

Marital Satisfaction in Multi Ethnic Couples (Chinese-Javanese)

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ABSTRACT

In Indonesia, multi ethnics marital, especially with Chinese, still not fully accepted because of the stereotype. These conditions made some multi-ethnics couples got trouble to marriage or became afraid to continue their marriages. This study intended to analyze the influence factors of multi ethnics marital satisfaction. From 86 subjects (whose already married and became multi ethnics couples) found that there were eight major factors which influenced multi ethnic marital satisfaction; (1) love and intimacy,(2) couples interactions,(3) marriage readiness,(4) family support,(5) religious and nationality background,(6) pre-marital relation,(7) personal hope of marriages,(8) relation with partner's family. The three most dominant factors were (1) love and intimacy, (2) pre-marital relation, (3) relation with partner's family. In this study, pre-marital relationship was also time for each couple to learn about the other cultures and could accept it. Results from this study suggested that pre-marital multi ethnic couples should learn about the cultures of their partner and make a good pre-marital relation, not only with the partner but mostly with the partner's families. For marriage couples, they should concern about eight factors that could influence their marital satisfaction.

Key words : Marital satisfaction, multi ethnics couples (Chinese-Javanese)

1. Introduction

Creating marital happiness and satisfaction is the dream of every people when they are married. Marital satisfaction is a feeling positive that couples can get from marriage (Ponzetti, Jr.,2003). Indonesia as a country with pluralistic society that consists of various ethnics. Plurality is shown by the number of ethnic groups in Indonesia reached 300 ethnic groups inhabiting different places and spread in various islands in Indonesia (Tjio, 2009). Largest ethnic groups in Indonesia are, among others, Javanese, Sundanese, Malay, Balinese, Batak, Dayak, Bugis, and Chinese. Because of these pluralistic society, it is possible that there were inter-ethnic marriages.

Inter-ethnic marriage, between Chinese and Javanese, could link with prejudice between them. One of the causes of prejudices between Chinese and Javanese due to historical legacy of the past (Dutch divisive political). In the past, Dutch divided the population into three groups; the European group, Eastern group foreign such as Chinese, Indian and Arabic, and the group of Natives. Among these three groups, the natives were very far behind, both economically and socially, than the two others. Chinese were described as exclusive, stingy and economic wolves (Winarta, 2008). For the natives, Chinese are opportunities, because they just making money, not patriotic, do not have commitment, exclusive. For the Chinese, natives are lazy, stupid, just looking for fun, would like making profit without sweat (Dahana citations in Susetyo, 2010). Chinese have negative stereotype about Javanese daughters in law. They believe that Javanese daughter's in law

just interest in their properties, and will spend it not properly. The Chinese also doubt about Javanese son's in law ability to improve their economics conditions. According to Susetyo (2010), Javanese families are more open to Chinese's in law and can accepted more to Chinese's in law, than the Chinese families. Sharley (2009) found that the barriers of communication in inter-ethnic marriages are caused by assumptions about equations, a tendency to judge, and high anxiety. There are some factors that influence marital satisfaction, but it is based on marriage in general. In this research, authors would like to examine the factors that influence marital satisfaction in Chinese-Javanese couples.

