

Five Personality Types Based on Big Five: A Latent Class Analysis

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ABSTRACT. From a sample of 4,522 individuals (2,261 couples, both husbands and wives), five personality types emerged through the use of latent class analysis with data collected on the SCOPE (Social, Change, Organized, Pleasing, and Emotionally Steady) personality inventory (a Big Five assessment used by PREPARE-ENRICH couples assessment). The five personality types identified were Well-Rounded, Stable, Flexible, Unstable Organized, and Unstable Distant. Comparative analysis was conducted by comparing males versus females across the five types, clinical couples versus non-clinical couples, and the husbands versus wives as a couple for both non-clinical and clinical couples. Results revealed that males and females tended to have different types of personalities. However, there was no significant difference in personality types when comparing non-clinical and clinical couples. About one-fifth of the couples married someone with a similar personality type. No significant differences existed between the non-clinical couples and clinical couples in terms of the spouse personality similarity.

Keywords: Big Five, personality type, SCOPE personality inventory

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Five Personality Types Based on Big Five: A Latent Class Analysis

Each person has a unique constellation of personality traits that contribute to various intrapersonal characteristics and interpersonal relationships. In the past, most personality research focused on differences among individuals on a particular trait, using a dimensional or variable-centered approach. However, studies adopting this approach often focused on a single dimension at the expense of other personality traits. This approach fails to consider the configuration of the characteristics within a person and does not focus on the person as a whole.

Another method of studying personality, the typological or person-centered approach, views the person as a system of interacting components. More recently, this method has experienced a renaissance (Asendorpf, 2002), with research regarding personality typologies adopting the person-centered approach. Personality typologies are defined categories of individuals who have similar configurations of characteristics and share the same personality structures (Robins, John, Caspi, Moffitt, & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1996).

Most existing personality typologies are conceptual. One of the most noted examples is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers & McCaulley, 1985), which classifies people into 16 personality types. A few personality typologies were derived through empirical studies. Over the last twenty years, some scholars have developed and used empirical personality typologies (Avdeyeva & Church, 2005; Boehm, Asendorpf, & Avia, 2002; Robins et al., 1996; Roth & von Collani, 2007; Sava & Popa, 2011). Most empirical studies have measured personalities by using the Big Five Model (McCrae & Costa, 2008), which consists of five factors: neuroticism (N), extraversion (E), openness (O), agreeableness (A), and conscientiousness (C).

Three personality types (i.e., resilient, undercontrollers, and overcontrollers) are most frequently proposed in previous research (i.e., Avdeyeva & Church, 2005; Robins et al., 1996). In a study by Herzberg and Roth (2006), *resilient* showed a generally well-adjusted profile with below average neuroticism and above average or intermediate scores on the remaining four dimensions; *overcontrollers* scored high in neuroticism and low in extraversion. *Undercontrollers* had low scores in conscientiousness and agreeableness.

These previously mentioned studies indicate that no matter who the informants were, these three personality types were consistent throughout different samples even with different instruments and various statistic methods to derive the typologies. There is inconsistency in the literature, however. Some studies identify five (Herzberg & Roth, 2006; Roth & von Collani, 2007; Sava & Popa, 2011) or seven cluster solutions (Pulkkinen, 1996), adding more questions to the replicability and utility of the three personality types (i.e., Costa, Herbst, McCrae, Samuels, & Ozer, 2002).

Most studies utilized samples in European countries (i.e., Germany, Spain, Italy, Finland and Romania). Very few studies on personality typologies were conducted with North American samples. This geography is notable because the sample from the current study is from the United States. Another major limitation is that most studies used small sample sizes, raising questions of external validity of the previously developed typologies. Furthermore, most studies adopted cluster analyses (K-means) to derive the types, but current statistical practice in psychology and related social science fields is to use the mixture modeling approach to classify data into typologies.

