

The relationship between personality traits, emotional schema and dyadic satisfaction

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Abstract: In this study, we set out to examine the mediating role of emotional schema in association with the Big Five personality traits and dyadic satisfaction. The participants (N = 98), with ages ranging between 24 and 50 years old, mainly students, completed a series of three questionnaires, regarding Big Five personality traits, emotional schemas and level of dyadic satisfaction. The results have shown positive and negative correlations between these three variables, but, most importantly, a strong negative correlation between neuroticism and dyadic satisfaction. We have also established that emotional schemas act as a mediator between the neuroticism dimension of the Big Five personality traits and dyadic satisfaction, a finding which provides us with new insight into designing interventions aimed at increasing the level of couple satisfaction.

Keywords: Big Five personality traits, emotional schema, dyadic satisfaction, mediating role.

Introduction

Dyadic satisfaction can positively or negatively affect all aspects of an individual's life, greatly influencing the well-being of individuals, families and its members, but also of the greater society. An extensive body of research has documented the negative effects that relationship dissolution, divorce and marital conflict can have on the mental health and general wellbeing of children, the larger family, and on the individual partners involved in a relationship. That is why it is still important for us, as mental health practitioners, to identify theoretical models upon which to construct efficient interventions, in order to promote greater relational health between individuals. Based on the existing literature, we have found emotional schema to be a useful concept, with a powerful impact on relationship wellbeing, concept which can help in the crafting of interventions at the individual but also at the couple level. While we can cite numerous empirical studies (Barelds & Dick, 2005; Kelly & Conley, 1987; Karney & Bradbury, 1995) that attest the existence of strong correlations

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between personality traits and dyadic satisfaction, especially neuroticism, we have found very few that examine the relationship between emotional schema and personality traits or dyadic satisfaction.

Big Five and couple satisfaction

It is already well established that intimate personal relationships play a central role in the lives of all people. The quality and stability of these relationships have extremely important implications for the individual mental health and general wellbeing. On the one hand, a high level of relationship satisfaction is associated with greater quality of life and overall wellbeing (Myers & Diener, 1995). On the other hand, relational distress and instability can lead to an increase in psychological and physiological symptoms affecting the partners involved in the dyad, and also their children (Bloom, Ascher, & White, 1978). As Myers and Diener (1995) quote Glenn (1990) in their study, “as with other close social bonds, broken marital relationship are a source of much self-reported unhappiness, whereas a supportive, intimate relationship is among life’s greatest joys.” In relationship quality research, the level of dyadic satisfaction over time became one of the main ways of evaluating relationships (Hendrick, 1988).

The theory and past research suggest that individual personality traits are related to satisfaction and couple functioning. Because personality shapes the way that people interpret and respond to the situations they find themselves in, it is expected that each partner’s traits will influence the interactions that arise and unfold within a relationship (Robins, Caspi, & Moffitt, 2002). It thus follows that personality can be considered an important predictor of relationship quality, given that those interactions that are molded by each of the partner’s relationship influence the perceived relationship quality (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). Studies have found that partner interactions function only partially as a mediator between personality traits and relationship quality (Donnellan, Assad, Robins & Conger, 2007). Empirical studies have shown that stable personality traits are, in fact, associated with the relationship satisfaction as it is perceived at the individual level (Robins et al., 2000; Heller et al., 2004).

The research literature suggests that neuroticism, agreeability and conscientiousness represent the personality traits that demonstrate the strongest association with dyadic satisfaction. In their 2004 study, Heller, Watson and Ilies published a meta-analysis of the existing literature that summarizes the correlations between Big Five personality traits and marital satisfaction. They confirmed that the strongest association was found to be between neuroticism and marital satisfaction, followed in decreasing magnitude between agreeability and conscientiousness. The correlations between extraversion and openness were less significant. Another meta-analysis which deserved consideration is the one published by Malouff, Thornsteinsson, Schutte, and Rooke in 2010, which

aimed to clarify the relationship between personality traits and dyadic satisfaction. In their effort to calculate the total effect of the five personality dimensions, Mallouff and his colleagues found significant correlations between partner personality and dyadic satisfaction for four of those five traits. The strongest identified effect was related to neuroticism, followed by agreeability, conscientiousness and extraversion. We can thus conclude that the one personality trait that has shown the most significant correlations with relationship satisfaction is neuroticism (emotional instability). Having a partner characterized by emotional instability is associated with lower levels of relationship satisfaction (Barelds, 2005; Botwin et al., 1997) followed eventually, in most cases, by relationship dissolution.

