

## Locus of Control, Interpersonal Trust, and Assertive Behavior Among Newlyweds

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This study related two cognitive personality characteristics—locus of control and interpersonal trust—to assertive behavior in a sample of recently married couples. Assertive behavior was measured by the Inventory of Marital Conflicts, an observational procedure in which couples resolve disagreements about hypothetical marital problems. Hypotheses were formulated in terms of individual locus of control as well as two combinations of locus of control and interpersonal trust—internal – low trust and external – high trust. Results showed that internal husbands were more assertive than external husbands in the marital conflict situation, that external – high trust husbands were least assertive, and that internal – low trust wives were highly assertive. These findings are interpreted in light of previous locus-of-control and trust research, as well as in terms of unconventional marital role behavior.

Contemporary research on the marital relationship has focused on the cultural and situational determinants of spouses' attitudes and behavior. Sociologists have emphasized the influence of marital role prescriptions (e.g., Stryker, 1964), whereas psychologists have studied the processes by which spouses shape each other's behavior through reciprocal rewards and punishments (e.g., Weiss & Margolin, 1977).

In contrast to these major interest areas in marital studies, the personality or individual differences dimension of marriage has received relatively little attention in recent years. Historically, this area was once highly popular with researchers. As reviewed by Tharp (1963) and Barry (1970), two research traditions once dominated personality and marriage studies. The first tradition was concerned with the personality correlates of marital "adjustment." From the 1930s through the 1950s, studies consistently found that neurotic traits in individual spouses

(especially husbands) were associated with greater marital instability and lower levels of self-reported marital adjustment (Burgess & Cottrell, 1939; Burchinal, Hawkes, & Gardner, 1957; Terman, 1938).

The second personality and marriage research tradition was concerned with whether spouses tend to be similar or complementary in personality characteristics. Although Winch's (1958) research on complementary needs in mate selection stirred considerable controversy, the bulk of the research has supported the similarity hypothesis for married couples (Tharp, 1963). Clore and Byrne (1977) summarized a review of this issue with the following conclusion: "Marriages, and stable marriages in particular, are composed of people with similar personalities, attitudes, and other characteristics" (p. 548).

In recent years, research on the personality aspects of marriage has nearly come to a standstill. At least two problems with past research in this area may help to explain this decline in interest. First, the major findings added little to the common sense notions that "likes marry likes" and that unhappy individuals are apt to have unhappy marriages. Sec-

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ond, on a methodological level, these studies suffered from a reliance on global, atheoretical personality traits as independent variables (e.g., neuroticism and maladjustment) and on self-reports of overall marital adjustment as criterion variables. In the past decade, each of these categories of variables has become the object of considerable scholarly criticism. The traditional trait approach has been attacked by personality psychologists like Walter Mischel (1968, 1973) on the grounds that global trait ascriptions ignore the situational constraints on behavior. In addition, marriage researchers have criticized marital adjustment research on both conceptual and methodological bases, arguing that the construct is ill defined and value laden and that marital adjustment inventories have been psychometrically weak (Laws, 1971; Ryder, 1967; Spanier, 1972; Spanier and Cole, 1976). Perhaps for these reasons, related to the turmoil in both personality psychology and marital studies, scholars have turned to other areas of interest.

The present study attempts to break new ground in personality and marriage research through two innovations: first, the use of cognitive personality constructs as opposed to traditional trait dimensions, and second, a focus on an interaction dimension of marriage—assertive behavior. As far as can be determined, no previous study has found a personality correlate of observed marital interaction.

Specifically, this study examines the relationship between the locus of control orientations of individual spouses and their assertive behavior in a marital disagreement situation. Spouses' interpersonal trust expectancies are used as a moderator personality dimension between locus of control and marital assertiveness.

There is no general agreement on the meaning of assertiveness. After examining the various usages found in the psychological literature, Rich and Schroeder (1976) defined assertive behavior in the general sense as "skills that (a) are concerned with seeking, maintaining, and enhancing reinforcement and (b) occur in interpersonal situations involving the risk of reinforcement loss or the

possibility of punishment" (p. 1083). In a review of the related marriage research, Olson and Cromwell (1975) have urged that researchers adopt a standard definition of assertive behavior in marriage, namely, "attempts to change the behavior of the (spouse)" (p. 6). Combining elements of these two definitions, the present study conceptualizes assertive behaviors in marriage as attempts to modify the partner's behavior in order to maintain or enhance one's interests during a marital conflict. This definition is deliberately broad and does not distinguish assertive behavior from aggressive behavior. The assertiveness construct is operationalized in this study primarily through the coding of spouses' influence-attempt behavior during a contrived marital disagreement situation.