Latent class analysis is a technique identifying unobserved (latent) groups of individuals with similar profiles (clusters or classes) based on observed responses. Magidson and Vermunt (2002) compared the two clustering methods and concluded that latent class analysis was preferred to the K-means technique. They argued that latent class analysis is more robust than the K-means technique because (a) clusters are less arbitrary and are developed through a rigorous statistical procedure, (b) latent class analysis eliminates the need to make decisions about scaling the observed variables, and (c) latent class analysis uses formalized criteria to make decisions about number of clusters and to work with mixed-level measurements (Magidson & Vermunt, 2002). Still, very few studies (i.e., Merz & Roesch, 2011) considered using latent class analysis to derive the personality types and no studies focused on couples.

Various instruments measure the Big Five constructs (e.g., NEO-PI-R and the Big Five Inventory), but none is considered to be the gold standard (John, Naumann, & Soto, 2008). OCEAN (openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism) is a personality assessment developed for professionals working with couples (John, Naumann, & Soto, 2008). The current study uses the SCOPE (Social, Change, Organized, Pleasing, and Emotionally Steady; see detailed description in the measures section) personality inventory, an assessment based on the Big Five and a simpler version of the OCEAN assessment.

In the current study, the first aim was to develop a personality typology based on the SCOPE (Olson, 2009), which is derived from the Big Five personality scales (McCrae & Costa, 2008). The second aim was to use the created typology to compare males versus females and clinical marital couples versus persons in non-clinical marital couples. The third aim was to explore whether individuals select marital partners with similar or different personality types.

Method

Sample

The study sample consisted of 2,261 married couples (4,522 individuals) living across the United States who completed the online PREPARE-ENRICH couple inventory (Olson, 2009). Of the 4,522 married people, 3,998 were individuals who were not in therapy (non-clinical group) but took the inventory to enrich their relationships from 2008-2012. 524 were individuals in marital therapy (clinical group) during these years. At the time of assessment, the clinical couples were seeing marriage and family therapists for relationship concerns that the PREPARE-ENRICH couple inventory identified.

The PREPARE-ENRICH couple inventory is a self-report questionnaire completed independently by both partners. The PREPARE-ENRICH couple inventory was designed to identify relationship strengths and growth areas, and couple and family cohesion and adaptability. As part of PREPARE-ENRICH, participants also filled out items that make up the SCOPE assessment. The SCOPE items are used for measuring personality traits. The current study focuses on the SCOPE items to develop the personality typologies. Individual and couple scores were obtained from data provided through PREPARE-ENRICH, Inc., a company that offers and scores this couple assessment (see www.prepare-enrich.com for more information).

All sample respondents were currently married. The majority of men (89.6%) and wives (87.8%) in the sample were between 26 and 60 years old. About three-quarters of the participants were Caucasian; the remainder were African-American or of multiple ethnicities. The most common level of education was two to four years of college for husbands and wives. Most of the husbands worked full-time (84.1%); 47.4% of the wives worked full-time. Regarding religious affiliation, most participants were either Catholic or Protestant Christian (74.1%).

Measures: SCOPE Scales

The five SCOPE Scales are part of the comprehensive couple assessment called PREPARE-ENRICH, which contains more than twenty scales (Olson, 2009). Twelve of the scales assess relationship areas like communication and conflict resolution and four scales assess couple and family cohesion (togetherness) and adaptability (change) based on the Circumplex Model of Family Systems (Olson, Russell, & Sprenkle, 1989). Developed by David Olson and colleagues, PREPARE-ENRICH was created in 1996 and has been used by over 100,000 counselors and clergy to help premarital couples prepare for marriage (PREPARE) and enrich relationships of married couples (ENRICH). More than 4 million couples from across the United States have taken this inventory as part of their counseling. The scales have high alpha reliability (.70-.85) and predictive validity of over 80 percent (Olson, 2009).

