



The Influence of Personal Factors and Job Satisfaction on Marital Quality among Muslim Working Women

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ABSTRACT

Married women who work face various challenges in managing both sides of the world. Performing both tasks demand high degree of commitment and the responsibilities that need to be performed may vary across family life cycle. Success in one domain may influence the other. This study examined the relationships between personal factors, job satisfaction and marital quality among respondents from different stages of family life cycle. Participants were 235 married working women from four districts in Selangor, whose husbands residing together with them at the time of the study. Self-administered questionnaire was used for data collection. The results indicate that there are significant differences in marital quality and job satisfaction between the different stages of life cycle. Women who have more children, older, and have long-term marriage reported lower marital quality. It is also noted that higher educated women tend to have high marital quality while increased in job satisfaction would ensure a better quality marriage among the respondents. Future studies need to consider using longitudinal data to fully understand the impact of job satisfaction on marital quality across the life cycle.

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Introduction

Work and marriage roles among married couples are prominent especially during their adult life. Thus, these roles become one of their mutual responsibilities in creating a family life course (Spain & Bianchi, 1996; Moen, 1992; McLanahan & Casper 1995). As women, this responsibility is crucial especially on helping their family source (i.e. increase family income). Women involvement in the workforce has been more prevalent and for various reasons such as major or secondary support for family income (White & Rogers, 2000). It has been of concern for many on how women involvement in the economic sector may have impacted the family well-being. Some even claimed that it will lead to marital instability. Longitudinal research found that marital instability among family will lead to marital conflict and decrease on marital quality (Matthews, Wickrama & Conger, 1996). Due to this, work and marriage roles seem crucial to determine the level of marital quality.

The quality of marriage has been defined as a form of global evaluation on marriage (Bradbury & Fincham, 1987). Various constructs such as satisfaction, happiness, integration and commitment between couples are normally associated with marital quality (Lewis & Spanier, 1979). According to Bowen, on family systems theory, each member has his or her own role as an individual in the family. In performing this particular role, married individuals must be able to manage both their external (i.e. the workplace) and internal environments (i.e. marriage and family). Individual perceptions on household and marital responsibilities as well as job related factors may influence the level of marital quality (Klein & White, 1996). From the systems point of view, things that do not work on the home ground may have negative effects on the job performance of the persons involved as well. Low marital quality among married couple is likely to be associated with the increase to divorce rate.

In other words, marital quality was predicted as the factor that will affect the relationship between couple that could lead to divorce (White & Booth, 1991). Statistics on married couples especially for Muslims has increased over the years, namely from 2002 to 2009 with an increase of 21%. Data showed that Selangor state is one of the highest marriage cases recorded among Muslim couples during the particular years, from 13,481 couple in 2008 to 17,299 couple in the following year. However, while the number of couples registered for marriage reported increased every year, unfortunately, the rate of divorce among Muslims also reported to be increased. Divorce cases were reported to be high in three states (Selangor, Putrajaya and Kuala Lumpur). Selangor has 3558 cases in 2008, in which was increased to 4614 cases in the following year, compared to Kuala Lumpur (second highest cases reported) with 1444 cases in 2008 to 1637 cases in the following years. Literature has documented various factors that lead to marital disruptions and poor marital quality is one of the factors acknowledged to have a vital role.

The present research aims to determine the relationships between personal factors and job satisfaction with marital quality among Muslim working women. For a woman, work is important for various reasons, one of which is because it helps woman to get income for the family. However, having to spend time outside home may lead to various consequences on self, as well as marriage and family of the women (Matthews, Wickrama & Conger, 1996, Klein & White, 1996). This study examines on how satisfaction towards job may lead to the decrease or increase on women marital quality. Job satisfaction is one of the most used variables in organizational behavior that predicted employee's attitudinal by an evaluation. It includes an evaluative component that comprised cognitive, affective and behavioral components of an individual. Logically, by this

evaluation, job satisfaction may become an important role in determining the marital quality and well-being of the individuals.

Based on previous researches, some studies found that the connection between work and family systems are connected to each other, as logically, it may become one of the most influential factors between the systems (Hill, 2005, Roger & May, 2003). According to Hill, this condition may expose the women to experience job that create frustration or depression and obviously can give a negative impact and effect to their marital quality. Vice versa, they might experience jobs that create feelings of enjoyment and competence, which may result in positive effects in marital quality. Past studies has found that that decline in jobs satisfaction over time was also influenced by marital instability of the working individuals. This finding shows that the increase in marital discord may significantly affect the jobs in workplace, similar as how work role significantly impacts the family role (Matthews, Conger, & Wickrama, 1996; Rogers & May 2003).

