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Title	Locus of control and marital satisfaction in Singaporean couples
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Year	2010
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## SUMMARY

Marriage is a legal union that typically occurs between a man and a woman. It has been described as the most important and fundamental human relationship. Research has shown that marital satisfaction plays a major role in the individual's overall sense of well-being. When married individuals and couples achieve high levels of marital satisfaction, they experience emotional and psychological wellness. On the other hand, marital distress has profound and harmful effects on the physical and emotional well-being of the couples and their children. In many Western and Asian countries including Singapore, there is an increasing trend in divorces which sounds an alarm.

The research study seeks to examine the relationship between locus of control and marital satisfaction. Locus of control is the extent to which individuals believe that the outcome of events in their life is attributable to their own actions. While the traditional and dominant paradigm is based on the concept of internal and external locus of control, this research study is based on the contemporary and alternative paradigm of primary and secondary control, which is more congruent with Asian beliefs system and cultural values. The purpose of this research study is to examine the relationship between the individuals' locus of control, primary and secondary control, and their influence and impact on marital satisfaction. If a change of locus of control can bring about an increase in marital satisfaction, concrete steps can be taken to teach and educate couples on changing their locus of control in their marriages. This means that the married individuals change their cognitions, affect, and behaviours so as to bring themselves in

line with the environment for marital happiness. The study is significant as it contributes to the psychological well-being of the individuals, couples, families and society.

The method for collection of data is through completion of questionnaire. The sample,  $N = 118$ , comprises of 27 males and 91 females who are married. The independent variable is the individual's locus of control. The instrument used is the Primary-Secondary Control Scale. The dependent variable is marital satisfaction. The instrument used is the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale.

The result of the survey supports the hypothesis that the overall locus of control and secondary control is related to marital satisfaction in Singaporean couples positively and significantly. Couples who have a higher secondary control are more satisfied than those who do not think and feel that they have control over their marriages.

The implications for counselling and intervention are that the perception of secondary control does matter in marital relationships. Secondary control as a personality variable influences marital satisfaction. Clinicians and practitioners are to consider the cognitive beliefs of couples in marital therapy as they design interventions to counsel the individuals or couples. Psychological, remedial or educative interventions are effective when they are congruent with the clients' belief systems. In marital counselling, cognitive behavioural therapy is effective in developing and enhancing the secondary control of the individuals and couples. Reframing as a cognitive intervention seeks to change the cognitive distortions of the couples in their marriages. As a result, marital relationships are enhanced and strengthened.