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## MARITAL QUALITY IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERPERSONAL DEPENDENCY

**ABSTRACT.** The survey presented in this paper partly proved the main hypothesis “Marital quality and the degree of interpersonal dependency are in inverse proportion, i.e. the higher marital quality, the lower the degree of interpersonal dependency”. The phenomenon of interpersonal dependency is derived from the concept of codependency, which is mainly related to alcoholism, but also to other types of mental and physical dependence on the substance or process.

**JEL Classification:** F22, Z10

**Keywords:** the quality of the marriage; interpersonal dependency, marriage

### Introduction

The quality of the marriage depends on many factors. These include, among others, subjective sense of satisfaction of spouses, partners personality type and their own activity (see eg Spanier, Lewis, 1979; Braun-Gakowska, 1985, 1992, 2008; Plopa, 2008), as well as the maturity to marry, reasons for choosing a spouse, chief compliance attitudes towards values and character traits, communication within marriage and sexual arrangement (see, for example: Earth, 1975; Rostowski, 1987; Janicka Niebrzydowski, 1994, Ryś, 1994, 1999, 2008b; Wojciszke, 2005; Plopa, 2008 ). Maria Trawińska (1997) stresses the importance of compliance of the established model of marriage, the motivation to act on behalf of marriage and the balance between the elements of continuity (family tradition) and the components of variation (self-development). Many researchers highlights the important relationship between economic and socio-ontic conditions and the quality of the marriage (see eg Trawińska, 1977, Braun-Gakowska, 1992, 2008, Ryś, 1999, 2008b; Wojciszke, 2005). Good material conditions are positively correlated with the quality of the marriage (see eg Amato, Johnson, Booth, Rogers, 2003, for: Jankowiak, 2007, p. 16; Plopa, 2008).

However, there are studies that indicate that the level of satisfaction with the marriage remains to small extent dependent on coping with external tasks such as the financial security of the family. Maintaining internal cohesion and the exchange of positive actions and feelings in a relationship are of crucial meaning (see eg Brichler et al., 1975, Gottman, 1979; Levinger, 1964, for: Wojciszke, 2005, p. 149). Researchers have also studied the quality of marriage in the light of attachment theory (cf. eg Bowlby, 1969, for Holmes, 2007, p. 129; Hazan, Shaver, 1987, for Holmes, 2007, p. 129; Shaver *et al.*, 1988 , for: Wojciszke, 2005, p

87; Mikulincer, Nachson, 1991, Feeney, Noller, 1990 by: Wojciszke, 2005, p. 90; Halpern, 2007). The marital satisfaction in late adulthood (Lee, 1988), and the correlation between the relationship quality and job satisfaction has been analyzed (Rogers, May, 2003). In addition, premarital cohabitation negatively correlated with the quality of the marriage (see eg Laskowski, 1987; Larson, Holman, 1994; Balakrishnan, Rao, Lapierre-Adamcyk, Krótki, 1987; Bennett, Blac, Bloom, 1988; De Maris, Leslie, 1984, Janus, Janus, 1993; Trussell, Rao, 1989; Thomson, Collela, 1992, Kamp Dush, Cohan, Amato, 2003, for: Jankowiak, 2007, p. 17). Other studies have shown the importance of serial cohabitation in the terms of the quality of marriage (DeMaris, MacDonald, 1993, for: *ibid*, p 19). Sexual initiation before marriage can have either a negative or positive effect on future marriage (Cate, Long, Anger, Draper, 1993, for: *ibid*, p. 20). Psychological differences between sexes knowledge is also important for high-quality relationship (cf. eg Sujak, 1988; Zienkiewicz, 1988, Ryś, 1999; Zarembowie, 2007; Pulikowski, 2008). Maria Ryś (1994, 1996, 1999) shows that integrating conflict resolution deepens the intimacy of the spouses. Renata Doniec (2001) emphasizes the need for implementation of affiliation in the relationship. Mieczysław Plopa (2008) points out that there is a higher level of sense of coherence in spouses in a successful relationships. All authors emphasize the important role of love and emotional involvement for the quality of marriage.

The phenomenon of interpersonal dependency is derived from the concept of codependency, which is mainly related to alcoholism, but also to other types of mental and physical dependence on the substance or process. The problem of alcoholism is particularly acute in Poland. According to the statistical yearbook (last year) 125,896 people are registered in outpatient drug treatment. However, a significant proportion of people abusing alcohol is not registered anywhere. It is estimated that in our country four to five million people live in families with alcohol problems, and adult children of alcoholics are more than two million (Ryś, Wódz, 2003, p. 118).