2. Theories

Marital satisfaction is an individual experience that can be evaluated by any person in response to the level of marriage's enjoyment (Kaplan and Maddux, 2002). Rosen-Grandon (2006), state marital satisfaction as an individual's subjective evaluation of marriage in which individuals feel satisfied if their wishes, wants, and needs can be met. According to Rosen-Grandon (1999), there are several factors that can affect marital satisfaction : a) Expression of affection or love which can be expressed through verbal language and non verbal. Keeping, maintaining, and finding new ways to demonstrate genuine affections, b) Communication, involves trust, desire for sharing, and the ability to express themselves without fear of bad evaluation from others, c) Consensus, the agreement in how to live married life. Topics in which couples should build consensus: how to manage finances, parenting, recreation, and relationships with others in their lives.d) Sexuality and intimacy, make partners feel that they are loved, valued, and interesting, e) Management of conflict, the ability to resolve a conflict in the relationship, f) Distribution of roles, is also related to the marital satisfaction. Lee (2009) divides the factors that influence marriage into two, before marriage and after marriage. Factors influencing marital satisfaction before marriage are: a) Marriage of parents. If parent of a couple having a happy marriage, the couple has a greater chance to have a life good marriage. b) Childhood, if it was fun and "normal" have greater chance to succeed in marital life. c) Long period of introduction. In general, the longer the introductory period the more likely a marriage will work because both partners can get to know characteristics of each individual before they were married. d) Age at marriage, in general, couples who marry at an older age has a more stable married. The couples marry at the age of twenty years and over have twice longer marriage than those who marry below the age of twenty years. e) Parental approval, relates to the success of marriage. f) Pregnancy before marriage, have a higher failure rate about 50% and within five years. g) Reasons to get married. Marriage is built on the basis of understanding and attention has higher success than marriages that began with the wrong reasons such as getting married in order to leave the house, married to rebel, or get married because they want to be "mature". Factors influencing marital satisfaction after marriage starts are: a) Democratic attitudes. When husband and wife work together and compromise to reach a mutual reach a mutual agreement is an attitude that works best in marital life. b) Partner's family. Each family has an interest, values, education, social background, and culture that are different from each other. c) Joint interest. Couples who have similar interest is more likely to be involved together in an activity so they can develop understanding and empathy on one another. d) Similarity. The marriage will work better if there were similarity in educational background, religion, nationality and socio-economic status between husband and wife. e) Children, can strength a good marriage relationship, but only can sustain a bad marriage. f) Communication. Couple with a happy marriage would talk more often to

one another, more sensitive to the feelings of partner, and using non-verbal communication more effectively. g) Role. It will be better if couples have similar role with their expectations. h) Personality traits such as emotional stability, self-control, affection, responsibility, favorable self perception, and optimism correlated with a good marriage. i) Religious participation. The relationship between religiosity and marital success has been proven for many years. Jernian and Nock (citations) in Barlow, 2009) found that 1/3 couples who come to church every week avoid divorce.

According to Saxton (citations in Husodo, 2007) there are three basic needs that must be met for marital satisfaction, namely as: a) Material needs, or biological needs such as food, clothing, housing, regularity of the household (house cleaning), and money. b) Sexual needs, c) Psychological needs. It includes sense of security, cooperation, appreciation, and commitment, love, intimacy, and humor.

The term ethnicity is not only about racial groups, but also about groups, that have the same origin, the same religion, language, nationality (Narwoko & Suyanto, 2006). Chinese communities in Indonesia are ethnic minority. Chinese ethnics divided into two groups: a) Full-blood Chinese, and b) Peranakan Chinese. The full blooded Chinese groups are those which come from Chinese immigrants and still retains the original Chinese culture. The group was reluctant to adopt the custom in the new environment. Peranakan Chinese. This group does not use Chinese language, and married with other Peranakan groups or even with non-Chinese man/woman (Sarwono citations in Lanny, 2005). Today is very difficult to find a full-blooded group (except for some immigrants from Chinese). Most Chinese people have been adjusting to the social environment, economics, politics, and culture of Indonesia. The Chinese looked at the non-Chinese as people who do not civilized, lazy, unproductive, and the people who are not independent. Non-Chinese regard the Chinese as being arrogant, rich, but do not have the social awareness, and opportunities. According to the result of research conducted by Susetyo (2002) about the pattern of inter ethnic relation based on stereotypes of Chinese and Javanese, found that the Javanese are described as rough, easy despair, lack of caution, jealousy, low motivation, temperament emotional, and negative attitude toward the ethnic Chinese. However, the positive stereotypes of the Javanese are friendly, gentle, sociable, prefer work together, loyal friend, have a sense of nationalist, has a high tolerance, and manner.

According to Koentjaraningrat (2002), it is said that the Javanese basically think that life as a series of events filled with misery, which must be run with fortitude and resignation. They are usually can accept the situation as fate. They also develop attitude tolerance and conformity with one another (Hariyono citations in Susetyo, 2010). The Javanese culture is also known for its social value, which could maintain a state of harmony in society. They usually shy away from conflict by letting it passed. The Javanese are almost no strong motivation to work. They work just to be alive. The Javanese have characteristics such as smooth, suave, polite, modest, and respect for customs. From Javanese's perception, the Chinese were portrayed as people who opportunist, only concern about making money, not patriotic because it is always oriented to the Chinese, no commitment, rich, and exclusive. Chinese described by Javanese as selfish, stingy, luxurious style, less sociable, and lack of tolerance. The positive traits of Chinese from the frame of Javanese are disciplines, confident, and resilient in the works.