As defined and operationalized by Rotter (1966), locus of control is a generalized expectancy that one's outcomes are contingent more on one's own efforts or stable personality characteristics (internal) or more on outside forces such as luck, fate, or powerful others (external). Interpersonal trust as defined by Rotter (1967) is a generalized expectancy that other persons can be relied upon to live up to their verbal promises.

Although locus of control has been studied only rarely in the context of ongoing relationships, a considerable body of research using college student groups has found that internals tend to be less malleable to social influence than externals, as well as more persuasive and assertive (see reviews by Phares, 1976, and Strickland, 1977). These findings are consistent with the proposition that internals, believing more strongly that they can control their outcomes, are more likely to develop and use the social skills necessary to manipulate their environment. Extending this line of reasoning to the marital relationship, one can speculate that married individuals' locus of control orientations may be associated with assertive and yielding behavior vis-à-vis their marriage partner. Presumably, internality would be positively associated with assertiveness. According to Rotter's theory (Rotter, 1975), however, generalized locus-of-control expectancies would be only moderately predictive of behavior in a specific,

ongoing behavioral context such as marriage. Rotter believes that the more familiar the situation, the less powerful the influence of generalized expectancies.

To enhance the predictive value of locus of control in the study of assertive behavior in marriage, interpersonal trust was used as a moderating personality characteristic. In other words, this study assumed that the relationship between locus of control and assertive behavior would be mediated by the individual's interpersonal trust expectancies. This strategy was adopted for the following reasons:

1. Interpersonal trust itself has implications for understanding the marital relationship. Evidence presented by Rotter (Note 1) suggests that low trust individuals are more suspicious and behave more competitively than do high trust individuals. High trust persons, in contrast, are characterized in some studies as pleasant and conventional.

2. Previous research has found combinations of locus of control and interpersonal trust to be better predictors of certain criterion behaviors than is locus of control alone. In particular, Hochreich (1974, 1975) has distinguished theoretically and empirically between two types of external males based on their trust scores. External-low trust persons ("defensive externals") have been found to behave much like internals in achievement situations; however, they tend to project blame for failure onto the environment. External-high trust individuals ("congruent externals"), on the other hand, were found to behave in a relatively passive, noncompetitive fashion consistent with theoretical assumptions about externality. This distinction has been found only in males.

3. Finally, in research reviewed by Seeman (1976), sociologists and political scientists have distinguished fruitfully between variations of trust and control expectations. One prominent hypothesis from this research tradition holds that internal control expectancies in the political area, when combined with low trust in government institutions, are associated with greater political activism.

In sum, two combinations of locus of control and interpersonal trust seem to have

special importance for assertive behavior in marriage. If internals are generally more assertive than externals, then the low trusting or suspicious internal should be especially likely to protect his or her self-interest in an interpersonal conflict. Conversely, the least assertive behavior should characterize the generally unassertive external who also has a high degree of confidence in the honest intentions of other persons.

Based on the foregoing review, this study hypothesizes that individual spouses' locus-of-control orientations, with interpersonal trust as a moderating personality dimension, will be associated with levels of assertive behavior by that spouse in marital conflict situations. Specifically, it is hypothesized: (a) that internality will be associated with greater assertiveness, (b) that the combination of internality and low trust will be associated with the highest levels of assertive behavior, and (c) that the combination of externality and high trust will be associated (at least in husbands) with the lowest levels of assertive behavior.

## Method

### *Subjects*

Eighty-six recently married couples were recruited by mail from marriage license records of first marriages. All had been married less than one year (average 6.4 months), and they may be characterized as a white, college-educated, middle-class group. None had children. The sample was part of a larger pool of recently married couples generated by the Couples Research Project at the University of Connecticut.

### *Procedure*

Couples recruited in the first phase of data gathering went through a two-session procedure in a university setting. During the initial session, couples wrote essays about their relationship, then completed an omnibus questionnaire that included two instruments used in this study. Couples were then invited back for a second session of testing. Although virtually every couple agreed to return, in practice only about half did so. During the second session, couples were administered the locus-of-control and interpersonal trust scales as well as the marital interaction measure. The *n* for this first group of couples was 28.