SCOPE consists of five subscales of personality: Social, Change, Organized, Pleasing, and Emotionally Steady; each subscale had seven items. For this study, the Cronbach's alphas for the five scales ranged from .77 to .84 (with a mean of .82). SCOPE has good validity, with a factor analysis resulting in five factors with each item loading over .30 for the seven items within each of the five scales, and no overlapping items across factors over .30 (Olson, 2009). A brief description of the five SCOPE scales is provided.

Social. This scale assesses a person's interest in other people and social activities (e.g., "I make friends easily") and is related to the Big Five's extraversion. High scores reflect an individual who is extroverted and enjoys people, activities, and groups. Medium scores reflect an individual who may find social settings enjoyable but also values privacy. Low scores reflect an individual who is reserved or introverted and less interested in social activities (scores range from 10 to 99, $M = 45.04$, $SD = 24.72$, $\alpha = .84$).

Change. This subscale measures openness to change, personal flexibility, and interest in new experiences (e.g., "I like to solve new problems"), which relates to openness in the Big Five. High scores reflect an individual who is very flexible, unconventional, and open to new experiences. Medium scores reflect an individual who balances new and creative ideas with more traditional approaches to life. Low scores reflect an individual who is more down to earth, practical, and less interested in new ideas or change (scores range from 10 to 99, $M = 49.52$, $SD = 29.07$, $\alpha = .80$).

Organized. This subscale assesses how organized and persistent a person was in his or her daily life, work, and pursuit of goals (e.g., "I am always prepared"). In the Big Five, it relates to conscientiousness. High scores reflect an individual who is methodical, well organized, goal oriented and very reliable. Medium scores reflect an individual who may be generally organized but can also be flexible about her or his agenda. Low scores reflect an individual who is more spontaneous, less organized, and prefers not to make rigid plans (scores range from 10 to 99, M

Pleasing. This subscale reflects how considerate and cooperative a person is in his or her interactions with others (e.g., “I accept people as they are”). In the Big Five, it relates to agreeableness. High scores reflect an individual who is very friendly, cooperative, and values getting along with others. Medium scores reflect an individual who can be warm and cooperative but is occasionally more competitive, stubborn, or assertive. Low scores reflect an individual who tends to be more assertive, less cooperative and more competitive (scores range from 10 to 99, $M = 51.08$, $SD = 28.50$, $\alpha = .77$).

Emotionally Steady. This subscale measures the ability to stay relaxed and calm even when faced with stressful situations (e.g., “I rarely complain”). In the Big Five, it relates to neuroticism (N). High scores reflect an individual who tends to be more relaxed, calm, and less prone to distress. Medium scores reflect an individual who will generally be calm and able to cope with stress but may sometimes experience feelings of anxiety, anger, or depression. Low scores reflect an individual who is more emotionally reactive, moody, and possibly prone to feelings of anxiety, depression, or anger in times of stress (scores range from 10 to 99, $M = 46.49$, $SD = 28.61$, $\alpha = .84$).

Analyses

The current study used latent class analysis to derive personality types based on the SCOPE (Olson, 2009). By using latent class analysis, the number of latent clusters (personality types) and the probabilities of class membership among the sample respondents could be derived. Pearson’s Chi-square tests were used to compare the prevalence of personality types between husbands and wives and between clinical and non-clinical couples.

Exploratory analysis phase. Mclust, a contributed R package for model-based clustering, classification, and density estimation based on finite normal mixture modelling (Fraley & Raftery, 1998, 2007), was used to identify personality types based on the five SCOPE scale scores of the entire sample (4,522 individuals). The model of latent class cluster is based on this equation:

$$P(y_n) = \sum_1^S \pi_j f_j(y_n|\theta_j) \quad (1)$$

Where y_n is the n th observation, S is the number of clusters, π_j is the probability of y_n classified into cluster j ($\sum_1^S \pi_j = 1$) and θ_j are the corresponding parameters including μ_j and Σ_j (μ_j and Σ_j are mean and variance-covariance matrix of cluster). $f_j(y_n|\theta_j)$, also expressed as $f_j(y|\mu_j, \Sigma_j)$ is the density function of the manifest variables.