For some cases, it may lead to hostility and harm because some partners tend to have arguments or conflicts in workplace that brings a lot of arguments at home. In addition, past studies highlighted this circumstance will impact on individual physical health and also interpersonal relationships. Other than that, the positive link between job satisfaction and marital adjustment or marital satisfaction have already proven in previous research declare that increase in marital quality will increase in job satisfaction and vice versa (Rodgers & May, 2003; Tarver, 1995). For women who are working, it is necessary to have a good marital quality that will balance the stressful demand from job, if any, and it also important to have satisfaction with partner that could support the level of job satisfaction at the workplace (Heller & Watson, 2005; Barnett, 1994).

The determinants for marital quality from previous research have also found the important roles of personal factors in shaping marital quality. Variables such as age, education level and personality traits were among the factors. Interestingly, mixed findings of the influences were obtained over the years. Educations was found to have no significant role in marital quality among women (VanLaningham, et al., 2001; Amato, et al., 2003; Umberson, et al., 2005). Another potential determinant of marital quality that expected to influence the marital quality is the age at marriage. Western studies find that those married at young ages have lower marital quality and a greater risk of divorce and separation (Glenn, et al., 2010). This pattern may be due to young people being emotionally and psychologically immature and unprepared for marriage (Lee, 1977). Furthermore, number of children and duration of marriage seem important to study for determinant on marital quality. Some research declares that having children may affect the marital quality of married couple. However, past research found that by having children viewed as a substantial part of marriage and for that marriage, it become valuable (Stone, 1978). However, to determine the roles of these variables, this study aims to examine:

1. What personal factor that influence the marital quality?
2. Does job satisfaction significantly relate with marital quality?
3. What are the unique predictors of marital quality among Muslim married working women?

Method

Participants

The respondents for the current study comprised two hundred and eighty eight (n=235) married Muslim women who were currently employed at the time of the data collection. They represent three different life stages based on marital duration which is early stage (married below ten years), middle stage (married for ten to twenty years) and long-term stage (married for twenty years and above). Selection of the samples was specified by some criteria; working women, and husband residing together with them.

Procedure

The respondents were recruited from four districts in Selangor. By location, 23.4% of the respondents were from Hulu Langat, 27.2% from Sepang, 23.8% from Gombak and the rest is in Petaling district. Then, for each district, the selection of the respondent continues by dividing into rural and urban area which is 52% of respondent was from the urban area. Each respondent who agreed to participate in the study was given a self-administrated questionnaire. To reduce the risk of bias on answering the questions, each respondent was requested to complete the questionnaire independently and the questionnaire was collected upon completion.

Measures

Personal factor. The respondents' demographic characteristics (e.g., age in marriage, number of children, marriage duration, education and individual income) was collected and reported by using self-administrative questionnaire.

Job satisfaction. The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ; Weiss et. al., 1967) was designed to measure a job satisfaction with his or her job. The MSQ comes with two different forms, a long version (100-items) and a short version (20-items). For this study, we are using a short version to compare the level of job satisfaction among respondent. The purpose of this questionnaire is to give exact determination on how satisfied individual feel about their present job, what are the things they most satisfied and not satisfied with. This instrument consist two subscales which is intrinsic satisfaction and extrinsic satisfaction. Intrinsic refer to inner nature evaluation on how people satisfied on what work they do meanwhile extrinsic refer to interaction on the job such as job commitment with other or itself. However, for this current study, we compute the total score of this two subscale and combine it to get a level of job satisfaction overall. As mention before, this instrument consists of 20 items that best represent each of the 20 scales. The short form version combines all the items into a single total score. Twenty items were scored on a five-point likert scale of (1=Very not satisfied) to (5=Very satisfied). Total score for MSQ is from 20 to 100 that indicate high score show high satisfaction on work. Example of questions: "*The chance to work alone on the job*", "*The competence of my supervisor in making decision*" and "*The chance to do something that makes use of my abilities*". The Cronbach's alpha for this scale in this study was 0.91.

Marital Quality. The dependent variable, marital quality was measured using Muslim Marital Quality Scale (MMQS; Rumaya et. al., 2012). MMQS was used to measure the quality of marriage based on how satisfied the individual towards their marriage. Forty nine items (49-items) were scored on a five-point Likert scale of 1 (Very not satisfied) to 5 (Very satisfied). Total scores for MMQS ranged from 49 to 249. Higher scores

represented higher levels of Marital Quality. Example of question is “In this marriage, how satisfied are you with _____ (i.e financial management, relationship with in-laws) in your marriage”. The Cronbach’s α for the scale in this study was 0.96.

