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## The Influence of Social Support on Marriage Satisfaction among Working Women in Selangor, Negeri Sembilan And Melaka

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### Abstract

Marriage is demanded in Islam and Allah s.w.t has made human beings in pairs. Most couples, especially women, choose to work because they want to help their husbands in the financial management of the family. This study was conducted to see the influence of social support on marital satisfaction among working women in the states of Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Melaka. The study also involved a total of 184 respondents from selected states. This study also uses survey techniques by using several questionnaires to measure demographic profile, Inventory of Socially Supportive Behaviors (ISSB) and Enrich Marital Satisfaction (Enrich Marital Satisfaction). Pearson correlation analysis showed that there was a significant relationship of social support to marital satisfaction among career women,  $r = .572^{**}$ ,  $p < .00$ . Furthermore, the researchers found that social support influences marriage satisfaction among working women in the states of Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Melaka, the value of  $R^2 = .327$  shows 32.7% change in the social support variable due to changes in marital satisfaction. Test results F also showed that there was a relationship between social support and marital satisfaction with a significant level of  $p < .05$ . The implications of this study show that there is a need in building social support models in the family especially individuals closest to the couple such as family, peers and neighbours holistically in ensuring one's marital satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Social Support, Marital Satisfaction, Career Women

### Introduction

Marriage satisfaction is a key element in the success of family life. Satisfaction and positive development can only be achieved when the relationship between the couple is coherent and satisfactory (Azeez, 2013). However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic that hit the country since November 2019, it turns out that many workers have been laid off due to many organizations or businesses incurring losses. This makes the national unemployment rate increasing to 3.2% in 2019 to 3.5% in 2020 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2020). This factor also causes most women to start leaving the house to find a job in helping the family financially.

In terms of statistics released by the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2020), the total labour force in Malaysia for working women is 5,949 million populations with a female labour force participation rate of 55.8% compared to the male labor force of 80.8%. However, in the first quarter of 2020, women represented 39% of the labor force in Malaysia at 6.16 million (39%) compared to men at 9.63 million (61%). In 2020, the total female labor force was found to have decreased by 0.2% from 2019 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but most of the laid off women did other work such as small traders to cover the family finances in the face of the outbreak. Women are now more involved in earning a living, regardless of whether they are married or unmarried.

Women are more prone to marital dissatisfaction problems related to the jobs they go through. Men were found to be more likely to withdraw from negative marital interactions, while women were more likely to engage in conversation or conflict (Johnson, 1997). This can be seen through the divorce statistics in 2018 higher than the previous year which is 50356 divorces that occurred compared to 50314 the previous year. 1.6% gross divorce rate per 1000 population has been reported (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2019). Marriage satisfaction is an aspect that is always studied in the field of relationships and family. Marital satisfaction does not involve conflicting elements that lead to problems of dissatisfaction between spouses. In fact, it involves the consensus of the couple on the main issues in marriage namely marriage adjustment, small differences between couples and mutual understanding in increasing marital satisfaction (Qadir et. al., 2013). These things are very important in ensuring the quality of marital relationships that impact the individual and the well-being of the family.

According to Majid and Hudin (2017), household favours can be expressed in the relationship between husband and wife when there is a nature of mutual love, understanding and helping, fulfilling the obligations of the couple and mutual gratitude for the favours obtained. However, sadness and grief can also occur if the couple does not appreciate their partner to the point of losing the value of love and responsibility leading to divorce problems. Recently, many married couples have failed to solve the financial, care and health problems of their children, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, there is also the problem of lack of communication between spouses and children because it makes the excuse of tired work to create a love gap between them (Amato & Previti, 2003; Gigy & Kelly, 1992). There are also researchers who think that the use of ICT such as WhatsApp and Facebook are the causes of the domestic crisis. They spend a lot of time facing gadgets regardless of the feelings of their own family members (Ghani, 2001). This phenomenon is especially noticeable when couples face a period of Movement Control Order (MCO) where most couples interact less and spend a lot of time using gadgets. Putriana (2019) states that problems in communication are due to the couple only focusing on themselves without empathizing with other family members. Conflict in the family occurs due to communication errors in a family.