Couples recruited in the second phase were administered all the instruments (except the essays) consecutively in one session. The *n* for Phase 2 was 58. A comparison between the Phase 1 and Phase 2 groups revealed no differences in locus of control, interpersonal trust, or demographic variables (except that Phase 2 wives were more likely to have completed college). The two groups were combined for data analysis.

### *Instrumentation*

1. *Rotter's Internal-External Locus of Control (I-E) Scale* was used to measure locus of control expectancies. A subset of items from Rotter's scale similar to Mirels' (1970) Personal Control Factor was derived through factor analysis, but it yielded no improvement in terms of relating to the marital variables. Hence, only the whole scale score was retained. The I-E scale contains 29 items in a forced-choice format, including 6 filler items. A higher score indicates a more external orientation.

2. *Rotter's Interpersonal Trust Scale* (Rotter, 1967) was used to measure interpersonal trust expectancies. The scale consists of 25 Likert-type items plus fillers. A higher score indicates a more trusting orientation.

3. *The Inventory of Marital Conflicts (IMC)*, a laboratory interaction procedure, was used to provide both a process measure and outcome measure of assertive behavior (Olson & Ryder, 1970). The IMC poses a nonthreatening disagreement situation in which spouses typically try to influence each other's behavior. The procedure presents couples with 18 vignettes in which married couples are involved in typical marital disagreement situations (over money, sex, household chores, etc.). Each spouse individually reads the vignettes and answers two main questions about each conflict situation: (a) Who is primarily responsible for the problem? and (b) should a proposal for resolving the conflict be accepted or rejected? (After the partners completed the individual part of the IMC procedure, they filled out the I-E and interpersonal trust questionnaires, which took about 20 minutes.) Finally, the partners are brought together and asked to discuss each conflict situation and reach a consensus on two questions: (a) Who is primarily responsible for the problem? and (b) which of two mutually exclusive solutions is best? This discussion is audiotape-recorded with no experimenter present in the room.

Disagreement is built into the IMC procedure rather than being left to chance. For 12 of the 18 vignettes, the partners are given somewhat different versions of the conflict situation. The husband's version slants the responsibility for the problem toward the wife, whereas the wife's version makes the husband look more responsible for the marital conflict. The couples were told in the IMC instructions that in some cases, they would be reading different perspectives on the same problem.

The IMC yields two types of data: (a) win scores

(who won more of the disagreements) and (b) interaction data taken from the taped discussions. The coding of the couple interaction was based on the Marital and Family Interaction Coding System (Olson & Ryder, Note 2), which contains 15 content codes for verbal behavior (plus an uncoded statement category). The codes are divided conceptually into three categories: task related, assertive, and affective. Each statement made during the IMC discussion procedure was coded directly from the audiotape by two independent coders, whose frequency ratings for each code were averaged. Since the concern of this study is with assertive or influence behavior in a disagreement situation, coding was done only for discussions of vignettes on which the spouses had initially disagreed on their individual forms. Because of damage to several tapes, the final *n* for the IMC interaction data was 80.

*Reliability of the IMC variables.* Two types of reliability estimates were performed on the IMC data. First, interrater reliability was assessed for each code by examining the agreement between raters on the scores of each code for each spouse. A code's score was its frequency divided by the total frequency for all interaction codes for that spouse. (This procedure controls for amount of talking.) Corrected by the Spearman-Brown formula for two independent raters, the interrater reliability coefficients ranged from .49 to .99, averaging .86 across all the codes for both spouses.

The second set of reliability procedures examined the internal consistency of the IMC data. To compute internal consistency reliability estimates for the IMC variables, the items (vignettes) were divided into two halves that were equal in the degree of disagreement elicited in the sample. As expected from previous studies (Olson & Ryder, 1970), the win scores proved highly unreliable (split-half  $r = .12$ , with Spearman-Brown correction) and were retained for exploratory purposes only. For the interaction codes, split-half reliability coefficients, corrected by the Spearman-Brown formula, ranged from .31 to .92, averaging .59 across all codes for both spouses. Codes with interrater or internal consistency reliability coefficients of under .60 (averaged over both spouses) were dropped from subsequent analyses. Remaining were 9 of 15 originally coded variables: initiation of discussion (who begins discussion of each vignette), laughter, outcome question (e.g., "What do you think?"), read/content (e.g., "My story says the husband had tried to stop smoking"), self-disclosure (the first spouse to reveal an opinion on the vignette), partisan opinion (statements defending one's opinion), outcome disagreement (the first statement of disagreement during the discussion of a vignette), process disagreement (all subsequent disagreement statements), and disapproval of spouse (criticizing the other's viewpoints or character). Average interrater and split-half *rs* for those 9 codes were .91 and .72, respectively.