Statistical Analysis

In the current study, analyses were carried out using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Descriptive statistics of variable distribution were run to analyze the variable for age on marriage, education, income, number of children and marriage duration. Lastly, frequency analysis of total score of marital quality and job satisfaction also stated. For the analysis of correlation, spearman correlation analysis was conducted to get the r value with p value that is required. Meanwhile, to compare the level of marital quality and job satisfaction of respondent, ANOVA was conducted by comparing the different stages of marital life span. Lastly, the regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictor of marital quality.

Result

Descriptive analysis of respondent demographic factors, marital quality and job satisfaction total score

Table 1 depicts the descriptive statistics for studied variables. The results indicate that majority of the respondents were married for 1 to 20 years. The participants’ age at marriage ranged from 21 to 64 years old and the average age was 37.7 years ($SD = 8.5$ years). In addition, result indicates 64.3% of respondents were between 31 to 50 years old, while 28.1% of them aged between 21 to 30 years old.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for respondents’ demographic background, Job satisfaction and Marital Quality

Variables	M	SD	Min	Max
Respondent background				
Duration of marriage	12.8	8.76	1	37
Age on married	37.7	8.5	21	64
Years of education	13.6	2.98	0	21
Individual Income	2492	1562	200	10000
Number of children	2.4	1.817	0	12
Total score				
Job satisfaction	79.01	8.94	51	100
Marital Quality	210.6	21.19	98	245

M=mean; SD = standard deviation; Min = minimum; Max=maximum

The sample was fairly well educated: 5.6% had advanced degrees (masters’ and PhD), 21.5% had college degrees, 31.1% had some college education, 40.4% had secondary school education, 0.4% had primary school education and 0.9% report didn’t have any formal education. All participants in this current studies reported they having a jobs currently, and only 11.9% of them had no children. The result also indicated most of the respondent (40.9%) reported they income at the range between RM1600 to RM3000 meanwhile, only 19.1% reported income above RM3001 which can be claims as high income. The mean for individual income is RM2492 ($SD=1562$) with minimum as RM200 and maximum RM10000.

For the total score of job satisfaction and marital quality, high and low for each of the variable total was determine by the value of mean that indicate total score that lower than mean is consider as low satisfied meanwhile score that more than mean is consider as high satisfied. The result on total job satisfaction show 50% ($n=235$) of the respondent reported high satisfied with their job while the rest was low satisfied. Mean for the total job satisfaction is 79 ($SD=8.94$). For marital quality, the result

also show most of respondent reported high marital quality which is 49% of them are high marital quality. Mean for total marital quality is 210 ($SD=21.16$).

Different level of marital quality and job satisfaction with different stages of marriage

In Table 2, result indicate that there was a significant differences stages of marriage on job satisfaction at the $p<.001$ level for the three conditions [$F(2, 232) = 9.24, p = 0.000$] meanwhile for marital quality, it also show a significant differences stages of marriage at the $p<.05$ level with [$F(2, 216) = 3.74, p = 0.025$]. This result reveal that each stages of marriage have a significantly differences between the groups when it compare with job satisfaction and marital quality.

Based on the result, women who have been married for 10 to 20 years group showed higher level of job satisfaction than those who have been married for less than 10 years however, the difference is not significant. Interestingly, significant difference was identified in job satisfaction between women who are married more than 20 years compared with those who were married for less than 10 years. The result indicates that women who are married less than 10 years are more satisfied with their job. Among the three groups, women who are married between 10 to 20 years are the most satisfied with their job, followed by those who have been married for less than 10 years and those of more than 20 years.

For the level of marital quality, the ANOVA post hoc analysis showed that there is no significant differences between women who are married less than 10 years and women who are married for 10 to 20 years. However, women who are married than 10 years are more satisfied with their marriage compared to women who are married for 10 to 20 years. For women who are married for more than 20 years groups, the level of quality of marriage show significantly lower than those who are married less than 10 years and 10 to 20 years. However, there was no significant difference for women who are married more than 20 years with who are married for 10 to 20 years.

Relationships between number of children, job satisfaction and marital quality

Table 3 shows that the independent variable which is job satisfaction has positive and significant relationship ($r = .580$) with marital quality. This result indicates that women with lower satisfaction with their jobs will show decrease in their level of marital quality. Meanwhile, the relationship between number of children and age of respondent are negative and significant ($r = -.159$) for number of children and ($r = -.148$) for age of respondent at marriage when correlate with level of marital quality. Furthermore, duration of marriage ($r = -.177$) also has negative significant relationship with marital quality. The result indicates having more children would decrease marital quality among the respondents.

In addition, in accord with marital duration, older women tend to report low level of marital quality. Meanwhile, a positive significant relationship ($r = .139$) was identified between years of education and marital quality. Evidently, obtaining higher education can boost level of marital quality of the respondents.