Social support is also very important element in ensuring the satisfaction of the couple's marriage. According to Chi et al (2011), in studying the ecosystem of marriage, had identified two sources that allow a person to deal with the gloomy situation in marriage, namely social support in the family and community as well as individual self-control. Social support has been found to play an important role in ensuring the relationship between quality of marriage and stress in individual relationships as well as achieving quality of life in reducing

stress and tension (Lavee, 2005; Cobb et al., 2001). Social support is a significant factor in helping individuals who have a partner or child coping with chronic illness (Unger et al., 1996). Reevy (2007), found that women have an advantage in receiving higher social support than men. Low social support affects marital satisfaction negatively to wife, husband and family. According to Robert et al (2005), individuals who are women or men who are married and do not get satisfaction in marriage will have negative effects such as experiencing health disorders (in Zakaria, Shukry & Nen, 2019).

This study attempts to fill in the gaps from previous studies that mostly examine the relationship of social support and marital satisfaction to couples and having couples with chronic diseases (Unger et al., 1996; Teede et al., 2010; Navid et al., 2018; Suriyah & Prakasa 2020) however lack of studies examining these variables among working women.

### **Objective**

- To examine the relationship of social support and marital satisfaction among working women in Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Melaka.
- To analyze the influence of social support and marital satisfaction among working women in Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Melaka.

### **Hypothesis**

- There is a relationship of social support and marital satisfaction among working women in Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Melaka.
- Social support had influenced marital satisfaction among working women in Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Melaka.

### **Methodology**

The respondents of this study consisted of 184 working women around Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Melaka. The factors selected in this study determine the calculation of the study sample size. According to Hair et al (2010), setting a sample size setting using a 5: 1 ratio means that five samples are required in each independent variable in the regression equation. Hair et al (2010) suggested that it be increased to 15 to 20 samples for each independent variable to obtain adequate statistical power conditions. This study has two variables namely 2x 20 making 40 total sample size appropriate in this study. Next, the criteria for selecting respondents is women who have a career and get married for at least a year or more are appropriate to be used as respondents.

The demographic data given attention in this study are its employee sectors such as public sector, private sector, self-employed, unemployed and others. The place of this study involves three states, namely the states of Selangor, Melaka and Negeri Sembilan. The subjects of the study have 3 categories of age groups, namely 26 years to 33 years, 34 years to 41 years and 42 years and above.

This study uses a quantitative research design and uses survey techniques using several questionnaires to measure demographic profile, Inventory of Socially Supportive Behaviors (ISSB) which has 20 items and Enrich Marital Satisfaction has 15 items. The results of the study were analyzed using linear correlation and regression analysis.

**Findings and Discussion**  
**Descriptive Analysis Result**

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents According to Demographic Profile**

<b>Demography</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Occupation		
Public Sector	55	29.9
Private Sector	107	58.2
Self-employed	11	6.0
Not working	8	4.3
Others	3	1.6
Age		
26 years to 33 years	105	57.1
34 years to 41 years	59	32.1
42 years and above	20	10.9
Name of State of working		
Melaka	76	41.3
Negeri Sembilan	18	9.8
Selangor	90	48.9

The distribution of data in Table 1 shows that the working women from the private sector had a higher frequency of 107 people compared to the public sector 55 people, followed by 11 self-employed women, not working with 8 people and 3 for others.

As for the age demographic distribution, there are three groups in this study. The age group of 26 to 33 years for working women showed the highest frequency of 105 people.

While the age group of 34 years to 41 years obtained a frequency of 59 people and the last group was 42 years which obtained a frequency of 20 people.

The demographic distribution of working states for working women in this study had three places. Women working in the state of Selangor obtained the highest frequency of 90 people, followed by the state of Melaka with 76 people. Working women in Negeri Sembilan obtained the lowest frequency of 18 people.