Until 1988, when the Institute of Psychology, Health and Temperance of Polish Psychological Association has being studied Polish wives of alcoholics, there was little objective data on their specific psychological situation, their personal, social, marriage and family issues, that affect them, as well as on the strategies that they take in dealing with those problems (Szczepańska, 1996, p. 5). As emphasized by Jerzy Mellibruda (1999, p. 116), we need a systematic study of psychological problems of co-addicted individuals, as well as the process of solving these problems, and the methods and forms of therapy that can help to manage this. Review of existing research on interpersonal dependency indicates the connotational diversity of the phenomenon. The authors point out three main variants: the destructive adaptation to living with an addict, so to chronic stress (Szczepańska, 1996; Sobolewska, Mellibruda, 1997; Mellibruda, 1999; Kisiel, 2001; Sobolewska, 2001; Sztandera, 2006), psychosomatic illness, which means the individual's dependency of functioning from a spouse, who is himself addicted to a substance or process (Cermak, 1986, for: Cierpiałkowska, 1998, pp. 75, Norwood, 1993, Cermak, Rutzky, 1998, Al-Anon Family Groups, 1994; Woititz, 1994; Zaworska-Nikoniuk, 2000; Wobiz, 2001, Halpern, 2009); a set of traits of personality or type of personality disorder, in which a key role is played by the origin of the phenomenon, that is the dysfunctional environment in the family of origin (Whitfield, 1984, 1989, for: Krawczinska, 2007, pp. 6-7, Forward, 1992, Bradshaw, 1994; Loughead, Spurlock, Yuan-yu ting, 1998, for: Margasiński, 2010, p. 117; Millon, 2005; Melody, 2008, Ryś, 2008b). Regardless of the approach, many authors emphasize the importance of harmful effects of family of origin (Bradshaw, 1994; Sobolewska, Mellibruda, 1997, Ryś, 2008b; Margasiński, 2010). Both Jerzy Mellibruda (1999) and Howard Halpern (2009) draw attention to the specificity of the addictive agent, which is the second person. John Bradshaw (1994) sees the origins of the phenomenon of internalized shame, and Howard

Halpern (2009) in hunger attachment. Maria Ryś (2008b) emphasizes the abnormality of the interpersonal relationship, in which the second person becomes the criterion of self-esteem. Marta Miklasiewicz (2007) draws attention to the relationship of self-awareness with the basic hope and styles of coping with stress in co-addicted women. Many researchers emphasize the many negative feelings and emotional states that accompany those codependent (Cierpiałkowska, 1998; Majchrzyk-Mikula, 2006; Woronowicz, 2009).

Broader understanding of interpersonal dependence evolves along with the development of the new addictions, including relationships with partners such as dependent on sex, drugs, gambling, food, internet, shopping (Beattie, 1994; Hemflet, Minirith, Meier, 2004) and may include professional relationship (Mellibruda, 1999; Krwczinska, 2007). The researchers stress that staying in a codependent relationship often means experiencing violence (Walker, 1979, for Rothenberg, 2003, p. 777; Rothenberg, 2003, Ben-Ari, Winstok, Eisikovits, 2003; Mellibruda, 1999; Skłodowski, 2003, Ryś, 2008a). Rich and valuable illustration of the phenomenon of addiction to another person, apart from the scientific literature, can also be found in popular scientific literature or in fiction literature (Hłasko, 2001; Grochola, 2003, 2008; Wesółowska, Wasilewska-Sleeper, 2004; Scibor-Marchocka, 2007, Miller, Cichočka, 2008, Pawlikowska, 2008).

Therefore, it is important to conduct research on the functioning of codependent people, so those who live in a specific destructive relationships; research that will contribute to a greater understanding of the characteristics of this group. Conducting this analysis seems to be further justified by the fact of the evolution of the phenomenon, which covers, apart from alcoholism, many other types of addictions, as well as the evolution of the diversity of the group, which includes wives of alcoholics, parents, siblings, extended family and others staying in a close emotional (even professional) relationship with the codependent person.

## **Theoretical introduction to the survey<sup>1</sup>**

### ***The notion of marriage and marital quality***

Marriage is 1. “a legally recognised and regulated lasting union between a man and a woman, entered into for the purpose of starting a family”; in addition, in the Polish language the same term małżeństwo also refers to 2. “a husband and wife, a married couple, spouses” (as translated from Słownik Współczesnego Języka Polskiego, 1996, p. 495 – Dictionary of Contemporary Polish).

Matrimony is the unity of two different individualities, two unique personalities who decide to spend the rest of their lives together (Ziemska, 1975, p. 55). Psychology describes relations between husband and wife as well as between the spouses and their children and more distant relatives. It emphasises mutual needs, expectations, desires, emotions, temperaments, ways of communicating, parenting models applied to the children (Tokarczyk, 1999, p. 81).

Marriage is a dynamic community which offers a person an opportunity to realise their expectations, satisfy their needs as well as liberating from selfishness and enriching their personality by opening themselves to another person's needs (Ryś, 1999, p. 5).

According to Słownik Języka Polskiego (1988) – “Dictionary of the Polish Language”, quality is a property, a value or a set of attributes which combine to make an item “the” item and not another (ibid., Vol. 1, p. 820). According to Słownik Współczesnego

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<sup>1</sup> The paper discusses the survey conducted as part of the author's master's thesis written at the Institute of Psychology of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw (UKSW), under the supervision of UKSW Prof. Dr hab. Maria Ryś.

Języka Polskiego (1996) – Dictionary of Contemporary Polish, quality is a set of characteristics determining the assessment of a given product (ibid., p. 337).

In other words, high or low marital quality implies marital well-being, a happy, satisfactory marriage or marital success. Internal factors constituting marriage include: mutual love, spouses' personalities, communication and problem-solving skills, mental maturity of partners as well as the choice of the right husband or wife. As regards external factors, those comprise: the financial standing and living standards (Braun-Gałkowska, 1992, p. 20) as well as wives' employment status, the size of the household and community embeddedness (Ryś, 1999, p. 102).

Marital quality is measured in dimensions such as: adjustment, satisfaction, economic well-being, happiness as well as marital integration and communication (Lewis, Spanier, 1979, as cited in: Rostowski, 1987, p. 25). High marital quality influences the stability of marriage (Spanier, Lewis, 1980, as cited in: Ryś, 1994, p. 20).

