

A Study on the Sustainability of Marriage among Community in Seremban, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to explore the antecedents for sustainability of marriage among community with the main objectives of exploring the relationship between the variables namely loyalty and faithful, compromise and tolerance, financial stability and intimate relationship towards sustainability of marriage and derive the main factor that affect the prolong marriage and relationship. 200 respondents of this study are community lived in Seremban, Negeri Sembilan. Purposive sampling technique was used with questionnaire as the instrument. Correlation and regression analysis was conducted, and the findings show that there is a significant relationship between the variables and sustainability of marriage with financial stability as the main factor. Hence, various parties such as authority, non-governmental bodies and community has benefited from the study.

Keywords: *sustainability, marriage, community, loyalty, tolerance, relationship*

INTRODUCTION

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In Malaysia, divorce cases are on the rise and there are many factors related to it (Kamini, 2016). In a recent article, Kamini also provides the statistics from the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) which shows that 77 Muslim couple's divorce every day, while the National Registration Department also recorded the rising divorce trend of non-Muslim couples which is from 6,573 in 2008 to 9,020 in 2012. Basically, the most common reasons for divorce are infidelity, lack of finances, incompatibility between partners, unhappiness, and others (Carney, 2015). Hence, based on the figures, the study on the divorce rates in Malaysia seems to be more than double in just 8 years and it is equivalent to one divorce per couple in every 10 minutes (Su-Lyn, 2014). Furthermore, based on the same statistics from Syariah Judiciary Department of Malaysia during the year of 2004 until 2012, the exact number of Muslim couples getting divorce is increasing at 2.3 times from 20,916 cases in 2004 to 49,311 cases in 2012, while for non-Muslim couples is shockingly broke down at 2.7 times higher compared to Muslim couples with 3,291 cases in 2004 to 9,020 cases in 2012 (Su-Lyn, 2014). Thus, this situation is said to be very uneasy and worrisome as it could damage

the sustainability of a marriage and can bring a lot of negative effects either to the children, families or the parents itself due to the broken marriage.

On the other hand, a study from JAKIM has reported that most married couples only enjoyed the peak of happiness during their early 5 years of marriage (Kamini, 2016). Basically, it is happened due to the sour relationship and loss of faith between the couples which have led most of them towards the decision of ending their marriage as they could not get the same feeling as before. Therefore, it is important for every couple to understand what the keys to the strong and sustaining marriage are. Besides, according to Yap (2015), every couple needs to develop and have some sort of compromise and tolerant attitudes with each other to develop a strong relationship among them.

Apart from that, the unhealthy phenomenon of a divorce in every 10 minutes is believed to threaten the growing stability of our country in terms of social cohesion (Emery, 2013). The social cohesion is important as it could give impact towards the stability of our country. This is because part of the success factor of our country comes from the unity of peoples and represent the social solidarity in Malaysia (Emery, 2013). According to a study conducted by Kolotkin (2012), every couple needs to develop an insightful awareness before getting married by which they need to know and understand why everything will be changed after they got married and whether the couples are truly ready to end their single life and be together. Therefore, in Malaysia, people are encouraged to attend the marriage course but for Muslim, it is a must as it is designed to help the marriage becomes stronger and better through the advice and practical guidelines monitored by the authorized person (Irene, 2014).