In this study by using a combination of theory elicitation process and preliminary survey, in general marital satisfaction is influenced by some factors, which are: a) Marriage of the parents, b) Childhood. c) Long period of introduction. d) Age when marriage, e) Parental approval, f) Reasons to get married, g) Similarities background, h) Agreement resolving

conflict, i) Expectations of the role, j) Personality, k) Want to learn about ethnic partner, l) Willing to adapt to the new family environment, m) Relationship with the partner's family, n) Religious, o) Distributions of roles, p) Children, q) Economic condition, r) Expression of affection, s) Communication, t) Sexuality and intimacy, u) Mutual trust between husband and wife, v) Mutual respect to ethnic differences, w) Mutual complimentary.

3. Methodology

Subjects used in this research were couples that marriage is still undergoing, and they are Chinese and Javanese, already have children, and having the same religion. Subjects were chosen by a non-random sampling technique which is snowball sampling. Data are collected by using two questionnaires: a) identity and demographic data, current marital conditions and personal report about marriage, b) marital satisfaction. Data analyzed using factor analyzing.

4. Results

Subjects in this research were 86 married men/women have characteristics : 52 (60.47%) female, 34 (39.53%) male, Javanese female 31 (36.04%), Chinese female 21 (24.41%), Javanese male 15 (17.44%) and Chinese male 19 (22.09%), mostly age 40-59 years old (52.33%), mostly married at age 19-39 years old (94.19%), mostly have under-graduate education (44.29%), mostly work in private sectors (43.02%), mostly live in their own house (66.27%), mostly live only with spouse and children (72.09%), mostly both are the family bread-winner (55.81%).

The three top reasons that they decided to married with difference ethnic partner: love (23.78%), feel suitable with partner (15.24%) and human being are always the same (12.20%). The top obstacle when they married is no parents' support (21.78%).

By using 51 items as represent 23 factors that could influence marital satisfaction, after the process of component matrix, only 49 items can use. From the process of rotated component matrix, all factors categorized eight factors. The summarizing and naming of the eight factors are shown in table 1.

Table 1a. Name of Factors of Marital Satisfaction for Multi Ethnic Couples-Factor 1

	Item	Aspects	Name of Factor
Factor 1	Item 7	Expression of affect	Love and Intimacy
	Item 9	Take and Give Relation	
	Item 17	Sexual and Intimacy	
	Item 18	Mutual Trust	
	Item 30	Willingness to learn partner's ethnic	
	Item 32	Agreement in conflict resolving	
	Item 33	Expression of affect	
	Item 36	Reason to married	
	Item 50	Personality (affection)	

Table 1b. Name of Factors of Marital Satisfaction for Multi Ethnic Couples-Factor 2

	Item	Aspects	Name of Factor
Factor 2	Item 4	Children	Couples' Interactions in Marriage
	Item 19	Willingness to adapt with new family's environment	
	Item 20	Mutual respect about ethnic differences	
	Item 21	Communication	
	Item 24	Reason to marriage	
	Item 26	Mutual Complimentary	
	Item 27	Mutual Trust	
	Item 37	Expectancy of role	
	Item 39	Children	

Table 1c. Name of Factors of Marital Satisfaction for Multi Ethnic Couples-Factor 3

	Item	Aspects	Name of Factor
Factor 3	Item 3	Role Distribution	Marriage Readiness
	Item 12	Agreement in resolving conflict	
	Item 14	Willingness to learn partner's ethnic	
	Item 22	Mutual Respect about ethnic differences	
	Item 29	Age when marriage	
	Item 35	Personality (self control & emotional stability)	
	Item 43	Sexuality and intimacy	
	Item 44	Age when married	
	Item 46	Willingness to adapt with new family's environment	

Table 1d. Name of Factors of Marital Satisfaction for Multi Ethnic Couples-Factor 4

