

THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONALITY SIMILARITY ON RELATIONSHIP QUALITY AMONG COUPLES IN SARAWAK

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ABSTRACT: Prior studies have indicated personality similarity influences the quality of relationship among couples. However, few studies have been conducted in Malaysia especially in Sarawak, and this reflects the utmost need to conduct such a study here in Sarawak. Hence, for this study, the aim is to empirically investigate the relationship between the personality similarity and quality relationship among couples in Sarawak. Samples of personality similarity and quality relationship were collected from 91 heterosexual couples (N=91 couples, 182 individuals) by using Big Five Inventory and Dyadic Adjustment Scale. Personality similarity between the couples were then measured by using absolute difference method. Results obtained from the correlation and multiple regression analysis indicated that the influence of personality similarity in terms of conscientiousness in couples is significant on the quality relationship of the female participants, whereas personality similarity does not have much influence on the quality of relationship for the male participants. However, the result itself cannot be generalized to the entire population considering the sample size is relatively small, and the nature of the research design. It is recommended that longitudinal research design and bigger sample should be used for future research. Apart from that, including qualitative methods such as interviews and case study could also bring more insights for future research.

KEYWORDS: Personality similarity, Romantic relationship, Marital satisfaction, Relationship quality.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Marriage is recognised as a social and ritual union between spouses that validates obligations and rights between them and their children; and between them and their in-laws (Haviland, Prins, McBride, & Walrath, 2017). Marriage are mostly seen as the ultimate goal of most romantically involved couples. Starting a new life after marriage can be both exciting and stressful for the couples. One of the factors to better quality of the relationship and key of happiness of starting a family is believed to be personality trait of the couple (Farooqi, 2014). A recent study (Sayehmir, Kareem, Abdi, Dalvand, & Gheshblagh, 2020) stated that attitude affects marital satisfaction. As attitude depends on personality, it can be concluded that individuals with different personality traits will have different attitudes towards relationship and even marriage and thus influencing their relationship satisfaction. In the Five Factor Model, neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness are the basic dimensions of personality (McCrae & John, 1992). According to Kaufman (2011), recent development in the personality psychology field has indicated that personality traits might have a strong influence over relationship satisfaction and perhaps forecasting of whom we find attractive.

The Government of Malaysia is considering about personality compatibility tests for couples planning for marriage due to the increase divorce rate in Malaysia. The increase of divorce rate could lead to several psychological and social problems such as children with divorced parents having problem in adjustment, suicidal thoughts, stress, depression, and so on. The question on whether personality similarity influences the satisfaction in marriages has not been clarified especially among Malaysian couples. Currently there is lack of study of similar topics here in Malaysia, especially here in Sarawak. Even though there are foreign studies that indicated significance of neuroticism on the quality of relationship, Claxton, O' Rourke, Smith and Delongis (2012) and