According to Graham B. Spanier (1980), there are four key determinants of marital success: 1) consensus of the spouses on matrimony; 2) joint participation in family life; 3) marital satisfaction and the need to stay in the relationship; 4. emotional expression of the spouses (as cited in: Cieślak, 1989, pp. 1042–1049).

Other factors vital for satisfactory relationships are also: trust, mutual respect, involvement in the marriage, showing love, support in occupational matters, similar lifestyles, equal marital rights, absence of destructive jealousy, friends' approval of marriage partner as well as the spouses' readiness to listen and effective communication (Sabatelli, Pearce, 1980, as cited in: Nęcki, 1990, from p. 253).

Jan Rostowski (1987) distinguishes three integral macro-components building and cementing marriage. Those are empathy, intimacy and involvement (ibid., p. 75–95). Bogdan Wojciszke (2005, p. 12) adds passion as an essential element of a successful relationship. The above factors constitute marriage, deepen the relationship between spouses, strengthen their self-disclosure, mutual communication and personal growth.

Marital quality is significantly affected by a given person's self-esteem. If a person is convinced of their worthlessness and basically not being worth loving, they will be prone to interpret the partner's unclear behaviour as a sign of lovelessness (Brockner, 1983; as cited in: Wojciszke, 2005, p. 117).

According to surveys identical for both sexes, attachment patterns developed in early childhood may continue also in later stages in life and have an effect on marital quality<sup>2</sup> (Hazan, Shaver, 1987; as cited in: Holmes, 2007, p. 129).

To recapitulate, the formation of a successful relationship with a partner in adult life originates in the process of developing attachment patterns in a child in early periods of life.

### **Interpersonal dependency**

The phenomenon – where the whole family life concentrates on the needs and behaviour of one addicted person, and the lives of individual family members are affected by compulsory and periodical use by that person of a substance or engaging in a destructive

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<sup>2</sup> The following attachment styles are distinguished: The *secure style* (56% of those surveyed) characterises persons who find it easy to get close to others and have no difficulty forming close, intimate relations with the partner. They are not excessively worried about being abandoned. The *anxious-ambivalent style* (19% of those surveyed) characterises persons who expect others to be closer to them than they in fact are. They often worry about being abandoned. They do not fully believe in their partners' honest intentions. They wish to completely merge with the loved person. The *avoidant style* (25% of those surveyed) concerns persons who frequently feel uncomfortable being close to others. They become nervous then. They find it difficult to entirely trust others. Their partners often want them to be more intimate and disclosed (Bowlby, 1969; as cited in: Holmes, 2007, p. 129; cf. also Mikulincer, Nachson, 1991; Feeney, Noller, 1990; as cited in: Wojciszke, 2005, p. 90).

process – is referred to as codependency or, in other words, interpersonal dependency, and concerns dysfunctional dependency on another person (cf. Sztander, 2006a, p. 7; Zaworska-Nikoniuk, 2000, p. 382).

The dependency on another person means placing one's self-esteem in another individual's opinions and behaviour. A codependent person desires another person's approval, at the expense of their own needs. Their thoughts, feelings, judgements, decisions made and the system of beliefs are focused on another person's moods and behaviour (Zubrzycka-Nowak, 2008).

Control is central to the lives of codependent persons. In an interpersonal relationship merging with another person results in the limitation or loss of one's identity through involvement in another person's identity and issues (Hemflet, Minirth, Meier, 2004, p. 12).

Interpersonal dependency understood as a condition includes symptoms such as: "denial; protectiveness, pity/concern about the drinker; embarrassment; avoiding drinking occasions; shift in relationships; guilt; obsession, continual worry; fear; lying; false hope, disappointment; euphoria; confusion; sex problems; anger; lethargy; hopelessness, self-pity, remorse and despair" (Woititz, 1986, p. 30).

In an addictive relationship there is responsibility conversion, which means that the addicted person holds the partner responsible for their emotional states, at the same time assuming full responsibility for the partner's thoughts, feelings and reactions (Wobiz, 2001, p. 20).

Interpersonal dependency understood as a form of adjustment to a chronically destructive dyad is a conscious continuation of a relationship with an addict (Mellibruda, 1999, p. 128). It is determined by a very stressful situation, childhood experiences and overall changes in psychological patterns of an individual (Sobolewska, Mellibruda, 1997, p. 24).

Interpersonal dependency presented as a personality disorder approach is treated as a set of characteristics developed in a dysfunctional family. A codependent person has a personality predisposed to initiate relationships which are emotionally detrimental to them. The notion of a dysfunctional family concerns families with any form of neglect of emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs (Forward, 1992, pp. 28–137).

Codependency is a defectively developed life attitude which impairs personal development of an individual, the ability to make rational choices and exercise control over one's life (Mellody, 2008).

Codependency as a personality disorder is not only and not so much a result of living in close contact with an addict, but a certain type of an immature personality, a certain inclination towards the wrong ways of reacting to problematic life situations and towards disordered behaviours of others (Dziewiecki, 2000, p. 109).

Codependency stems from a distorted family system, a pattern of rigid personality traits embedded in internalised shame. Shame results from neglect. It concerns persons living in dysfunctional systems. It is the outcome of absence of own identity. It represents disappearance of one's own internal reality and dependency on external reality. It indicates a crisis of "self". It appears in a situation where a person places their identity outside them, e.g. in another person. With a very low self-esteem, a codependent person goes beyond their limits in their actions for others. They excessively seek other people's love and approval. They sometimes tend to suffer a career burn-out (Bradshaw, 1994, p. 207).