	Item	Aspects	Name of Factor
Factor 4	Item 11	Blessings from parents	Family's Support
	Item 23	Childhood	
	Item 25	Blessings from parents	
	Item 28	Parents' marriage	
	Item 40	Parents' marriage	
	Item 45	Economic condition	

Table 1e. Name of Factors of Marital Satisfaction for Multi Ethnic Couples-Factor 5

	Item	Aspects	Name of Factor
Factor 5	Item 13	Religious participation	Background (religion and nationality)
	Item 38	Religious participation	
	Item 41	Similarity of background (religion)	
	Item 48	Similarity of background (nationality)	

Table 1f. Name of Factors of Marital Satisfaction for Multi Ethnic Couples-Factor 6

	Item	Aspects	Name of Factor
Factor 6	Item 8	Length of Pre-Marital period	Pre-Marital Period
	Item 34	Length of Pre-Marital period	
	Item 47	Similarity of background (education)	
	Item 51	Personality (self perception)	

Table 1g. Name of Factors of Marital Satisfaction for Multi Ethnic Couples-Factor 7

	Item	Aspects	Name of Factor
Factor 7	Item 1	Communication	Personal Expectation of Marriage
	Item 2	Personality (responsibility)	
	Item 6	Economic condition	
	Item 15	Role expectation	
	Item 16	Role distribution	

Table 1h. Name of Factors of Marital Satisfaction for Multi Ethnic Couples-Factor 8

	Item	Aspects	Name of Factor
Factor 8	Item 5	Relation with partner's family	Relation with partner's family
	Item 10	Relation with partner's family	

Among the eight factors, the three dominant factors that could influence marital satisfaction are: 1) love and intimacy, 2) pre-marital introductory, 3) relations with the partner's family. These results were shown in table 2.

Table 2. Stepwise Regression Analysis Factors of Marital Satisfaction

Model	Factor	Adjusted R Square	F	p
1	Factor 1 : Love and Intimacy	0.740	242.358	0.000
2	Factor 1 and Factor 6 : Love & Intimacy and Pre-marital Introductory	0.757	133.051	0.000
3	Factor 1 and Factor 8 : Love & Intimacy and Relationship	0.774	97.850	0.000

	with partner's family			
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5. Discussion s

The author suggests there are 23 factors that shape satisfaction in multi ethnic marriages: a) Marriage of the parents, b) Childhood, c) Long period of introduction, d) Age at marriage, e) Parental approval, f) Reasons to get married, g) Similarities background, h) Agreement resolving conflict, i) Expectations of the role, j) Personality, k) Want to learn about ethnic partner, l) Willing to adapt to the new family environment, m) Relationship with the partner's family, n) Religious, o) Distributions of roles, p) Children, q) Economic condition, r) Expression of affection, s) Communication, t) Sexuality and intimacy, u) Mutual trust between husband and wife, v) Mutual respect to ethnic differences, w) Mutual complimentary. From the factor analysis process showed that the all factors forming marital satisfaction is mapped into eight major factors, namely ;a) love and intimacy, b) Couples' interactions in marriage, c) Marriage readiness, d) Family support factor, e) Background factor (religion and nationality), f) Pre-marital introductory, g) Personal hopes about marriage, f) Relationship with partner's family.

Love and Intimacy factor. This factor is a combination of several items including expression of affection, sexuality, togetherness, mutual trust between husband and wife, willing to learn about ethnic couples, a good conflict management, reason for marriage, and the subject and spouse's personalities. So love and intimacy that could influence multi ethnic couples is not love and intimacy in general, but must be supported by a willingness to learn about the spouse' ethnic. It becomes important thing that could make adaptation process between Javanese-Chinese couples easier.

Couples' interactions in marriage factor. This factor is formed through a joint of some items that include children, willingness to adapt to the new family's environment, couples mutual respect, mutual trust, good communication, the reasons to get married, mutual complimentary, and role expectations. From this factor, we knew that multi ethnic couples should build their relations based on good communication, trust respect, and willingness to adapt not only with the spouse but with the new families. Children and realistic hope of role expectations are also important things that could influence the quality of multi ethnic couples relations in their marriage.