Emotional schema

Cognitive therapists consider that schemas are essential for the development and maintenance of chronic forms of psychopathology, including personality disorders and depression (Padesky, 1994). Generally speaking, schemas are responsible for structuring information, supplying significance and orienting behaviors (Thimm, 2010) and can be differentiated according to their content (Conover & Feldman, 1984). For example, cognitive schemas focus on cognition, relational schemas on relations and emotional schemas on emotions. Strictly speaking, emotional schemas refer to plans, concepts and strategies used in the response provided to a specific emotion (Leahy, 2015). It follows that Leahy considers that the way an individual responds to the experience of a certain emotion, either by normalizing it or by rendering it pathological, makes up their global perception of that emotion and offers the necessary data that guide future interactions. The moment these emotions arise in the context of an interpersonal relationship, an individual's emotional schemas will directly inform his behavior, thus influencing the way people manipulate emotions in relationships. Although, historically, researchers have established connections between schemas as a general concept and an individual's satisfaction perceived in the context of a relationship (Chatav & Whisman, 2008; Marshall et al., 2011), a direct link between emotional schema and dyadic satisfaction has not yet been determined. In his work, *Emotional Schema Therapy*, Leahy proposes a model of emotional schemas, in which he defined 14 dimensions.

Although a lot research focused on understanding an individual's interpersonal and intrapersonal schema, a new generation of researchers has begun to reexamine interpersonal relationships (Baldwin, 1992; Laurenceau, Kleinman, Kaczynski, & Carver, 2010). The latest research on attachment models support this elementary link between intrapersonal schemas and relationships (Collins, & Feeney, 2004; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2001; Mikulincer, Shaver, Sapir-Lavid, & Avihou-Kanza, 2009). Research also shows that schemas tend to have an impact on the subjective quality of relationships

(Collins & Feeney, 2004) and has helped in the identification of a model of the way perceptions regarding the relationship influence the degree of relationship satisfaction (Laursen, DeLay, & Adams, 2010). Although researchers have found significant correlations between schemas and the level of dyadic satisfaction (Chatav & Whisman, 2008; Marshall et al., 2011), a direct link between emotional schema and dyadic satisfaction has yet to be investigated. We can find various examples of research that confirm the relationship between dyadic satisfaction and personality traits, but it's something we cannot say about emotional schemas, partly because this is a concept that has recently entered the stage of psychology, although the idea of schema has been around since 1923, with the help of Piaget.