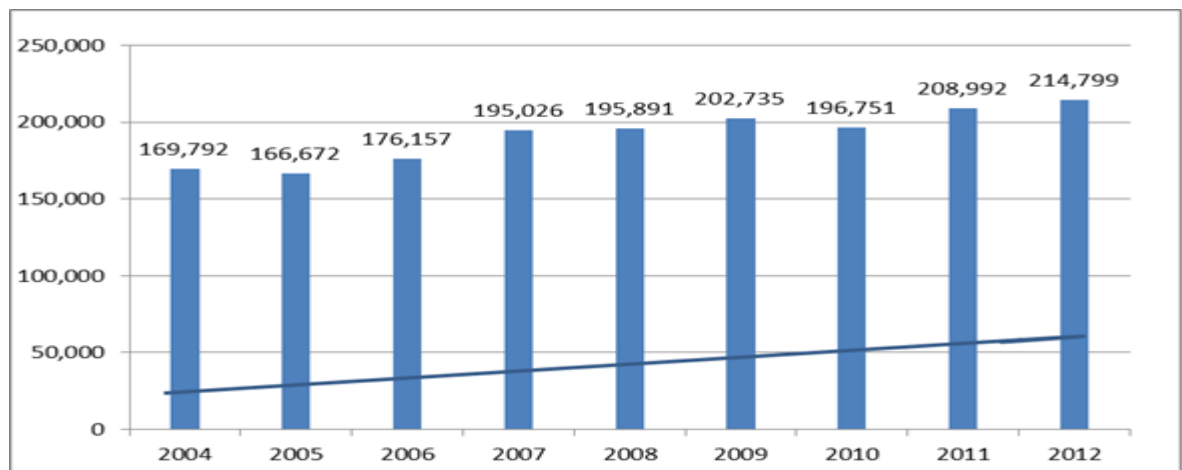


Figure 1: Statistics of divorce rates in Malaysia from Syariah Judiciary Department of Malaysia

Nevertheless, according to Wong (2014), the most common cause for divorce is due to the lack of commitment to fix the relationship problems which make the marriage as unable to sustain. This problem is difficult to resolve as there is no magic wands or quick-fix solutions found for conflicting issues, so it needs a lot of commitment, hard work, time, and patience to develop solutions and resolve the issues (Dorman, 2012). For instance, if there is a problem of infidelity and lack of intimate relationship between the spouses, of course it needs a maximum commitment to fix back the relationship. On the other hand, some researchers have also claimed that the growing and advancement of technologies such as smart phones and gadgets are also one of the factors of marital issues (Lim et. al., 2012). This is because, the use of smart phones is like a basic need for the society as people could get a lot of information and services using internet. Therefore, those who happen to be in the financial problem will be affected by these needs. However, the excitement in using those technologies can reduce face to face communication and later may ruin the relationship with the loved one as they usually give too much attention to the virtual world (Lee, 2012, as cited in Lim et. al., 2012). Therefore, in this case, the spouse should know how to handle the situation when it comes to their partner's feeling.

Based on the above statements, it seems that there are varieties of problems that can lead the spouse towards divorce. According to Levoy (2016), the reasons for divorce are varied like the stars in the sky because every marriage has a different marriage lifestyle which can be influence from many factors. However, despite all the reasons that could lead the spouse towards divorce, there are still other ways that can be used by the spouse if they want to build a sustainable marriage. A research shows that a

spouse could secure a sustainable marriage if both husband and wife have experienced a more meaningful and satisfied relationship through their marital period (Perkins, 2015). In simple words, the foundation to build a sustainable marriage is by understanding the partners. Therefore, there is a need for us to know what we can do to sustain the marriages and how to build a happy long-lasting marriage.

Sustainability of Marriage

Generally, according to Oxford dictionaries (2016), the term sustainability is referring to something that can be maintained, hold, upheld and defended at a certain rate or level. It is usually referring to something that needs to be endured and faced by a person or things. In other words, oxford dictionaries also define sustainability as something that can be continued and maintained over a certain period. Meanwhile, marriage here is defined as a universal institution which consists of a man and woman who legally lived together, have sexual relationship and cooperate economically such as by working together, providing for one another and sharing sources (Murdock, 1949 as cited in Steffo, 2007). According to Sutton (2000), people often talk about sustainable who mean something that is carefully managed and able to be restored and maintained for a long time. This definition is similarly applied to another study which has defined sustainability as a sustainable process or situation that can be maintained indefinitely as it is basically sufficient to address the practical choices on how to improve and maintain the well healthiness of the relationship in this planet (Holdren et al., 1995). Therefore, sustainability in the context of marital relationship is referred to the long lasting sustainable marriage experienced by the spouse. This is because a marriage requires a lot of commitment and sacrifices between a man and woman to ensure the continuity and lifetime relationship (Becker 1981, as cited in Laksmanasamy & Srinivasan, 1997). Thus, the sustainability of marriage can be viewed as a situation whereby the man and woman in a marital relationship have gone through a lifetime marriage relationship.

Sustainability of one's marriage will depend on varying elements which will contribute to it. According to Williams (2008), to sustain a marriage relationship, sex is important and plays a vital role. He stated that sex is the most intimate way of communicating and it declares that you are still attracted to each other. But sex is not the only intimacy that can be made between partners and intimacy can come in many ways such as conversation and cuddling (Brenoff, 2014). Other than that, to make the relationship last forever, partners need to be patient and must give and take in order to grow together at different times and different ways (Wong, 2016).

