

# Marital Conflict Resolution and Marital Affection in Chinese Marriage: A Person-Centered Approach

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## Abstract

This study represents one of the very first steps in examining the roles of couple interactive processes in shaping the development of marital affection within a non-Western cultural context.

Results suggested that the changes of marital affection varied systematically across three groups of couples identified based on spouses' marital conflict resolution strategies (i.e., Collaborative Couples, Aggressive Wife-Defensive Husband Couples, and Defensive Couples).

## Background

- Spouses generally experience decreases in positive affection and increases in negative affection during the first few years of marriage (Kayser, 1996; Niehuis et al., 2016). Such changes are often associated with reduced marital satisfaction and increased possibility of marital dissolution (Huston, 2009).
- Some key factors accounting for the changes in marital affection may lie in couple interactive processes, especially in couple interactions in conflictual contexts (Kayser & Rao, 2006).
- Couples in the early marital stage are in a period of flux and transitional stress and are likely to get involved in conflicting interests and encounter conflicts (Schramm, Marshall, Harris, & Lee, 2005; Storaasli & Markman, 1990).
- Conflict resolution strategies work in combination to shape relationship outcomes, highlighting the importance to use person-centered analyses (Cao, Fang, Fine, Ju, Lan, & Liu, 2015).

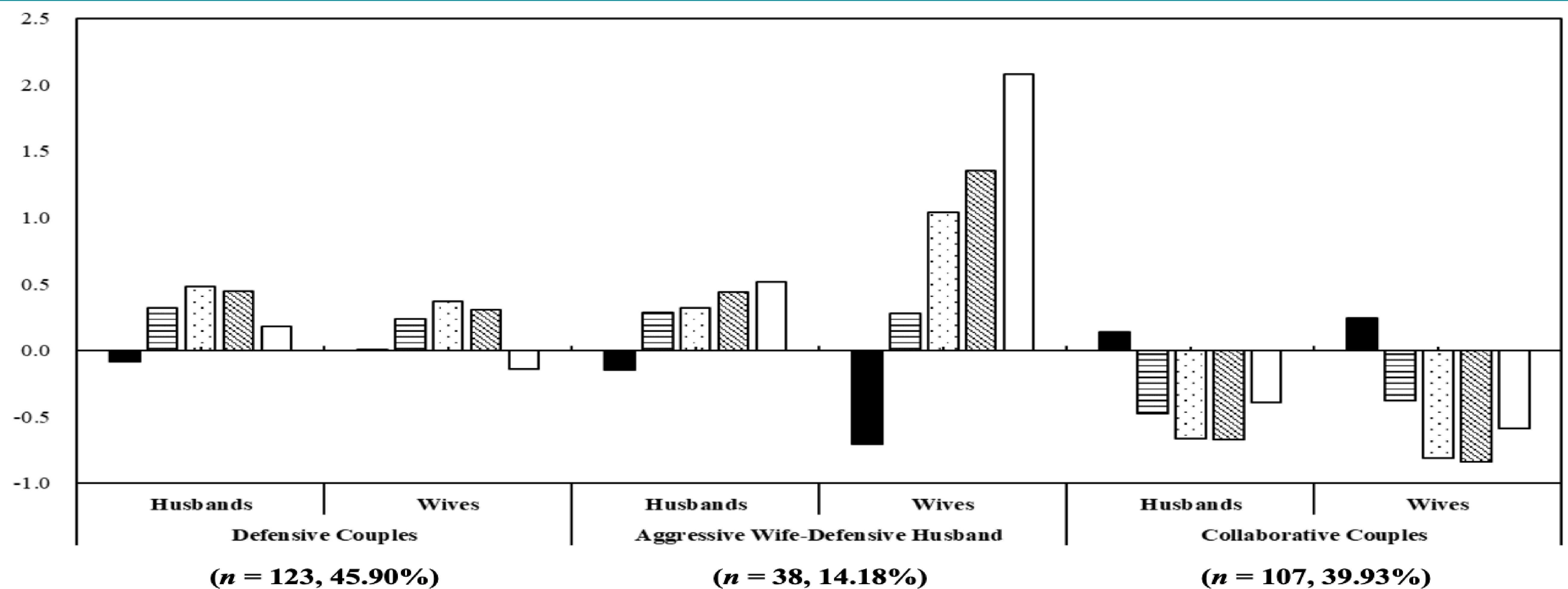
## Methods

**Participants:** 268 Chinese couples who were married for less than 3 years and childless

**Measures:** Marital conflict resolution in 2011 was assessed using Conflicts and Problem-Solving Scale (Kerig, 1996); Marital affection in 2011 and 2013 was measured using the Chinese Marital Affection Scale (Wang, 2009).

**Analytic Strategies:** three-step Latent Profile Analysis in Mplus 7.4

## Results



	Mean Scores			Between-Group Differences						
	DC	AW-DH	CC	DC vs. CC		AW-DH vs. CC		AW-DH vs. DC		
				Difference	Cohen's d	Difference	Cohen's d	Difference	Cohen's d	
<b>Husbands</b>										
Positive Affection	3.68 [3.52, 3.84]	3.49 [3.24, 3.74]	3.92 [3.79, 4.05]	-.24 [-.46, -.03]	-.31	-.44 [-.72, -.15]	-.59	-.19 [-.49, .11]	-.23	
Negative Affection	1.71 [1.58, 1.84]	1.65 [1.47, 1.83]	1.35 [1.27, 1.42]	<b>.37 [.21, .52]</b>	<b>.59</b>	<b>.31 [.11, .50]</b>	<b>.58</b>	-.06 [-.28, .17]	-.09	
<b>Wives</b>										
Positive Affection	3.44 [3.25, 3.64]	3.50 [3.21, 3.79]	3.91 [3.75, 4.07]	-.46 [-.73, -.20]	-.59	-.41 [-.61, -.22]	-.60	.06 [-.30, .41]	.06	
Negative Affection	1.85 [1.68, 2.01]	1.91 [1.68, 2.15]	1.44 [1.35, 1.52]	<b>.41 [.07, .74]</b>	<b>.53</b>	<b>.48 [.22, .73]</b>	<b>.71</b>	.07 [-.23, .36]	.08	

Note. P-values were adjusted using Bonferroni correction, and bolded are between-group differences that were significant at  $p < .05$  (two-tailed) level. DC = Defensive Couples, AW-DH = Aggressive Wife-Defensive Husband Couples, and CC = Collaborative Couples.

## Conclusions and Implications

- The variability in marital conflict resolution processes during early years of Chinese marriage
- The salient roles played by marital conflict resolution in shaping marital affection.

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