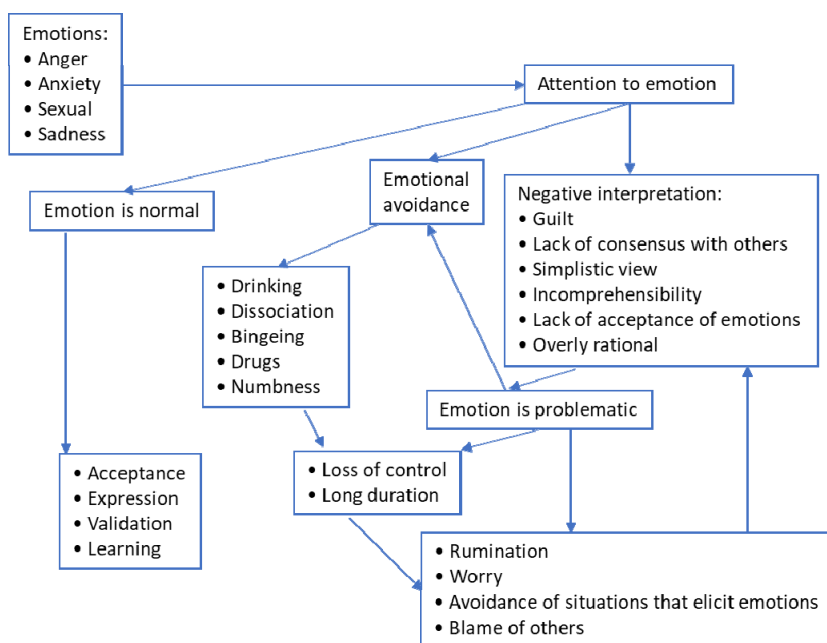


Figure 1. A model of emotional schema (Leahy, 2015)

We find it would be of interest to examine what relationships can be established between these intensely studied variables, dyadic satisfaction and personality traits, and a new, emergent one of emotional schema, and, even more, what practical implications such a relationship would have on couple therapeutic interventions. This is why we proposed the following hypotheses for our study: (1) there is a statistically significant link between Big Five personality traits and dyadic satisfaction; (2) there is a statistically significant connection between emotional schemas and Big Five personality traits; (3) there is a

statistically significant link between emotional schemas and dyadic satisfaction; (4) and, finally, we hypothesized that emotional schemas act as a mediator in the relationship between Big Five personality traits and dyadic satisfaction.

Method

Participants and procedure

The participants in this research are 98 students at the Faculty of Psychology, master's studies, aged between 24 and 50 years ($M = 36.24$, $SD = 15.13$), who are involved in a couple relationship for at least two years at the time of completing the questionnaires. The sample contains a relatively equal amount of female and male respondents.

The three instruments were distributed to the respondents in pencil-paper format, the training being done both in writing and verbally: there were no refusals to participate, participation was made based on the freely agreed involvement, the participants being assured of the anonymity of the data provided.

Materials and instruments

In order to explore the relationship between Big Five personality traits, emotional schemas and dyadic satisfaction, we have employed the following scales: The Big Five Inventory (BFI; John & Srivastava, 1999), the Leahy Emotional Schema Scale II (LESS II; Leahy, 2012b), and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS; Spanier, 1976).

In order to verify construct validity, we have calculated the total internal consistency for each of the scales in our study using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. For each of the scales we have obtained coefficients with values higher than .60, which means that, for the present sample, the instruments are measuring what they are intended to, raising the confidence level of the instruments (Table 1).

Table 1. The value of internal consistency coefficients for the three scales used in the study

Scale	Number of items	Alpha Cronbach
L.E.S.S.	28	.837
Big Five	44	.742
D.A.S.	32	.866

The *Big Five Inventory* is a self-report scale based on the hypothesis that the significant social and behavioral differences between individuals will be encoded in the individuals' expressive language. It is composed of 44 items which measure personality traits according to the five-factor model on a Likert

type scale, ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“agree strongly”) and evaluates individuals along the dimensions of neuroticism, extraversion, agreeability, conscientiousness and openness. The coefficient of internal consistency of the scales varies between .601 – .829, with values higher than .60, which means that, for the present sample, each trait and the corresponding items are measuring what they are supposed to measure, raising the confidence level of the instrument.

Table 2. The value of internal consistency coefficient for the dimensions of the B.F.I. Scale

	Number of items	Alpha Cronbach
Extraversion	8	.601
Agreeability	9	.762
Conscientiousness	9	.728
Neuroticism	9	.795
Openness	8	.829

The *Leahy Emotional Schema Scale II* is a questionnaire composed of 28 items which measure the 14 dimensions of the proposed Leahy emotional schemas. The questionnaire evaluates the way the patient thinks and reacts when he/she find himself/herself in a distressed state. This scale’s high scores are associated with depression, anxiety, personality disorders and addictive behaviors. The scale measures the way people deal with their emotions, on a Likert type scale ranging from 1 (“very untrue”) to 6 (“very true”). The scale assesses the individual along 14 dimensions of emotional schema: invalidation, incomprehensibility, guilt, simplistic view of emotion, devalued, loss of control, numbness, overly rational, duration, low consensus, non-acceptance of feelings, rumination, low expression, and blame.