Moreover, to sustain a marriage, partners need to begin to invest (Ifoh, 2014). Ifoh has stated that a man and wife should be able to plan, invest and expect profits together or else their marriage will neither suffer disgrace nor divorce. According to Woods (2015), she also stated in her article that a partner needs to be honest about the financial matters to spouse because if he or she finds out, war in marriage will happen and can lead to divorce. Delineate precisely “yours, mine” and “ours” (Phillips, 2016). Phillips is meant to prove that partners must outline precisely which finances should be placed in these three categories and by doing so will make the relationship stronger because partners will have an upfront conversation about those assets and what belongs to whom. Furthermore, faithfulness also gives such example to every married couple who has children on how to manage marriage in a right way and it will prevent from marital failure (Currie, 2014). Faithfulness is when the partners give commitments in relationship and it is more than promise to each other and it is also about the promises that the partners keep and choices that they make to survive in their marriage (Anderson & Fite, 1993).

Apart from that, a study by Le (2014) has found that there is a model of self-expansion which claims that if it applies to the idea of close relationship it can make a relationship more fulfilling for everyone. Therefore, if every spouse is loyal to their partner it will make their relationship to become more rewarding and satisfying thus creating a healthy and happy marriage. According to Hennessey and Hennessey (2004), a marriage works best when there is loyalty as it can help to build a sustainable loving relationship. With loyalty, the spouse may know their partners commitment in their relationship. Besides, it is believed that those who married with purpose other than love such as to having children, financial security or a good companionship generally may have longer and better marriages (Gadoua, 2014). This is because, a marriage requires the fulfillment of the basic needs such as shelter, food, and others but if the responsible person in a marriage could not afford these basic needs, it may result in a low sustainable marital relationship due to the lack of financial resources (Gadoua, 2014).

In addition, compromise and tolerance are also important elements to secure a sustainable marriage as it can act as a medium for the spouse to negotiate with each other when there is an issue arises. In fact, according to a study conducted by Gottman (2011), the successful marriage relationship theory includes learning to compromise and tolerance in the process of resolving conflicts and other shortcomings. In addition, physical touch and emotional understanding should play a vital role in a relationship as it is the most intimate ways in communicating and may strengthen the relationship in a marriage (Bennett, 2008). Therefore, the relationship between sustainability of marriages with all variables may contribute to the stability and healthiness of a marital relationship.

METHODOLOGY

Research design for the study is made based on quantitative cross-sectional design where only one sample of respondents is drawn from target populations. Cross-sectional design has benefited researchers in a way of it permits researchers to compare various variables at the same time (Abdullah, 2015). The data of this study were collected through the questionnaires where the questionnaires will be distributed to the community live in Seremban. This sample size was derived from the total population or subset from the population. Since the scope of study is about the sustainability of marriage that consists of community living in residential area in Seremban, thus in this study, the suggested sample size is 200 respondents which are statistically adequate to run the analysis using Statistical Package for Social Sciences. The respondents were chosen based on List of Registered Residents provided by the Seremban Municipal Council. In this study, the sampling technique used is purposive and supported by convenience sampling. Purposive sampling was chosen because the population for this study required a specific and thorough response from the respondents to ensure it met the objectives of the study. Thus, this population was the targeted sample for this study in order to ensure it meets the requirement of statistic and bind to the methodology used in the study. The measurements used in this study are adopted from the Civil and Syariah Judicial Department. The judiciary department also provided the list of antecedents for sustaining marriage thus top four from the list were chosen for this study.

RESULTS

Goodness of Measurement

The goodness of measurement is used to address the question on the reliability and validity of the scale (Abdullah, 2015). One of the ways to establish validity is using the validated measures, while to establish the reliability; there is a need to correlate between each item under the study to determine how close it is to the other. Thus, the goodness of measurements here helps to indicate to what extent we are accurately and consistently measuring the concept of reliability and determine whether we have measured whatever we are supposed to measure on the validity (Al-Mansor, 2012). This is because, if without the right analysis concept and method, the study will not generate the right results. Based on the analysis conducted on validity and reliability measures, the following are the results obtained using the normality test.