### Inference Analysis Results

**Hypotheses 1:** There is a significant relationship between social support and marital satisfaction among career women.

Table 2: Pearson correlation coefficient of social support with marital satisfaction

Variable	Marital satisfaction
Social Supports	.572**

\*\*  $p < .00$

Table 2 shows the correlation value between social support and marital satisfaction is .572 ( $r = .572$ ) which is a moderate positive correlation value and this correlation value is significant because the significant value is .000 which is smaller than the confidence level ( $p < .05$ ). This indicates that social support has a moderately significant positive relationship with marital satisfaction ( $r = .572$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Therefore, hypotheses are accepted because there is a significant relationship between social support and marital satisfaction [ $r(184) = .572$ ,  $p < .05$ ]. These results indicate that the higher the social support the higher the marital satisfaction among career women.

The findings of this study are supported by previous researchers who found that good social support such as giving encouragement, opinion, listening to expressions and getting help can help to increase marital satisfaction for working women. The balance between family and career for a successful wife and husband should be emphasized to achieve satisfaction in marital relationships (Zakaria at al., 2019). In fact, social support is an effective mechanism to provide marital satisfaction to the wife (Cobb et al., 2015). Couples who are married and can adjust the response in the relationship help increase marital satisfaction for both wife and husband (Surijah & Prakasa, 2020).

**Hypotheses 2:** Social Support influences marital satisfaction among working women in the states of Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Melaka.

The results of the analysis show that for the study population (sample size = 184), one predictor variable that is social support (P1), is a predictor for marital satisfaction score is significant where social support score [ $F(1, 182) = 88.43$ ,  $p < .05$ ], accounted for 32.7% variance ( $R^2 = .323$ ) in marital satisfaction score. This means that social support ( $\beta = .572$ ,  $p < .05$ ) is the main indicator that causes the working woman to obtain marital satisfaction.

Table 3: Contribution of variants in social support to marital satisfaction

	Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Increment R <sup>2</sup>
Model 1	Social Support	.572	.323	-

Table 3 shows the correlation between the criterion variable and the predictor of social support predictor is .572. A value of R<sup>2</sup> of .323 indicates that 32.3% of the change in the criterion variable (marital satisfaction) is due to the change caused by the change in social support.

Table 4: The influence of social support on marital satisfaction

Model	B	Beta	t	Sig
Constant	19.820	-	4.767	0.00
Social Supports	.511	.572	9.404	0.00

Table 4 shows a constant value of 19.820 meaning that if it does not involve independent variables, then the value of marital satisfaction is only at 19.820. From the coefficients, it is found that social support is a significant predictor. It was found that social support had a significant impact (beta = .572). Overall, one independent variable of social support gave a significant positive influence on marital satisfaction tested at a confidence level of 0.5, the statistical t value of the social support variable was 9.404 with a significance level of .00 which is smaller than .05. Thus, the hypotheses are accepted, thus concluded that there is a positive and significant influence between social support on marital satisfaction (t = 9.404, p < .05).

The regression results of this study indicate that social support influences marital satisfaction for working women. This finding is supported by Lirio et al (2007) found that working women in Canada show humility in talking about life success as well as marital satisfaction is a strong influence of social support in the family. In addition, tolerance, discussion is important to avoid conflict in the household, even satisfaction in marriage will be achieved if the husband and wife are tolerant in easing the financial burden (Zakaria et al., 2019). These findings show that working women need social support to get marital satisfaction in order to build better family relationships.

### Conclusion

To conclude, future researchers are proposed to add an element of communication between couples in influencing the marital satisfaction of working women couples in Malaysia. This study also suggests the construction of a model of social support in the family, especially individuals closest to the couple such as family, peers and neighbors holistically in ensuring one's marital satisfaction, especially in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic. Social support

education for the community is also important to ensure the psychological well-being of working women as well as to reduce stress and depression in Malaysia.

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