Table 3. The value of internal consistency coefficients for the dimensions LESS II Scale

	Number of items	Alpha Cronbach
Invalidation	2	.688
Incomprehensibility	2	.677
Guilt	2	.670
Simplistic view of emotion	2	.655
Devalued	2	.709
Loss of control	2	.653
Numbness	2	.704

	Number of items	Alpha Cronbach
Overly rational	2	.687
Duration	2	.694
Consensus	2	.681
Nonacceptance of feelings	2	.680
Rumination	2	.651
Low expression	2	.715
Blame	2	.657

The *Dyadic Adjustment Scale* is utilized to evaluate the level of adjustment between the partners engaged in a relationship, who participated in our study. This instrument was designed to be used for evaluation purposes of married couples but also other consensual dyads, like cohabitating couples. Since it was first elaborated and through the continued process of item refinement, the DAS has become one the most widely used scale in the evaluation of the level of adjustment within a relationship. The scale is composed of 32 items, and the theoretical construct at the basis of the scale is dyadic adjustment, a dynamic process which is measured longitudinally, highlighting the quality of the relationship as it is subjectively perceived the by the partners. Dyadic adjustment is a transformative process, evaluated in terms of the existing differences between partners, interpersonal tension and personal anxiety, dyadic satisfaction and cohesion, consensus and agreement relating to engaging in couple activities and the problems that the partners have to face. A high score on this scale reflects a high level of dyadic adjustment. The scores are calculated along each of the four dimensions of dyadic adjustment: dyadic satisfaction, dyadic cohesion, dyadic consensus and affectional expression.

Table 4. The value of internal consistency coefficients for the dimensions of the DAS scale

	Number of items	Alpha Cronbach
Dyadic satisfaction	10	.845
Dyadic cohesion	10	.602
Dyadic consensus	5	.698
Affectional expression	13	.864

Results

Using the Pearson correlations to examine the relationship between the variables, the results have shown significant correlations between Big Five personality traits, emotional schema and dyadic satisfaction.

Big Five personality traits and dyadic satisfaction

Table 5 displays the Pearson correlations between Big Five personality traits and dyadic satisfaction. The results show that while a large number of variables do not correlate in a statistically significant manner ($p > .05$), for neuroticism (BFI) and dyadic satisfaction (DAS) we have found a negative statistically significant correlation of medium intensity ($r = -.300$, $p < .05$).

Table 5. Statistically significant correlations between personality traits and dyadic adjustment dimensions

	Dyadic satisfaction	Dyadic consensus	Dyadic cohesion	Affectional expression	Dyadic satisfaction
Extraversion	.49	.11	.28**	.09	.18
Agreeableness	.05	-.01	.09	-.04	.03
Conscientiousness	.01	.08	-.03	.02	-.02
Neuroticism	-.19	-.34**	-.18	-.13	-.30**
Openness	.12	.10	.32**	-.06	.16

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .001$

Examining the association between personality traits and dimensions of dyadic satisfaction, we have found that there is a negative correlation between neuroticism and dyadic consensus ($r = -.34$, $p < .05$), while extraversion and dyadic cohesion correlate positively ($r = .28$, $p < .05$). Therefore, high levels of neuroticism will tend to be associated with low levels of dyadic satisfaction and dyadic consensus, while a high level in extraversion will associate with high levels of dyadic cohesion.

Emotional schema and Big Five personality traits

Using the correlations displayed in table 6, results show that there are significant correlations between the different dimensions of emotional schema and personality traits.