In the case of emotional relationships, the addictive factor, which is placed in addicted persons rather than substances, assumes the form of uncontrollable need to initiate and maintain a relationship with a particular person. There are four distinguishing features of dependency: 1) compulsiveness (compulsion to stay in the relationship, regardless of the suffering involved); 2) fear (of breaking the relationship); 3) abstinence symptoms (breaking of the relationship may be followed by pain, e.g. in the chest, stomach and abdominal area,

tears, sleep disorders as well as the proneness to irritation, depression, the feeling of purposelessness, the conviction that it is necessary to go back to the substance, i.e. that person as the only remedy); 4) the feeling of liberation and triumph appearing after the initial period of suffering (Halpern, 2009, p. 16).

To recapitulate, the occurrence of dependency on another person is determined by staying in an emotionally strong and destructive relationship. The development of interpersonal dependency is embedded in a dysfunctional family, functioning as a system of pathological interactions. A system where one addicted individual forms the core and determines the directions for the whole family. The feeling, thinking and acting by all family members depends on that individual's behaviours and moods.

Based on the literature gathered and the author's own experience in working with families as a sociotherapist, a diagram was developed (*Fig. 1*) to illustrate the phenomenon of interpersonal dependency. Read from the centre of the circle to its external circles, interpersonal dependency derives from personality disorders resulting from upbringing in a dysfunctional family or represents a reaction to permanent stress of living with an addicted partner or a specific condition where the addictive substance is another person. Codependency is usually rooted in improperly developed family relationships in the family of origin. Three central determinants form the core of interpersonal dependency. They influence the quality and type of feelings, thoughts and behaviour of the codependent person. Feelings, thoughts and behaviour represent the middle and interrelated circles. The feelings of codependent persons tend to be frozen, which means that they are not identified, named or expressed. Such frozen feelings protect against internal suffering, but at the same time completely block contact with one's own emotions, including positive experiences. Constraining anger on a regular basis then thwarts effective defence. Low self-esteem, the feeling of having no influence on the environment, a depressed mood and emotional lability are all components of disturbed emotionality.

Simultaneously, cognitive disorders are reflected in pejorative thinking and perception. Such disorders include: a negative image of oneself, of the world, time and environment as well as an ambivalent attitude to the partner and denial of facts in favour of an illusory status quo. Behaviours mostly represent a dichotomy in reactions towards the partner and others which are inadequate to the situation. Blackmail, arguments and threats show intensified helplessness with regard to the partner's addiction. The continuation of a toxic relationship, despite one's own suffering, represents dramatic support for the partner's addiction and false hope for recovery without treatment. An attitude characterised by the lack of assertiveness, servility with occasional outbursts of aggression, self-destruction, passivity, repeating inefficient patterns as well as enduring one's role as a victim and tolerance of pathology (e.g. tolerance of violence) is generally presented in relations with the loved person and the environment. The inadequacy of reactions towards the partner also includes increased control over their behaviour, an illusion of control over the whole situation as well as excessive sympathy and pity for them.