*Deriving an assertiveness interaction dimension.* Four of the reliable IMC interaction codes are con-

Table 1  
*Unrotated Principal Components Factor  
 Matrix For IMC Codes*

Code	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Husbands			
Initiation	.723	.178	.304
Self-disclosure	.770	.195	-.378
Read	.587	.106	.586
Outcome question	-.052	-.471	.485
Partisan opinion	-.600	.010	-.310
Process disagreement	-.545	.559	.178
Outcome disagreement	-.748	-.067	.433
Disapproval of spouse	-.069	.770	.188
Wives			
Initiation	.839	.142	.068
Self-disclosure	.637	.532	-.416
Read	.772	-.262	.123
Outcome question	.295	.132	.546
Partisan opinion	-.493	.234	-.607
Process disagreement	-.409	.724	.089
Outcome disagreement	-.625	-.335	.356
Disapproval of spouse	-.150	.626	.589

Note. IMC = Inventory of Marital Conflicts.

ceptually related to assertive behavior as defined earlier—partisan opinion, outcome disagreement, process disagreement, and disapproval of spouse. Each of these codes represents an effort either to stand one's ground or to change the other's opinion—and thus to gain an advantage in the disagreement. The other codes, except for laughter, appear primarily to represent behaviors that facilitate discussion of the vignettes, for example, initiating the discussion of a vignette, asking for clarification, and describing the content of the story.

As an empirical aid to the selection of the assertiveness dimension, a principal components factor analysis was performed on the reliable IMC codes, with laughter excluded. Separate analyses were conducted for husbands and wives. Unities were used as diagonal elements and no rotation was performed. Inspection of the factor loadings in Table 1 reveals three assertiveness-related codes—partisan opinion, process disagreement, and outcome disagreement—loading in the same direction on Factor 1. Three task-related codes loaded in the opposite direction from the assertiveness codes on this factor. This pattern

suggests a negative relationship between task-oriented and assertiveness behaviors. The fourth code that had been related conceptually to assertiveness—disapproval of spouse—did not load on Factor 1. However, a decision was made to retain this code as part of an assertiveness dimension for two reasons: first, it represents a theoretically interesting aspect of marital assertiveness, and second, it correlated with process disagreement .41 for wives and .25 for husbands, which suggests that disapproval of spouse has a fair degree of commonality with one other assertiveness code.

For each spouse an assertiveness score was derived by summing the *z* scores for partisan opinion, process disagreement, outcome disagreement, and disapproval of spouse. Husband and wife assertiveness scores correlated .45 with each other, a finding that suggests a moderate degree of reciprocity between spouses on these assertive behaviors.

### Data Analysis

The primary statistical procedure was two-way analysis of variance of locus of control (internal-external) and interpersonal trust (low-high) on marital assertiveness. Separate analyses were performed on the IMC observed interaction dimension and the win score variable. Of central interest were the main effects for locus-of-control and planned *t* test comparisons focusing on the external-high trust group and the internal-low trust group.

Extreme groups were created on locus of control and trust by dropping out the middle third of each distribution. Mean scores for the remaining husbands were as follows: Internal = 6.6; external = 15.4; low trust = 60.6, high trust = 76.7. The corresponding means for wives were: Internal = 8.0, external = 16.4; low trust = 59.9, high trust = 79.2. Four cells were created for husbands and wives separately in a 2 × 2 design—internal-low trust, internal-high trust, external-low trust, external-high trust.

Exploratory analyses of variances were also conducted on assertiveness difference sources (husband minus wife), and an examination was made of the relationship between couple locus-of-control patterns (husband I-E × wife I-E) and marital assertiveness.

## Results

### Descriptive Data

A significant difference between husbands' and wives' locus-of-control scores was found, with husbands more internal ( $M = 11.0$ ) than wives ( $M = 12.3$ ). (Studies typically report no sex differences on the Rotter I-E scale in college student samples—see Strickland, 1977; Doherty, in press, also found no sex differences in a national probability sample.)