$$f_j(y|\mu_j, \Sigma_j) = (2\pi)^{-\frac{p}{2}} |\Sigma_j|^{-\frac{1}{2}} \exp\{-\frac{1}{2}(y_n - \mu_j)^T \Sigma_j^{-1} (y_n - \mu_j)\} \quad (2)$$

Using latent class analysis, the probability of class membership was estimated by the maximum likelihood estimate method. Mclust automatically estimated the best model through the different covariance structures and different number of clusters. The best model, which had best parameters estimation and optimal cluster number, was selected by the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC). Across models of varying numbers of clusters, the model with the smaller BIC value is preferred.

Optimal solution phase. The models of five, six, seven, and eight clusters had very similar BIC values. We decided to compare the models with the lowest number of clusters (five and six; $BIC(5) = -210,128$ and $BIC(6) = -209,645$) because they had more clearly distinguished patterns of class membership. We found that the profiles generated by the five-cluster model contained more distinctive classes compared to the profiles generated by the six-cluster model. The five-cluster model also had a more balanced distribution of probabilities of class membership across the types.

Results

Description of the Five Types of Personality

By integrating definitions of the five dimensions of SCOPE personality scales, these labels were assigned to the five clusters: *Well-Rounded*, *Stable*, *Flexible*, *Unstable Organized*, and *Unstable Distant*. Table 1 provides brief description of personality characteristics and the estimated means of the five dimensions in each type.

Type 1: Well-Rounded. People in the well-rounded personality type tended to have the highest scores on all five dimensions of the SCOPE within the sample. They were somewhat extroverted, indicating they may enjoy social settings. Well-rounded people were very flexible, open to novel experiences, and valued organization and goals. They were also characterized by being cooperative and getting along well with others. Also, they were likely to be emotionally calm, relaxed, and able to cope well with stress.

Type 2: Stable. People in the stable personality type had high scores on emotional stability and low scores on change. They were likely to be somewhat extroverted, but also valued their privacy. They might prefer more practical ideas and be less interested in novel ideas. They tended to be organized, goal-oriented, cooperative, and valued getting along with others. They were relatively calm and able to cope with stress.

Type 3: Flexible. People in the flexible personality type tended to have low scores on all sub-dimensions except Change. They were likely to find social settings enjoyable while valuing privacy. They tended to be very open to change and to new experiences. Unlike people in well-rounded and stable personality types, people in the flexible personality type were likely to be disorganized. They tended to be cooperative and to value getting along with others. They were likely to experience emotional reactivity, moodiness, depression, or anxiety.

Type 4: Unstable Organized. People in the unstable organized personality type tended to have moderate scores on organization but low scores on the other sub-dimensions. They were more likely to be introverted and less interested in socializing; they tended to be more practical and uninterested in new ideas. They were somewhat organized and mostly cooperative and valued getting along with others. They were more likely to be emotionally reactive and moody, and more prone to have anxiety, depression, and anger in stressful times.

Type 5: Unstable Distant. People in the unstable distant personality type had the lowest scores on all five dimensions among those the sample. They were more likely to be introverted and show little interest in social settings. They tended to prefer stability. They were more likely to be disorganized. People in the Unstable Distant personality type were seldom cooperative and

were rather competitive. They tended to be very emotionally reactive and moody and more prone to have anxiety, depression, and anger in stressful times.

Comparisons of Prevalence of Personality Types

Prevalence of personality types was compared between husbands and wives and between clinical and non-clinical using Pearson's Chi-square test (see Tables 2 and 3 respectively). We also explored whether there was a pattern of personality combinations between spouses (see Table 4 and 5).

First, there was a significant relationship between personality types and gender ($\chi^2(4) = 121.00, p < 0.001$). The results showed there were more males than females in the Well Rounded - Type 1 (27.1% vs. 17.6%) and Stable - Type 2 (21% vs. 16.3%). There were more females than males in the Unstable Organized - Type 4 (36.5% vs. 23.6%). There was no significant difference between the males and females in the Flexible - Type 3 and Unstable Distant - Type 5.