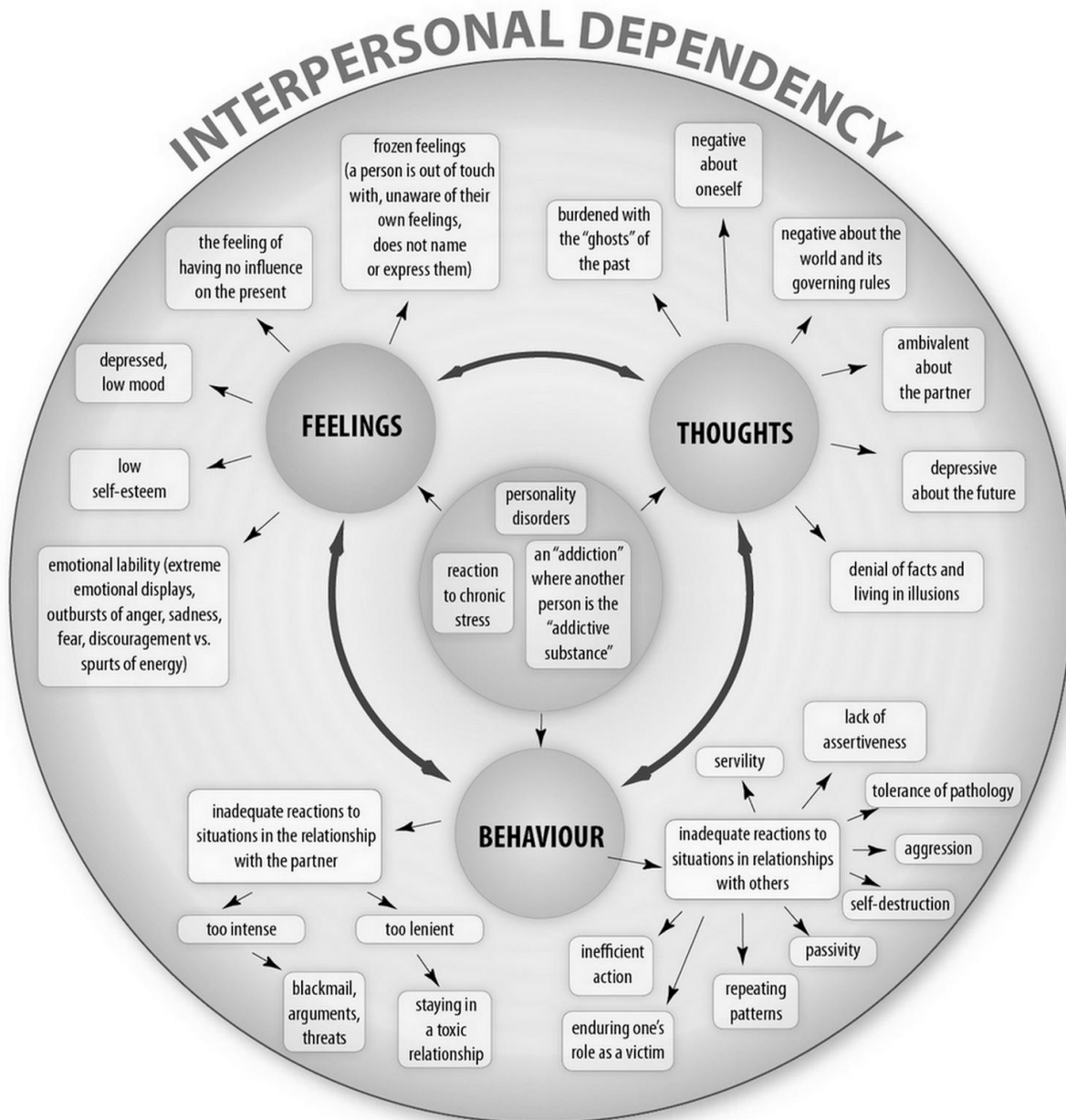


Figura. 1. Diagram illustrating interpersonal dependency  
Own study by: Maria Chmielewska

**Methodology of own survey**

***Subject of study and hypotheses posited***

The master’s thesis was aimed at examining the relationship between marital quality and interpersonal dependency. With a view to exploring whether the two categories are related, the following main hypothesis was put forward:

H: Marital quality and the degree of interpersonal dependency are in inverse proportion, i.e. the higher marital quality, the lower the degree of interpersonal dependency.

Detailed hypotheses were also proposed as follows:

H1: Marital quality and self-esteem are in direct proportion. Thus, the more proper self-esteem, the higher marital quality.

H2: Belief in being loved and marital quality are in direct proportion. The more a person believes in being loved, the higher marital quality.

H3: Exercising control over the spouse and marital quality are in inverse proportion. The more a person controls the spouse, the lower the quality of their marriage.

Furthermore, this paper also puts research questions concerning the differences between men and women as well as the relationships between variables such as: the spouses' age; educational attainment level; place of residence; financial and economic situation; duration of their marriage, number of children and the degree of interpersonal dependency and marital quality.

### **Description of those surveyed**

A total of 236 adults, i.e. 118 married couples, participated in a research programme supervised by UKSW Prof. Dr hab. Maria Ryś and conducted by students and PhD students at the Institute of Psychology of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw. Among the respondents in question, for the purposes of this paper, 72 persons meeting initial assumptions were selected at random, thus making 36 marriages: 36W and 36M.

The age of those surveyed ranged between 38 and 80 years, with the mean age of  $M = 49.1$  years (standard deviation  $SD = 6.6$  years) The duration of marriage among those surveyed ranged from 8 to 38 years, with the mean duration of  $M = 23.6$  years (standard deviation  $SD = 5.6$  years)

University-educated persons constituted the largest group of respondents, i.e. 42%, with 4% declaring not having completed university education. They were followed by persons with secondary and vocational education (29% and nearly one-fifth respectively). The respondents with primary education represented 4%. Those who refused to indicate their educational attainment levels accounted for 6% of the respondents.

The survey covered married couples with a varying number of children. The most numerous groups were those with three and two children (39% and 31% respectively). Families with one child constituted 22%. A mere 4% declared having four children.

The majority of the respondents lived in cities (55%). A further 25% were those from small towns. Rural residents accounted for 14%, whereas 6% of the surveyed families lived in bigger towns.

In terms of economic conditions, the largest group of married couples described their economic and financial situation as good (44%). Those were followed by persons who assessed the economic conditions of their families to be average (accounting for 25%). 24% of the families indicated their economic and financial standing as very good. The least numerous group (7%) represented those who were negative about their living conditions.

### **Description of the research methodology**

#### ***Interpersonal Dependency Scale***

The Interpersonal Dependency Scale (Skala Uzależnienia Interpersonalnego – SUIT) by Maria Ryś (2008b) serves to study those who married an addict or whose spouse developed an addiction to a substance during marriage. It enables to survey persons from dysfunctional families as well as those who in relations with others are primarily oriented towards satisfying the needs of their loved adults and assume responsibility for them (ibid., pp. 4–5).

The method was constructed on the basis of 42 statements corresponding to 5 particular scales, i.e. 1) Low self-esteem; 2) Lack of respect for one's own rights; 3) Lack of



belief in being loved; 4) Assuming responsibility for the spouse's feelings and actions; 5) Control over others (*ibid.*, p. 10).

Particular scales were also analysed. The Cronbach alpha coefficients were computed: 1 – 0.704; 2 – 0.696; 3 – 0.746; 4 – 0.759; 5 – 0.701 (*ibid.*, p. 5).

### **Modified Marital Quality Scale**

The tool in question consists of two basic parts. One refers to assessments of real marital quality by the surveyed married couples. The other reflects their ideal images of marriage. The Pearson's  $r$  coefficient of the Scale is 0.78 (Ryś, 2005, p. 4).

The Scale contains 40 statements repeated in both parts. The statements are constructed on the basis of multidimensional analysis of marital quality (*ibid.*, pp. 3–4).