Spouses' locus-of-control scores correlated at .18, which was nonsignificant. Husbands and wives did not differ in average interpersonal trust scores ( $M = 68.5$  for both spouses); the correlation between husband and wife trust scores was  $r = .07$ , which was not significant.

The relationship between locus of control and trust was different for husbands and wives, with husbands' scores on these two variables correlating at  $-.18$  and wives' scores correlating at  $-.38$ ,  $p < .001$ , indicating a positive association between internality and trust. This pattern contrasts with Hamsher, Geller, & Rotter's (1968) report that I-E and trust typically correlate higher for males than for females in college samples.

Two other husband-wife comparisons are worth noting. First, there were no significant husband-wife differences on the individual variables that comprised the marital assertiveness dimension—process opinion, outcome disagreement, process disagreement, and disapproval of spouse. Second, the win score variable also showed no husband-wife mean differences, with husbands winning an average of only 1.1% more of the disagreements in the IMC procedure.

### *Locus of Control, Interpersonal Trust, and Marital Assertiveness*

Table 2 shows the cell means and sizes for the two-way analyses of variance (Locus of Control  $\times$  Interpersonal Trust) on the IMC marital assertiveness variables. Results for the observed assertive behavior variable will be presented first, followed by results for the win scores and the supplementary analyses. It should be noted that some of the cells in Table 2 have small *ns*, especially the internal-low trust wife group.

*Observed assertive behavior.* For husbands, a significant main effect was found for locus of control,  $F(1, 38) = 7.93$ ,  $p < .008$ , indicating that internal husbands had higher assertiveness scores in the IMC marital conflict situation than did external husbands. Table 2 shows that the external-high trust husband group had the lowest average assertiveness score. A planned *t* test comparison between the external-high trust group and the other three groups combined showed a significant difference,  $t(38) = 3.09$ ,  $p < .004$ . Consistent with the congruent versus defensive external distinction, the external-high trust group was significantly less assertive

Table 2  
*Means and Standard Deviations of Marital Variables By Locus of Control and Interpersonal Trust Groups*

Group	IMC assertiveness			IMC wins <sup>a</sup>		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Husbands						
Internal-low trust	10	.232	2.196	10	59.9	19.5
Internal-high trust	13	.706	3.110	13	53.6	10.7
External-low trust	11	-.599	1.970	12	57.8	16.4
External-high trust	8	-2.867	2.076	9	30.1	13.8
Wives						
Internal-low trust	6	3.012	3.221	6	46.5	13.8
Internal-high trust	14	.512	1.140	16	57.6	12.5
External-low trust	14	-.158	2.620	16	51.2	17.1
External-high trust	9	.611	2.735	10	45.4	19.9

Note. IMC = Inventory of Marital Conflicts.

<sup>a</sup> Win points for husband relative to wife. Higher score represents more husband wins, lower score represents more wife wins.

than the external – low trust group, which was indistinguishable from the internal groups.

For wives, the analysis of variance yielded a nonsignificant effect for locus of control,  $F(1, 39) = 2.90$ ,  $p < .097$ . However, the interaction effect was significant,  $F(1, 39) = 4.37$ ,  $p < .043$ . Inspection of the cell means suggests that the extremely high assertiveness scores of the internal – low trust wife group were primarily responsible for the significant interaction effect. A planned  $t$  test comparison between the internal – low trust wife group and the other groups combined indicated that the difference was significant,  $t(39) = 2.53$ ,  $p < .016$ . There were no assertiveness differences among the other three groups.

*Win scores.* Although win scores were found unreliable across vignettes in the IMC, they were retained for exploratory purposes. For husbands, the analysis of variance results showed a pattern similar to observed interaction findings. The main effect for locus of control was significant,  $F(1, 40) = 7.60$ ,  $p < .009$ , with internals winning more disagreements than externals. However, in this analysis, the very low win scores of the external – high trust husband group created a significant interaction effect,  $F(1, 40) = 5.34$ ,  $p < .026$ . The other three husband groups averaged more IMC wins than their wives, whereas the external – high trust group won an average of only 30% of their disagreements. The difference was highly significant,  $t(40) = 4.76$ ,  $p < .001$ . There were no significant effects for wives on the win score variable.