Table 6. Statistically significant correlations between emotional schema and Big Five personality traits

	E	A	C	N	O
Invalidation	-.05	.07	.03	.11	.02
Incomprehensibility	.02	.08	-.11	.11	-.09
Guilt	-.22*	-.01	-.12	.23*	-.22*
Simplistic view of emotion	.11	.17	.09	.28**	-.16
Devalued	.24*	.10	.03	-.04	-.03
Loss of control	-.06	.04	.01	.27**	-.20*
Numbness	.24*	.06	-.06	.01	.10
Overly rational	-.14	.12	.10	.20*	-.10
Duration	.04	-.11	.02	-.08	-.06
Low consensus	.23*	.16	.26**	.00	.11
Nonacceptance of feelings	-.05	.10	.12	.30**	.07
Rumination	.06	.18	.03	.38**	-.03
Low expression	.32**	.01	.03	-.25*	.23*
Blame	.05	.24*	.13	.41**	-.01
Emotional schema	.14	.22*	.11	.37**	-.06

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$; E = Extraversion; A = Agreeableness; C = Conscientiousness; N = Neuroticism; O = Openness.

High extraversion levels tended to be associated with a decrease in the level of guilt but with a significant increase in the level of devaluation, numbness, low consensus and low expression, while a high level of agreeableness associated with an increase in the frequency of blame and low consensus. A statistically positive and significant correlation has been established between conscientiousness (BFI) and low consensus (LESS II) ($r = .26$, $p < .05$). Examining the associations between neuroticism (B.F.I.) and emotional schema (LESS II), we identified the following positive statistically significant correlations: guilt ($r = .23$, $p < .05$), loss of control ($r = .27$, $p < .05$), overly rational ($r = .20$, $p < .05$), nonacceptance of feelings ($r = .30$, $p < .05$), rumination ($r = .38$, $p < .05$), blame ($r = .41$, $p < .05$), global emotional schema ($r = .37$, $p < .05$). We can observe a statistically negative and significant correlation between neuroticism and low expression, ($r = -.25$, $p < .05$). The value of the correlation indicated a modest association, a high level of

neuroticism being associated with a reduced level of low expression. High openness is associated with low guilt, low loss of control and high low expression.

Emotional Schema and Dyadic Satisfaction

Table 7 displays the Pearson correlations between emotional schema and dyadic satisfaction. Examining the associations between global dyadic satisfaction (DAS) and emotional schema (LESS II), a number of negative statistically significant correlations have been identified with the following dimensions: incomprehensibility ($r = -.36, p < .05$), guilt ($r = -.26, p < .05$), simplistic view of emotion ($r = -.29, p < .05$), loss of control ($r = -.33, p < .05$), rumination ($r = -.29, p < .05$), blame ($r = -.31, p < .05$). A negative statistically significant correlation can be identified between emotional schema and dyadic satisfaction ($r = -.30, p < .05$). An increase in emotional schema tends to be associated with a decrease in dyadic satisfaction.

Table 7. Statistically significant correlations between the types of emotional schema and dimensions of dyadic satisfaction

	Dyadic satisfaction	Dyadic consensus	Dyadic cohesion	Affectional expression	Dyadic satisfaction
Invalidation	.03	.09	.06	-.03	.05
Incomprehensibility	-.36**	-.34**	-.13	-.21*	-.37**
Guilt	-.26*	-.16	-.10	-.24*	-.23*
Simplistic view of emotion	-.29**	-.27**	-.18	-.13	-.31**
Devalued	.08	.09	.08	.20*	.12
Loss of control	-.33**	-.34**	-.15	-.09	-.35**
Numbness	.18	.02	.03	.14	.10
Overly rational	-.15	-.04	-.15	-.12	-.12
Duration	.02	.08	.06	-.02	.06
Low consensus	-.05	-.03	.12	.03	-.01
Nonacceptance of feelings	-.04	-.14	-.13	-.02	-.11
Rumination	-.29**	-.30**	-.13	-.09	-.31**
Low expression	.17	.27**	.30**	.18	.28**
Blame	-.31**	-.35**	-.14	-.15	-.35**
Emotional schema	-.30**	-.28**	-.09	-.10	-.29**

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .001$

Low dyadic consensus tends to be associated with a high frequency of the following dimensions of emotional schema: incomprehensibility, simplistic view of emotion, loss of control, rumination, blame, while high levels of dyadic consensus were positively associated with low expression. Low dyadic cohesion levels are associated with high low expression while negative statistically significant correlations have been observed between affectional expression and incomprehensibility ($r = -.21, p < .05$), guilt ($r = -.24, p < .05$) and devalued ($r = -.20, p < .05$).