Raw data from each statement in the first part of the Scale are deducted from raw points obtained in the corresponding statements in the second part of the survey. The resulting difference determines the level of satisfaction with marital quality as perceived by spouses (with six satisfaction levels distinguished): the narrowest difference (scores of 0 to 20 points) indicates a very high level of satisfaction, whereas the greatest difference (over 80 points) implies the lack of marital satisfaction (*ibid.*, p. 9).

### **Survey of Married Couples**

The Survey of Married Couples was developed at the Institute of Psychology of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw by a team of students and PhD students supervised by UKSW Prof. Dr hab. Maria Ryś. The survey was designed for the purposes of a research project on spouses' and their children's attitudes to important issues of modern life.

The questions asked in the survey concern the families of respondents as well as their families of origin. The survey is anonymous. The information gathered includes sex, age, level of educational attainment, place of residence, number of children and type of occupation. The tool in question allows to describe relations between the spouses, identify possible family issues, determine attitudes to the children as well as subjectively perceived marital satisfaction.

### **Analysis of survey findings**

In the first part of statistical analysis, based on Student's  $t$ -test of significance, men and women were compared in terms of: 1) marital satisfaction; real assessment of marital quality; ideal image of marriage (Marital Quality Scale), and: 2) low self-esteem; lack of respect for one's own rights; lack of belief in being loved; assuming responsibility for the partner; control over others (Interpersonal Dependency Scale).

In the second part the correlation between the scales of main tools and demographic and socio-economic variables was analysed.

Finally, the correlation between the variables on the Interpersonal Dependency Scale and those on the Marital Quality Scale was examined. To this end, Pearson's  $r$  coefficient was applied (*Table 1*).

In order to verify the main hypothesis put forward in this paper as well as the detailed hypotheses and certain research questions on the correlation between demographic and socio-economic variables such as: spouses' age, duration of their marriage and number of children, and interpersonal dependency and marital quality, Pearson's  $r$  coefficient was used to calculate correlations between the variables in both of the surveyed groups together. The

choice of the coefficient in question is based on the assumption that the variables are measured on an interval scale, their dependence is linear and that the distributions are normal.

With the aim of finding answers to certain research questions concerning the correlation between socio-economic variables such as: spouses' educational attainment levels, place of residence and assessments of economic conditions and interpersonal dependency and marital quality, Spearman's rho correlation coefficients were computed. That non-parametric coefficient was chosen on account of the variables analysed, measured on ordinal and nominal scales.

### ***Comparison of the groups of men and women***

As regards assessments of marriage by sex, descriptive statistics showed no significant differences between men and women in terms of marital satisfaction, assessment of real marital quality and the ideal image of marriage.

According to Student's t-test of the level of interpersonal dependency by sex, there were no statistically significant differences between men and women on particular interpersonal dependency scales.

### ***Demographic and socio-economic variables***

Analyses of Pearson's  $r$  correlation coefficients indicated no statistically significant dependence between the age of those surveyed and the marital quality and interpersonal dependency scales.

Analyses of Spearman's rho correlation coefficients showed no statistically significant dependence between the level of educational attainment, the place of residence and assessments of economic conditions of the surveyed persons and the variables of both Scales.

At the same time, analyses of Pearson's  $r$  correlation coefficients indicated a statistically significant dependence between the duration of marriage and assuming responsibility for the spouse's feelings and actions. It means that the longer the persons are married, the more inclined they are to assume responsibility for their spouses' feelings and actions.

Analyses of Pearson's  $r$  correlation coefficients showed a statistically significant correlation between the number of children and the real assessment of marital quality (directly proportional relationship) and the ideal image of marriage (inversely proportional relationship). It means that the higher the number of children, the better the assessments of marital quality, but at the same time an increased number of children results in a deteriorated ideal image of marriage.

Analyses of Pearson's  $r$  correlation coefficients indicated statistically significant relationships between the level of marital satisfaction and the assessment of real marital quality and the lack of belief in being loved. It means that the higher the level of marital satisfaction, the more favourable the assessments of marital quality and the greater the belief in being loved. In addition, correlation analyses also showed a statistically significant relationship between the assessment of marital quality and the lack of belief in being loved. It means that the better the respondents' assessments of marital quality, the greater was their belief in being loved.

## Interrelations

Table 1. Pearson's r coefficients of correlation between the Marital Quality Scale variables and the Interpersonal Dependency Scale variables

Variable	Marital satisfaction	Assessment of real marital quality	Ideal image of marriage	Low self-esteem	Lack of respect for one's own rights	Lack of belief in being loved	Assuming responsibility for the spouse's feelings and actions	Control over others
Marital satisfaction	-	<b>0.70*</b>	0.02	0.03	0.07	<b>-0.31*</b>	0.07	0.09
Assessment of real marital quality	<b>0.70*</b>	-	0.11	-0.03	0.00	<b>-0.37*</b>	0.12	0.11
Ideal image of marriage	0.02	0.11	-	-0.10	-0.16	-0.21	-0.10	<b>-0.24*</b>
Low self-esteem	0.03	-0.03	-0.10	-	<b>0.72*</b>	<b>0.54*</b>	<b>0.73*</b>	<b>0.64*</b>
Lack of respect for one's own rights	0.07	0.00	-0.16	<b>0.72*</b>	-	<b>0.50*</b>	<b>0.42*</b>	<b>0.45*</b>
Lack of belief in being loved	<b>-0.31*</b>	<b>-0.37*</b>	-0.21	<b>0.54*</b>	<b>0.50*</b>	-	<b>0.38*</b>	<b>0.42*</b>
Assuming responsibility for the spouse's feelings and actions	0.07	0.12	-0.10	<b>0.73*</b>	<b>0.42*</b>	<b>0.38*</b>	-	<b>0.59*</b>
Control over others	0.09	0.11	<b>-0.24*</b>	<b>0.64*</b>	<b>0.45*</b>	<b>0.42*</b>	<b>0.59*</b>	-

Results: \*  $p < 0.05$ ; otherwise  $p > 0.05$

The tests also indicated a statistically significant correlation between the ideal image of marriage and control over others. It means that if those surveyed had higher results on the ideal image of marriage scale, they exercised lesser control over others at the same time. Furthermore, correlation analyses proved the existence of positive correlations between particular scales on the Interpersonal Dependency Scale, which means that an increase in the level of one variable (a particular scale) is accompanied by a rise in the level of another variable (a different scale).