*Supplementary analyses.* Results of analyses of variance employing mixed husband–wife locus of control groups (Husband I–E  $\times$  Wife I–E) yielded no significant effects for either observed assertiveness or win scores. The other supplementary analysis examined the relationship between individual spouse locus of control and trust scores and the couple's relative assertiveness (husband minus wife). For husbands, the results showed a significant main effect for locus of control,  $F(1, 38) = 5.09$ ,  $p < .030$ , indicating that internal husbands when compared to external husbands were more assertive relative to their wives. Of the four Husband I–E  $\times$  Trust groups, only the internal – low trusters had

average assertiveness scores higher than their wives. This difference between the internal – low trust group and the other husband groups combined was significant,  $t(38) = 2.04$ ,  $p < .049$ . There were no significant effects for wives.

### Discussion

The main findings of this study may be summarized as follows: (a) For husbands, internals behaved more assertively in the marital conflict than externals did; external – high trusters were least assertive; (b) for wives, internal – low trusters behaved most assertively in the marital conflict. Husband–wife locus-of-control combinations were not associated with differential levels of assertive behavior.

These findings may be interpreted in terms of previous theory and research on locus of control and interpersonal trust and in terms of unconventional role behavior. To begin with, the tendency for internal husbands to behave more assertively than external husbands is consistent with locus-of-control theory. Since they believe they can control events, internals are thought to pursue valued outcomes more vigorously and persistently than externals do, although relatively little research has examined this hypothesis in social interaction situations. Presumably, supporting one's interests in a marital conflict constitutes a generally valued goal that internal husbands seek more assertively than do external husbands. No explanation is readily apparent for the failure to find a main locus-of-control effect for wives, but one may speculate that succeeding in a more-or-less public marital conflict may be more important to husbands than wives.

The tendency for external – high trust husbands to engage in unassertive marital interactions is likewise consistent with previous research on congruent externality (Hochreich, 1974, 1975). According to this research, reviewed earlier, external – high trust males tend to behave in a passive, noncompetitive manner consistent with theoretical assumptions about externality. Believing that an

interpersonally trustworthy environment controls their lives, these men may have little motivation to win or "make points" in marital disagreements.

Although there is previous empirical research on external-high trust males, the internal-low trust combination has not been highlighted in the literature. However, it seems intuitively reasonable that more vigorous assertive behavior should follow from the belief that one's environment is controllable but socially untrustworthy. In the marital context, the present data suggest that the combination of internality and low trust is associated with greater assertive behavior by wives in marital conflict situations. A supplementary analysis found internal-low trust husbands to be more assertive relative to their wives than were the other husband groups.

The second set of interpretations of these findings takes the position that external-high trust husbands and internal-low trust wives represent personality patterns opposite to the conventional stereotypes of husband and wife role behavior. The external-high trust husband does not match the cultural norm of the active male mastering his environment and representing with appropriate caution the family's interests in the world. Being at the opposite end of the conventional masculinity continuum from the "macho" male, the external-high trust husband is fairly unassertive and yielding in arguments with his wife.

Nonnormative in the opposite direction are internal-low trust wives. Instead of assuming a relatively passive and trusting stance toward the world, these women combine qualities of a strong belief in personal control of their lives and a sense of skepticism about other people's intentions. Women with this orientation are apt to relate to their husbands in an assertive manner, arguing vigorously and persistently for their viewpoints.

In sum, a picture emerges of the internal-low trust wife that is exactly opposite that of the external-high trust husband. Whereas he tends to be passive and uninvolved in marital disagreements, she tends to be active and heavily involved. Unfortunately, because of small cell sizes in the present study, couples with an external-high trust husband and an

internal-low trust wife could not be compared with other husband-wife matches.

### Conclusion

Findings have been reported here for a sample of recently married couples without children. Whether the same results would hold for couples married longer is problematic. In addition to sampling issues, a further note of caution pertains to the small amount of variance accounted for in most of the statistical analyses. Accounting for such low levels of variance, however, is not surprising in light of the notorious difficulty involved in predicting observed behavior from paper-and-pencil personality instruments.

Within these limits, this study suggests that there may still be life in personality and marriage research. For the first time, cognitive personality variables have been related to observed marital interaction behavior. In addition to breaking new ground in personality and marriage research, the present study has identified two interesting types of married persons, external-high trust husbands and internal-low trust wives. Following a strategy suggested by Rotter (1975), it may be useful in the future to employ a measure of locus of control that is specific to marital outcomes. In this way more powerful predictions may be possible concerning some interesting marital behavior patterns and attitudes, and some new understandings may be reached about the role of individual differences in marriage.

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