Examining the mediating role of emotional schemas in the correlation between personality traits and dyadic satisfaction

In order to examine the mediating role of emotional schemas in the relationship between personality traits and dyadic satisfaction, we employed the Baron and Kenny mediation model.

Of all the five personality traits featured in the Big Five model, we chose neuroticism to be part of the mediation model because, according to previous studies (Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Kelly & Conley, 1987; Botwin, Buss & Shackelford, 1997; Barelds & Dick, 2005), neuroticism is the most significant predictor for low levels of dyadic satisfaction. Given that neuroticism has such a negative impact on dyadic satisfaction and given the practical orientation of this research, geared at finding therapeutic interventions that increase dyadic satisfaction in couples, we found it important to address this variable.

We reiterate at this point the significant correlations between the dimensions of emotional schemas and neuroticism as a personality trait (Table 8).

Table 8. Statistically significant correlations between emotional schema and neuroticism

	Neuroticism
Guilt	.23*
Loss of control	.27**
Overly rational	.20*
Nonacceptance of feelings	.30**
Rumination	.38**
Low expression	-.25*
Blame	.41**
Emotional schema	.37**

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .001$

Using these data as a starting point, we analyze the mediation relationship for all seven types of relevant emotional schemas and the total score, in the context of the relationship between neuroticism and dyadic adjustment (used as a criterion). Following the Baron and Kenny mediation model, we identified the indirect effect of the predictor variable neuroticism on the mediator variable blame, $a = .343$, $\text{std. err} = .078$, statistically significant, with $p = .0001 < .05$. We identify next the indirect effect of the mediator variable blame on the criterion variable dyadic satisfaction, $b = -1.664$, $\text{std. err} = .633$, statistically significant, with $p = .010 < .05$. We then move on to calculate and model the mediation relationship of the mediator variable blame on the direct relationship between neuroticism as a personality trait and the criterion variable dyadic satisfaction, as can be seen in figure 2.

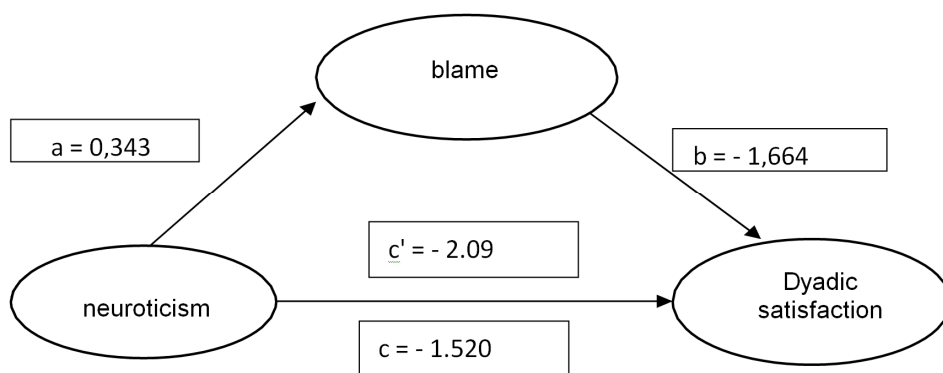


Figure 2. The model of the mediation relationship in the prediction model represented by neuroticism, blame and dyadic satisfaction

- We calculate the total effect $c = c' + a * b \rightarrow c' = c - a * b \rightarrow c' = -2.09$
- We calculate the mediation effect $a * b = 0.343 * (-1,664) = -.0570$.
- We test the mediation effect using the online calculator, the Sobel test:
- We identify $s_a = .078$; $s_b = .633$;
- We calculate the value of the Sobel test.