Predictor of Marital Quality

The results of Multiple Regression Analyses are shown in Table 4 which indicate that only job satisfaction ($\beta=0.578$), serves as a significant predictor of marital quality. A total of 35% variance of marital quality of the respondents is explained by this variable ($F=22.853, df(5,211)$).

Table 2. ANOVA with Job Satisfaction and Marital Quality

Variable	Job Satisfaction				Marital Quality			
	M	SD	F	Sig.	M	SD	F	Sig.
Stages of marriage			9.24	.001			3.74	.025
Less than 10 years	78	9.79			213	19.07		
10 to 20 years	81	8.12			211	24.67		
More than 20 years	74	6.97			203	14.52		

NOTE: Stages of marriage is based on duration of marriage of respondents

Table 3. Intercorrelation among variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Job Satisfaction	-						
Age of respondent	-.084*	-					
Years of education	.143*	-.170**	-				
Duration of marriage	-.151*	.895**	-.238**	-			
Individual income	.207**	.163*	.599**	.034	-		
Number of children	-.125	.607**	-.231**	.682**	.108	-	
Marital Quality	.580**	-.148*	.139*	-.177**	.078	-.159*	-

Note : *** p < .001; ** p < .01; * p < .05

Table 4. Regression analysis for Marital Quality

Marital Quality Predictor	B	SE	β	t	Sig.
Job Satisfaction	1.349	.132	.578	10.213	.000
Age on marriage	-.267	.304	-.106	-.879	.380
Number of children	-.562	.818	-.048	-.688	.492
Duration of marriage	.175	.320	.072	.548	.584
Years of education	.092	.405	.013	.227	.820
R ² = 0.351					
F = 22.853***					
df = (5, 211)					

NOTE: B = Unstandardized beta, SE = Standard Error & β = Standardized beta

Discussion & Conclusion

In this study, we have examined the relationships between personal factors and job satisfaction with marital quality among married Muslim working women. Based on the results of the analyses, we found that several personal factors have significant relationship towards marital quality. Results indicate that age on marriage, number of children and marriage duration show a negative significant meaning increase number on the variable may lead to decrease the marital quality. However, as we expect that women at the younger age have lower marital quality, the result seems different from our findings compared with previous research findings. These perhaps because of Malaysian culture context which claims maturity that comes with greater age may have different perspective on marital quality. Finding on this result is in contrast with western studies that states that young ages would lack the emotional and psychological maturity that lead to decrease in ability to adapt to changes and demands of marital adjustment and marital quality (Glenn, et., al., 2001). For the number of children, most of studies suggest that the presence of children may affect marital quality (Belsky & Rovine, 1990, Bradbury, et al., 2000). This finding is in complete support of our hypotheses which indicate women with higher number of children tend to have lower marital quality. This is because; the presence of children may increase marital roles, less time spent together and also less communication and interaction between the couple. On the other hand, the presence of children may also diminish the intimacy among couples. Other than that, marital duration also show significant relationship with marital quality. This finding is in accord with some studies that reports couples tend to become less compatible with each other over time and the marital quality seem to decline (Umberson & Liu, 2005).

This also happened when couple starts to become bored with each other when they get older similarly to couple with long-term marriage (VanLaningham, et al., 2001). Although, in this study, only years of education show a positive significant with marital quality meaning more educated the women, it will increase the marital quality. In western studies, they suggest that education is the determinant variable that associated with greater marital quality it is believed to related with less stress, depression and also high with personality and communication skill (Amato, et. al., 2003). On current study, the result proves that women with high education have high marital quality. Some previous studies on marital quality also support that education was significantly associated with greater expressions of problems by discussion, and love compare less of doing harm to spouse or hostile with partner (Hoelter, et al., 2004). On job satisfaction, the findings suggest that job satisfaction as an important, significantly correlate and also become the main predictor to explain marital quality. Result indicate, higher job satisfaction lead to higher marital quality. On previous research, job satisfaction shows mixed findings when examined against marital quality. Apparently in this study, the findings support the notion that a happy woman at work is also a happily married person. The roles of personal factors and job satisfaction in influencing marital quality were examined in this study. We find job satisfaction, age of married, marriage duration, years of education and number of children related to level of marital quality. Interestingly, only job satisfaction emerged as a unique predictor of marital quality among the respondents. Older women, those who have longer marital duration and low job satisfaction tend to have poorer marital quality than their counterparts. Further research is needed to extend the meaning

of the findings of this study. In particular, the small sample size of the survey limits the analysis. Bigger sample size is recommended by increasing more number of respondents is required for future research. It is also important to examine other constructs of marital quality such as marital adjustments and happiness since the focus in this study was just on marital satisfaction. Other factors that may explain the cultural context of the respondents may be added to enrich the understandings of the phenomenon.

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