According to Origin Lab (2015), test of normality is used to determine whether the sample data has been drawn from a normally distributed population or not. Thus, it

is considered as one of the data screening and transformation techniques. Data screening is important to know whether the data are normal and properly distributed (Coakes, 2016). This is because the distributional characteristics for each variable must be clearly represented under this study (Abdullah, 2015). Thus, based on the result obtained from data screening test, it shows that all data are normal and properly distributed. There are several statistical methods that can be used to determine whether the data is normal or not. However, in this study the value of skewness and kurtosis is used to describe whether the data is normal, and the value of a normal data have been set to fall between +2 or -2 limits only.

Table 1: *Normality test*

Variables	Skewness	Kurtosis	Remarks
Sustainability of marriage	-0.87	-0.24	Normal
Loyalty and Faithful	-0.70	-0.44	Normal
Compromise and Tolerance	-1.08	0.29	Normal
Financial Stability	-1.03	0.22	Normal
Intimate Relationship	-0.70	-0.46	Normal

The results of the normality test are generated based on the data collected under the dependent variable and independent variables which are involved under this study. Thus, the table on the results of the normality test generated above shows that all variables involved in this study is normally distributed. This is because, all of the variable values under this study are respectively falling between the range of +2 and -2 limiting scale for the test.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2: *Profile of respondents*

Profile	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	
Gender	Male	69	34.5
	Female	131	65.5
Age	21-30	80	40.0
	31-40	55	27.5
	41-50	40	20.0
	51 Above	25	12.5
Level of Education	Diploma	58	29.0
	Degree	58	29.0
	Master	20	10.0
	PHD	12	6.0
	Others	52	26.0
Level of Income	1501-2500	75	37.5

	2501-3500	67	33.5
	3501-4500	31	15.5
	4501 Above	27	13.5
Length of Marriage	5-10	114	57.0
	11-16	30	15.0
	17-22	23	11.5
	23 Above	33	16.5
Have Child(ren)	Yes	154	77.0
	No	46	23.0

This study involves 200 respondents of gender, males and females among the married persons. From the data collected, 69 of the respondents are among males and they hold a lower percentage of 34.5% compared to the number of female respondents of 131 with 65.5%. This shows that most respondents are females. The respondents in this study consist of married people who are the community in Seremban 2 and able to sustain their marriage for more than 5 years.

Majority of the respondent's age for this research are in the range of 21 to 30 years old which has the percentage of 40.0%. For the respondent with the range of age within 31 to 40, has the percentage of 27.5%. This is followed by the range of age of the respondents between 41 to 50 years old with the percentage of 20.0%. Then, the least age range comes from the respondents of 51 years old and above with 12.5%.

In the questionnaires, the researchers also provide the level of education. This is because, the researchers want to know about respondents' highest level of education either they are from Diploma, Degree, Master, PhD or others. Based on the study, majority of the respondents' highest level of education comes from Diploma and Degree, both education levels consist of the same number of respondents which is 58 and the percentage is 29%. Meanwhile, 20 respondents with 10% have Master, 12 respondents with 6% have PhD. Then, the other remaining 52 respondents with 26% have other level of education.

Then, for the respondents' level of income. From the range of RM1501 to RM2500, the researchers have earned the majority number of respondents with 75 respondents with 37.5% while, income which is ranged from RM2501 to RM3500, has 67 respondents and the percentage is 33.5%. Then, for level of income that ranged between RM3501 to RM4500, has 31 numbers of respondents with 15.5% and for the last range of income which is RM4501 and above consists of 27 respondents with 13.5%.

Furthermore, for the length of marriage within the range of 5 to 10 years, the result shows that it has the majority number of respondents with 114 respondents and

57%. Then, there are 30 respondents who already married between 11 to 16 years with 15% while for 17 to 22 years of marriage have 23 respondents with 11.5%, and for the respondents who got married for more than 23 years consists of 33 respondents with 16.5%. Then, for the last demographic characteristic of respondents which is about the number of children. Majority of the respondents which is 154 respondents have children, while the rests of the respondents which consist of 46 respondents do not have any children. Thus, majority of respondents have children with the percentage of 77 percent of 100%.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 3: *Pearson correlation analysis*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Sustainability of Marriage	1				
2. Loyalty and Faithful	0.31**	1			
3. Financial Stability	0.59**	0.39**	1		
4. Compromise and Tolerance	0.51**	0.44**	0.69**	1	
5. Intimate Relationship	0.51**	0.27**	0.64**	0.52**	1

** $p < 0.05$

Based on Table 3, the strongest correlation between the dependent variable and the independent variable lies under the financial stability element with a value of 0.594. However, by referring to the Guilford rule of thumb, the independent variable which is the financial stability element is deemed to have only a moderate correlation with the dependent variable on the sustainability of marriage. Thus, even though the other two elements which are the compromise and tolerance and the intimate relationship elements also falls between the moderate correlation scale of $0.70 < r < 0.90$ and with a value of 0.519 and 0.513 respectively, but the financial stability element still has the highest correlation among them.