In comparing personality types for non-clinical versus clinical married individuals (Table 3), the Pearson's Chi-squared test indicated there was no statistically significant difference between the clinical and non-clinical groups ($\chi^2(4) = 8.975, p < .1$). The largest difference was that there were more well-rounded - Type 1 people were in the non-clinical than clinical group (22.9% vs. 18.5%), and more flexible - Type 3 people in the clinical group than in the non-clinical group (27.9% vs. 24.3%).

To see the distributions of personality type in married couples (Table 4 and 5), a cross tabulation of the five personality types for each couple (husband and wife) was created. The results show that for the non-clinical and clinical samples, the largest group of couples among all 25 kinds of personality combinations includes those couples where the wife belongs to the well-rounded type and the husband belongs to the unstable organized type. About one-third of the husbands in both samples belonged to the unstable organized type no matter what types their wives belonged to. The results also show that 22.9% of non-clinical couples were the same personality type (i.e., both members of the couple were Well-Rounded, Stable, Flexible, Unstable Organized, or Unstable Distant), and 17.1% of clinical couples were also the same personality type. The vast majorities of the non-clinical (87.1%) and clinical (82.9%) couples married partners with different personality types.

Discussion

This study analyzed 2,261 married couples (4,522 individuals) who took the PREPARE-ENRICH couple assessment that contained the SCOPE Personality Inventory. By using latent class analysis, five personality types were identified: Well-Rounded, Stable, Flexible, Unstable Organized, and Unstable Distant. The paper also compared distributions of personality types in males versus females, clinical couples versus non-clinical couples, and husbands versus wives as a couple for non-clinical and clinical couples. Results show that males and females tend to have different types of personalities, while no significant

difference in personality types prevalence exists among non-clinical and clinical couples. Only about 20 percent of the couples married someone with a similar personality type. Little difference exists between the non-clinical couples and clinical couples in terms of the spouse personality similarity.

Gender Differences in Personality Type Prevalence

Based on the results from this study, more males than females were in the Well-Rounded personality type and Stable personality type, while more females than males were in the Unstable Organized personality type. Results are congruent with the previous literature on gender differences in personality, which has indicated that females are more neurotic, more introverted and less self-confident than males are (Heidbreder, 1927; Iveniuk, Waite, Laumann, McClintock, & Tiedt, 2014; Tyler, 1947).

Are Certain Personality Types Associated with Relationship Difficulties?

In the current study, we found no significant differences in terms of personality type distributions between the non-clinical and the clinical couples. This finding contradicts findings in some previous studies. For example, Claxton and colleagues (2012) found that each of the Big Five personality traits was significantly associated with marital satisfaction. Bloch, Haase, and Levenson (2014) found that emotion regulation ability was positively associated with marital satisfaction. Our different findings could be due to the disproportionate sub-samples: our clinical sample is smaller in size than is the non-clinical sample.

Do People Choose Partners with Similar Personalities?

Based on statistics in the current study, only about one-fifth of couples married someone with the same personality type. The vast majority of both the non-clinical and clinical couples married someone with a completely different or slightly different personality type.

Does Personality Similarity Matter in Couple Relationship?

People often say that difficult marital relationships are the results of unmatched personality styles. Based on the results of this study, we conclude there is no significant difference in distribution of personality types between non-clinical and clinical couples. We also find little difference between distributions of non-clinical and clinical married couples in terms of spouse similarity.