Analyzing the data we obtained, we can state that for the value of the Sobel test in standard Z scores $Z = 2.23$ with a standard deviation $\text{std. error} = .25$ and $p = .025$, we consider that the mediation effect of mediator variable blame in the relationship between neuroticism and criterion variable dyadic satisfaction is statistically significant for the research sample, for a significance threshold of .025.

In conclusion, of all the mediator variables we examined, only the blame variable statistically significantly mediates the relationship between neuroticism and dyadic satisfaction; we have not been able to observe a mediation effect between neuroticism and dyadic satisfaction using any other variable.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between Big Five, emotional schemas and dyadic satisfaction. The research results confirm the hypotheses we set out, and that is we have been able to identify statistically significant correlations between these three variables.

The first hypothesis of our study was confirmed as we have been able to establish a statistically significant correlation between Big Five and dyadic satisfaction, in accordance with the findings of previous studies on this topic (Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Kelly & Conley, 1987; Botwin, Buss & Shackelford, 1997). Of the five personality traits, neuroticism is the most significant predictor for low couple satisfaction (Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Kelly & Conley, 1987). These studies define neuroticism as negative affectivity or generalized anxiety (Costa & McCrae, 1992). According to them, persons who are high in neuroticism display the tendency to manifest and experience a constellation of negative emotions, including anxiety, anger, disgust, sadness and embarrassment. These are difficult persons and can negatively influence a relationship.

Confirming the results obtained in other studies on the relationship between personality traits and dyadic satisfaction, we identified significant positive correlations between extraversion and couple cohesion (Barelds & Dick, 2005; Kelly & Conley, 1987). This correlation can be explained by taking into account the fact that the extravert persons possess certain qualities that contribute to a positive climate, are open to negotiation and sensitive to their partner's needs and are mainly cooperative (John, 1990), qualities which highly contribute to the perception of a strong emotional bond between the two partners.

The second hypothesis proposed in our study was also confirmed, as we found a statistically significant correlation between emotional schema and Big Five traits, also in accordance with the results of studies that underline the importance of schemas in developing personality traits and which also established a link, for example, between dysfunctional cognitive schemas and personality traits (Thimm, 2010; Valikhani et al., 2017; Sava, 2009). It is possible that a person high in neuroticism will nurture the belief that he shouldn't experience the emotions he does experience (blame), will continuously ruminate on the meaning of the negative emotions (rumination) and will try to find a guilty party for the emotions he experiences (blame). These persons also strongly believe that emotions have to be controlled (loss of control), and place a higher value on reason rather than on emotion and try to convince themselves that the emotions experienced are not that intense (excessive ration). These somewhat contradictory beliefs create a conflict that manifests itself as emotional instability. Not at all surprising is the negative correlation between

neuroticism and low expression. A neurotic person will have the tendency to freely express his emotions, which can have negative consequences in an interpersonal context, especially if those emotions are insufficiently digested, with the potential to escalate a conflict, hurt a partner, and especially if it arises at the most inappropriate moments.