This shows that the three independent variables which are the financial stability, compromise and tolerance and the intimate relationship have the same significant impact on the sustainability of marriage. Meanwhile, another element which is the loyalty and faithfulness has the weakest correlation with the dependent variable. This is because, by referring to the Guilford rule of thumb scale, the value of the loyalty and faithfulness element is only 0.309. Thus, the value falls between the weak correlation scale of $0.20 < r < 0.40$ but the loyalty and faithfulness values are still important to ensure the sustainability of a marriage.

Table 4: *Regression analysis*

Variables	Standardized, β
Loyalty and Faithful	0.05**
Financial Stability	0.33**
Compromise and Tolerance	0.15**
Intimate Relationship	0.20**
R Square	0.40
F	32.48
Sig.	0.00 ^b
Durbin-Watson	1.97

DV: Sustainability of Marriage, ** $p < 0.05$

Based on the table above, the independent variable which is financial stability has the highest regression value of 0.33. Thus, this means the financial stability variable is considered as the most important element in this study. This is because the other independent variables under this study have resulted to possess lower regression values than the financial stability variable. Apart from that, based on the table above, the regression value of the other independent variables which are loyalty and faithfulness is .05, while compromise and tolerance is 0.15 and intimate relationship is 0.20 respectively.

On the other hand, the table above shows that all relationships between independent variable and dependent variables have positive correlation with each other. However, the highest standardized beta value is 0.33 which is the financial stability and it is regarded as the main element that contributes to the sustainability of marriage. This means that the financial stability element has the greatest impact to the sustainability of marriage compared to the other elements. Thus, this means that the financial stability element is the main element which is used to strengthen and support the relationship with the dependent variable on the sustainability of marriage; however, this does not mean that the other independent variables are not important to the study because they still have some impacts towards the sustainability of marriage.

The output of the R square (R^2) value in the table above which is .40 represents the strength of the overall study between the elements and the sustainability of marriage. This means the R square value of the linear regression explains about 40 per cent of the variances in the data. Additionally, the 40 per cent of the R square regression value represents the total strength of the variables under this study. The table also contains the output of F-test which has resulted from the linear regression. The F-test is basically representing the null hypothesis which means that there is no linear relationship between two variables or known as $R^2 = 0$ (Statistics solutions, 2016). However, based on the table above, the F-test value of 32.48 is significant. Thus, we

can assume that there is a linear relationship between the variables involved in this study. Moreover, the result of the significant value is 0.00. Thus, it means that the variables are significant since the p-value is less than 0.05.

CONCLUSION

This research paper aims to study the relationship between both independent and dependent variables in this study. The independent variables are important elements in a marriage, while the dependent variable is the sustainability of marriage. Evidently, the important elements of a marriage are loyalty and faithful, financial stability, compromise and tolerance, and the intimate relationship. Thus, by getting the finding from the analysis of this study, the researchers found that the financial stability element is the most prominent variable in sustaining a marital relationship as compared to the other variables. Apart from that, based on the result obtained in the finding analysis, financial stability has the highest correlation coefficient and the multiple regression result proved this antecedent as the main factor sustaining marriage. Thus, all independent variables observed under this study are proven to have met with the research objectives. This is because all of the independent variables have positive relationship with the dependent variable.

On the other hand, this study is believed to provide an insight into why some marriages are falling apart. This is because, through this study, we can know what the most important element in a marriage is. Hence, it can help those who are in a marital relationship to be more aware and concern about the importance of certain elements to secure a sustainable marriage. Additionally, those who are planning to settle down then can be more prepared and benefited through the findings of this research analysis. In conclusion, the functions of the important elements in a marital relationship could not be denied as the sustainability of marriage as depending on the independent variables. With that, this study benefited several parties such as the Judiciary Department, Ministry of Women and Community Development, the NGOs, and individual residents in Malaysia.

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