## Psychological analysis and interpretation of the obtained results. Summary

The survey presented in this paper partly proved the main hypothesis (H), therefore it is possible to assume that there is an inversely proportional relationship between marital quality and the degree of interpersonal dependency. It means that the higher marital quality, the lower the degree of interpersonal dependency.

The substantiation of two auxiliary hypotheses, H2 and H3, speaks for the corroboration of the main hypothesis.

H2 – there is a directly proportional relationship between the belief in being loved and marital quality. The stronger a person's belief in being loved, the higher marital quality is;

H3 – there is an inversely proportional relationship between exercising control over the spouse and marital quality. The more a person controls their spouse, the lower the marital quality is

The survey in question demonstrated that belief in being loved and marital quality are in direct proportion. Which means that the stronger a person's belief in being loved, the higher marital quality is (H2). Thus, there is a negative correlation between marital satisfaction from the Marital Quality Scale and the "Lack of belief in being loved" sub-scale on the Interpersonal Dependency Scale. It means that the more those surveyed believed in being loved, the greater their marital satisfaction was.

There is also a negative correlation between the assessment of real marital quality from the Marital Quality Scale and the "Lack of belief in being loved" sub-scale on the Interpersonal Dependency Scale. It means that the more the respondents believed in being loved, the more favourable their real assessments of marital quality were. Thus, one may assume that the survey in question showed statistically significant correlations corroborating the main hypothesis based on the detailed hypothesis H2 having been verified.

It seems, therefore, that confidence in the sense of love from the nearest person is an essential element of the quality of the marriage. When the need to be loved is satisfied by the conviction of being needed or necessary in the life of a spouse, love merges with pity and sacrificing for the good of the relationship. In light of these studies such a situation makes the relationship far from satisfaction. This study in terms of sense of being loved, and so in the wider dimension of conjugal love are confirmed in a number of both domestic and foreign scientific analysis (see eg Brichler *et al.*, 1975, Gottman, 1979; Levinger, 1964, for: Wojciszke, 2005, p. 149; Earth, 1975, Braun-Gakowska, 1985, 1992, 2008, Rostowski, 1986, 1987; Janicka Niebrzydowski, 1994; Trawińska, 1997, Ryś, 1999, 2008; Wojciszke, 2005, Zarembowie, 2007; Plopa, 2008; Pulikowski, 2008). Researchers agree that major importance for the marital quality is in mutual love of the spouses. Jan Rostowski (1986) points out that love is an essential dimension of the selected compound and a guarantee of authentic conjugal happiness.

The survey in question also confirmed the auxiliary hypothesis H3, demonstrating the existence of an inversely proportional relationship between exercising control over the spouse and marital quality, which means that the more a person controls their spouse, the lower the marital quality is. It was proven by a negative correlation between the ideal image of marriage from the Marital Quality Scale and the "Control over others" sub-scale from the Interpersonal Dependency Scale. This relationship means that an increase in the ideal image of marriage is accompanied by diminished control over the spouse, thus it can be assumed that high marital quality is correlated with a low degree of control.

Increased control of a loved one is a compensation for sense of insecurity in marriage (Ryś, 2005, p. 10). An overly controlling person tries to know about his or her partner as much details as possible, including even those non-significant, and in case of even a brief separation, feels anxiety, tension and nervousness. Such a person is somewhat obsessed with his or her partner. This causes many misunderstandings and quarrels in a relationship, and thus reduces the quality of the marriage. In the light of this study, it therefore appears that the quality of a marriage is strengthened by the attitude of trusting in the partner. What is more, the attitude is free from excessive control.

According to the results of the validation studies of both Scales used in the present work, studies have also shown the existence of a strong, significant statistical correlation between all subscales within Interpersonal Dependency Scale as well as between satisfaction with marriage and its realistic assessment in Marital Quality Scale.

Contrary to expectations, the specific hypothesis H1 did not confirm – there is a directly proportional correlation between self-esteem and marital quality, which means that the more proper sense of self-esteem, the higher the quality of marriage.

The psychological literature shows the close correlation between positive self-esteem and high marital quality (Brockner, 1983; for: Wojciszke, 2005; Satir, 2000). No confirmation

of the assumed hypothesis may be due to too small number of research groups. There may also be too much uniformity in the research group. This research, therefore, require a closer analysis.

This study also gave answers to a number of research questions.

The literature repeatedly emphasizes gender differences (see Wisłocka, 1985; Sujak, 1988; Zienkiewicz, 1988; Ryś, 1999; Eldredge, 2005; Wojciszke, 2005; Zarembowie, 2007; Pulikowski, 2008). Michalina Wisłocka (1985) points to differences in the experience of sexuality. Jan Rostowski (1986) demonstrates the volatility dynamics of sexual relations along with the length of marriage as far as the groups of wives and husbands are concerned. Like other authors, Maria Ryś (1999) draws attention to the existence of many psychological differences between men and women.