Conclusions and Implications

Most personality research has focused on differences among individuals on a particular trait, referred to as dimensional or variable-centered approaches. However, studies with this approach often focus on a single dimension at the expense of other personality traits. The typology developed in this study integrated all five dimensions of personality traits, reflecting the configuration of the characteristics within a person and viewing the person as a whole. Limitations of the study include the fact that typological analysis always has some non-quantitative interpretations and descriptive labels for the types. The number of types has also

One strength of this study is its use of a well-validated personality assessment, SCOPE, which is based on the Big Five. It overcomes the limitations in previous personality typology studies. Data are based on a large national database of married couples ($n = 2,261$) where husbands and wives both completed online PREPARE-ENRICH couples inventories. The study also has one of the largest samples of individuals and couples assembled in the United States, with analysis conducted at individual and couple levels. The study increased our understanding of the personality type among people living in the United States. The sample contains clinical couples (in therapy) and non-clinical couples (who took the assessment as part of a couple enrichment program). The typological analysis used latent class analysis, is a rigorous approach to data analysis.

The personality typology developed in this study facilitates development of personality theories and enriches understandings on personality profiles among the United States population. It also provides guidance for clinicians working with clients facing issues stemming from personality matters. For future studies, we suggest incorporating dependent variables (such as marital satisfaction and marital quality) into analyses to verify the identified personality types. Using a developmental approach to detect personality type change and the corresponding marital relationships will also be explanatory.

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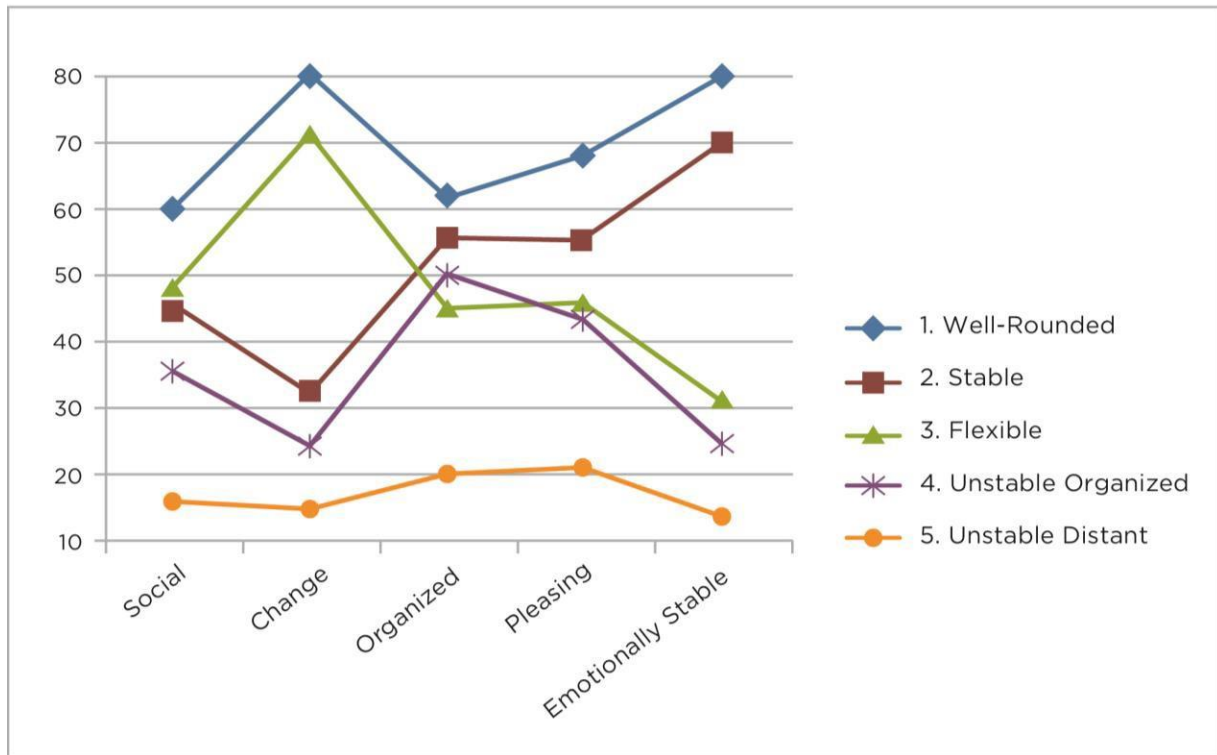


Figure 1. Five Personality Types based on SCOPE Personality Scales.