Although previous studies found significant associations between schemas in their most general sense and dyadic satisfaction (Chatav & Whisman, 2008; Marshall, Panuzio, Makin-Byrd, Taft, & Holzworth-Munroe, 2011), no direct link has been observed between these two variables. In one of his studies, Relational Emotional Schema Scale (RESS) (Leahy, 2010b), Leahy explored the link between emotional schemas and relationship satisfaction using the Relationship Emotional Schema Scale – RESS, which measured the individual's perception of the partner's beliefs about emotions. This study demonstrated the existence of a statistically significant correlation of RESS with marital satisfaction (measured using the Dyadic Adjustment Scale). Our study also yielded a statistically significant correlation between emotional schema and relationship satisfaction. Low expression positively correlates with overall dyadic satisfaction and in particular with the dimensions of dyadic cohesion and consensus. The simple emotional expression is not necessarily productive, seeing that intense and accusatory emotions can fan the flames of a conflict. It's important to remember that, for the purposes of this study, dyadic satisfaction has been defined as the subjective and overall perception of the relationship. For example, dyadic consensus represents the subjective perception of the couple relating to the positive character of their emotional relationship. It is possible that the persons who hold the strong emotional belief that emotions must not be shared or expressed, will withhold and even block their negative emotions about the partner or relationship, thus creating the illusion for the partner that there is a positive emotional connection between them. We must also mention that the statistically significant link between these two variables is not very strong. An alternative interpretation of the positive link between low expression and dyadic satisfaction requires us to turn to the concept of tact. Tact is defined as empathy towards the thoughts, feelings and motivations of the partner, in order to find the best moment to discuss certain aspects (Turliuc, 2004). If we take tact into account, not readily expressing feelings towards the partner may convey care and a respect shown for his needs.

Dyadic satisfaction is especially negatively affected by blame and rumination. Blaming the others for your own negative emotions erodes the perceived level of satisfaction. The persons who engage in blaming may consider themselves to be provoked, done an injustice, exploited, ignored or just misunderstood (Leahy, 2015), which provokes them into actions, behaviors intended to hurt and punish the culprit. These types of negative exchanges hurt intimacy and favor detachment and avoidance (Turliuc, 2004). Blame can be

enhanced by rumination. Persons prone to rumination get stuck in one emotion, constantly thinking about the fact that they experience an unpleasant emotion and ask themselves questions to which they can never find an answer (Leahy, 2015), which can constitute a real barrier to the partner's efforts of openly discussing a problematic issue. They just become blind to their partner's feelings. Rumination also makes finding solutions impossible, and also hinders remembering positive aspects which are elements necessary for resolving relationship issues.

The last one of our hypotheses has been confirmed, as we have been able to establish that emotional schemas play a mediating role between Big Five's neuroticism and dyadic satisfaction. The mediator variable explains the relationship between a predictor and a criterion, shows us the mechanism by which the variable neuroticism affects the variable dyadic satisfaction. Of all the mediator variables we have analyzed in our study only the variable blame statistically significantly mediates the relationship between neuroticism and the criterion variable dyadic satisfaction. We can affirm with confidence that blame is the mechanism by way of which neuroticism affects dyadic satisfaction, which further explains the association between these two variables.

This study is not without its limits. The main limitations of this study consist of the small sample of subject and the use of instruments that rely entirely on self-report measures, thus not being able to control for any confounding variables.

Conclusions

The goal of the present study was to examine the relationships between Big Five personality traits, emotional schema and dyadic satisfaction. A large part of our findings has been in accordance with the results of those studies in the research literature, while others have identified new and surprising associations between variables, which we were not able to support using previous research. Such an example would be the correlation between emotional schemas and certain aspects of dyadic satisfaction, such as a mediation relationship between neuroticism, blame and relationship satisfaction. This mediation relationship (Frazier, Tix, & Kenny, 2004) could be used as a solid basis of support for a couples' therapy intervention aimed at increasing dyadic satisfaction. By specifically addressing blame, which in relationships wrought by conflict is manifested through the belief that "the real problem is my partner" and that our emotions are caused by the action or interaction with other people, we can most surely increase the couple's level of dyadic satisfaction. Blame can be counteracted by managing partner expectations, creating a more complex and human image of the other, and accepting responsibility for one's feelings and actions.

As we expected, dyadic satisfaction is negatively associated with neuroticism and positively associated with extraversion. The most unexpected results referred to negative correlations between emotional schemas (L.E.S.S. II) and certain facets of dyadic satisfaction (like couple satisfaction and couple cohesion).

Finally, we strongly support the need to explore in further research mediation relationships which use interpersonal, motivational and behavioral mechanisms as mediators (which are also sensible and perfect candidates for intervention) in order to further explain and bring a more nuanced perspective upon the relationship between personality traits and dyadic satisfaction.

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