Having taken these data into consideration, would then be expected significant differences between spouses in their level of interpersonal dependency and assessing the marital quality. Comparative analysis of a group of men and women carried out in this study showed no statistically significant gender differences as for examined variables. These results can be explained by the small sample size and too much uniformity of the research group.

The survey showed no differences between sexes in interpersonal dependency or marital quality. Neither did it demonstrate that women were more inclined to control the spouse than men. It is somewhat confirmed in survey findings presented in the literature (Walker, 1979, as cited in: Rothenberg, 2003, p. 777; Rothenberg, 2003; Ben-Ari, Winstok, Eisikovits, 2003; Mellibruda, 1999; Ryś, 2008a), with corroborated hypotheses that strong control exercised by men over their wives often takes the form of domestic violence.

In these studies, there was no correlation between respect for one's rights and taking over responsibility for the feelings and actions of the spouse and the marital quality.

The correlation analysis of demographic and socio-economic factors such as age of the spouses, their level of education, place of residence and the material conditions, the time length of marriage and number of children as well as the level of interpersonal dependency showed statistically significant correlation between the length of marriage and taking over responsibility for the feelings and actions of spouse. This means that the longer the relationship, the more responsibility for the feelings of the partner is taken. Probably it has to do with mutual, various obligations, such as responsibility towards children and extended family, or financial obligations. One partner's high irresponsibility is burden to the family, because the other spouse is trying to compensate for the losses incurred. "Taking responsibility for the partner's feelings and actions" is one of the subscales of Interpersonal Dependency Scale. If it correlates with the length of marriage, it can mean that the length of the relationship, to some extent, positively correlates with interpersonal dependency, deepening its level and the emotional involvement of the spouses in a destructive relationship. This result confirms the research of Jerzy Mellibruda and Hanna Szczepańska (1996), who demonstrated that a sense of inability to farewell with a partner (which is a sign of codependency) is paradoxically strengthened by the duration of the relationship and the subsequent destructive events caused by the partner's addiction and by repeated attempts to leave the partner (Mellibruda, 1999, p. 81).

The correlation analysis of demographic and socio-economic factors such as age of the spouses, their level of education, place of residence and the material conditions, the time length of marriage and number of children and the marital quality two statistically significant correlation have been demonstrated.

First, it demonstrated a positive, statistically significant correlation between the number of children and a realistic assessment of the marital quality. This means that the more children, the higher the marital quality according to realistic assessment of the spouses, in

other words, if the spouses have more children, they assess their relationship more realistically.

Secondly, it also showed a negative, statistically significant correlation between the number of children brought up and a ideal image of the relationship. This means that a greater number of children in marriage at the same time lowers the image of the perfect couple.

In conclusion, this study has shown that there are differences between the real assessment of the marital quality and the ideal image of the relationship in the perception of the spouses in relation to the number of children raised. Namely, the people have more children, the more realistically assess the quality of their relationship, but on the other hand, the increase in the number of children causes a decrease in the perfect image of the relationship. Therefore, studies show that there is a correlation between the number of children and the marital quality.

There are studies that indicate that the level of satisfaction with the marriage is to a small extent dependent on coping with external tasks, such as raising children or family financial security. It is crucial to maintain internal cohesion while in a relationship as well as positive, mutually supportive actions and to avoid negative behaviors and feelings, that is to maintain a satisfactory level of intimacy (Brichler *et al.*, 1975; Gottman, 1979; Levinger, 1964; for: Wojciszke, 2005, p. 149). Correlation analysis performed in this paper partially confirms the above-mentioned studies, showing no correlation between economic status of marriages, place of their residence and the marital quality. However, it has shown the correlation between the number of children and the marital quality. No correlation may be explained by the fact that the research has been carried out mainly in the city (the city of Warsaw) and the most common assessment of the material conditions in the "good" category. Therefore, these correlations require a more complex and accurate analysis based on a more differential sample.

These studies are also consistent with the psychological literature, in which a group of studies shows no statistically significant correlation between age or level of education of the spouses and the quality of their marriage. It should be noted, however, that the literature points to the pluralism of the results of the study for the homogamy of the spouses and the quality of their relationship. There are studies that show direct correlation between the multi-dimensional similarity between spouses (eg, in terms of education, age, social and physical attractiveness of the spouses) and their perceived marital satisfaction (cf, eg: Levinger, 1979; Rostowski, 1987; Garrison, Anderson, Reed, 1968, for: Ryś, 1999, p. 103). Other studies have put the emphasis on the connection between the marital quality and the spouses' activity for its good, showing no statistically significant correlation between the quality of the relationship and intellectual differences of the spouses (eg, education) (see eg Braun-Gałkowska, 1985, Nias, 1979, for: Wojciszke, 2005; Laskowski, 1987; Berscheid, Walster, 1978; Romer, Bergson, 1979, Walster, Aronson, Abrahams, Rottmann, 1971, for: Ryś, 1999, p. 102; Plopa, 2008).

The issue of the quality of a relationship is a vast subject, and the research contained in this paper does not exhaust the range. Interpersonal dependency is a present and serious mental problem of many people involved in a destructive relationship with a partner. It is therefore worthwhile to continue and deepen the study of the psychology of human relationships, including marital quality. Valuable and interesting could be the research on the quality and the intimacy of a marriage and a sense of coherence and interpersonal dependency, as well as any research aimed to find a new and effective therapeutic methods used in working with interpersonally dependent people.

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