Table 1
Scores and Brief Descriptions of Five Personality Types based on SCOPE Personality Scales

Social	Change	Organized	Pleasing	Emotionally Stable
Type 1. Well-Rounded				
60	80	62	67	80
Somewhat extraverted	Very open to change	Generally organized	Generally pleasing	Very emotionally stable
Type 2. Stable				
44	32	56	55	70
Balanced intro/extra	Prefers stability	Somewhat organized	Somewhat pleasing	Emotionally stable
Type 3. Flexible				
47	71	44	46	31
Balanced intro/extra	Open to change	Somewhat disorganized	Somewhat pleasing	Emotionally unstable
Type 4. Unstable Organized				
36	23	50	44	24
Introverted	Prefers stability	Somewhat organized	Somewhat pleasing	Emotionally unstable
Type 5. Unstable Distant				
16	14	20	21	12
Extremely introverted	Requires stability	Disorganized	Seldom pleasing	Very emotionally unstable

Table 2

Distribution of Personality Types by Gender (n = 4522)

		Well- Rounded	Stable	Flexible	Unstable Organized	Unstable Distant	Total
Females	n	399	369	567	825	101	2,261
	%	17.6	16.3	25.1	36.5	4.5	100.0
Males	n	613	475	551	534	88	2,261
	%	27.1	21.0	24.4	23.6	3.9	100.0
Total	n	1,012	844	1,118	1,359	189	4,522
	%	22.4	18.7	24.7	30.1	4.2	100.0

Table 3
Distribution of Personality Types among Clinical and Non-clinical Samples (n = 4522)

		Well- Rounded	Stable	Flexible	Unstable Organized	Unstable Distant	Total
Clinical	n	97	110	146	153	18	524
	%	18.5	21.0	27.9	29.2	3.4	100.0
Non-Clinical	n	915	734	972	1,206	171	3,998
	%	22.9	18.4	24.3	30.2	4.3	100.0
Total	n	1,021	884	1,118	1,359	189	4,522
	%	22.9	18.4	24.3	30.2	4.3	100.0

Table 4

Distribution of Personality Types for Non-clinical Couples (n = 1999 couples)

		Wives										Total	
		Well-Rounded		Stable		Flexible		Unstable Organized		Unstable Distant		n	%
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Husbands	Well-Rounded	119	6	69	3.5	86	4.3	81	4.1	10	0.5	365	18.3
	Stable	97	4.9	61	3.1	70	3.5	79	4	8	0.4	315	15.8
	Flexible	122	6.1	107	5.4	112	5.6	129	6.5	26	1.3	496	24.8
	Unstable Organized	191	9.6	164	8.2	186	9.3	159	8	35	1.8	735	36.8
	Unstable Distant	21	1.1	18	0.9	22	1.1	23	1.2	4	0.2	88	4.4
Total		550	27.5	419	21	476	21	471	23.6	83	4.2	1999	100

Table 5

Distribution of Personality Types for Clinical Couples (n = 262 couples)

		Wives										Total	
		Well-Rounded		Stable		Flexible		Unstable Organized		Unstable Distant			
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Husbands	Well-Rounded	3	1.1	7	2.7	13	5	11	4.2	0	0	34	13
	Stable	16	6.1	7	2.7	23	8.8	7	2.7	1	0.4	54	20.6
	Flexible	18	6.9	17	6.5	14	5.3	20	7.6	2	0.8	71	27.1
	Unstable Organized	24	9.2	22	8.4	21	8	21	8	2	0.8	90	34.4
	Unstable Distant	2	0.8	3	1.1	4	1.5	4	1.5	0	0	13	5
	Total	63	24	56	21.4	75	28.6	70	26.7	5	1.9	262	100