Marriage readiness. This factor include the distribution of roles, the ability to resolve conflict, learning about ethnic couples, mutual respect about ethnic differences, age at marriage, the personality of subject and spouse (self control and emotional stability), sexual and intimacy, and again willingness to adapt with a new family environment. Multi ethnic couples had to make sure that they were ready for marriage, which is a whole bunch of changes; changes in roles, changes in daily routine activities, and to be able to accept the differences between him/her with spouse. That is why age when they got married and couples' personalities also include in this factor. They have to be matured enough to accept all the differences and manage their conflict smoothly to improve their understanding.

Family support. This factor included parental consent, childhood, parents' marriage, and economic condition. For Chinese-Javanese couples, parental approval is significant because of the stereotype against these two ethnics. Therefore economic condition is also become an aspect in this factor. The Chinese usually have negative view/belief if Javanese daughter in law will spent their treasures, whereas Javanese sons in law usually not have a good ability in economics (Susetyo, 2010). How subject raise as a child in

his/her childhood also becomes an important thing in this factor, because it will influence how they will build relation with parents and parents in law after the marriage.

Background of the couples. This factor is a combination of some items that include the similarity of religion and nationality background, and the participation in religious activities. For Chinese-Javanese couples, it is more important to have the same religion and nationality, so they can face their ethnic differences easier. The same religion is one of their considerations when decided to marriage with different ethnic partner. They can still make togetherness in religious activities, for Indonesian people marriage is still one of the religion's rules.

Pre-marital factor include a long introductory period, the similarity background in education, personality of the subject (self perception). Because of the stereotype believes against Chinese and Javanese ethnics in Indonesia, therefore couples from these two ethnics must spend more time in pre-marital period. They have to learn and accept all their differences and make their parents believe that their partner was not the same as the stereotype. Lee (2009) states that the longer the period of introduction the greater possibility of a marriage will work because both partners can recognize the characteristics of their partners before they married. This period of learn could be easier, if they have similarity background in education. The higher one's education, then the tolerance for any differences will be higher too, so the individual could be more open to multi ethnic marriages. The high levels of education will also affect individuals in perceiving himself. The better the individual perceiving himself, the more they can appreciate their partners.

Personal hopes of marriage. This factor consists of a combination of several items; communication, subject and spouse personalities in responsibility, economic conditions, role expectations, and role distribution. Individual usually have some hopes about him/her live when marriage, including the characteristics of the spouse, economic condition, roles as a married man/woman. If their hopes could be met in their real marriage, it will upraise their marital satisfaction. Fulfillment of role expectations in marriage will shape satisfaction marriage. Lee (2009) states that the expectation of the role is one of important factors in marital satisfaction. Javanese-Chinese couples, like other couples also perceive these things as important in their marriage. The important personality characteristics that link to this factor is responsibility and good communication, because it could make hopes become reality or if it didn't happened as the same as their hopes, at least they showed their effort to achieve their hopes. Individual with responsibility when marriage will take all their roles and make the role's distribution becomes fair/equal.

Relationships with partner's family. For Chinese-Javanese couples, relationship with families with different ethnics becomes the important factor. It is related to the specific stereotype of these two ethnics as mentioned before. And a good relationship with partner's family have to build when they still on pre-marital period.

From these eight factors that could influence marital satisfaction in Chinese-Javanese couples, by using regression analysis found that factors: the Love and Intimacy, Pre-marital induction, and Relationship with partner's family became the most dominant factors for marital satisfaction. These three dominant factors consists specific things that correlated with Chinese-Javanese couples marriage satisfaction which are the decision to married based on love, learning successfully the ethnics of the partners before marriage and build a good relationship with the family of partners before marriage. Therefore the pre-marital induction also became one of the dominant factors.

6. Suggestions

This study has several limitations that could be the thing that should consider more in the next research. The limitations were not inquiry about the area/the city where the subject live and growing up (there are some area in Indonesia that more open to mixture ethnics), not asked further if the subject had never married, then married with the same or different ethnicity, only using subjects that have the same religion with spouse.

Suggestions for subjects from this study the love and intimacy, the relationship with partner's family were the dominant factors, therefore they still have to improve in continuing efforts. If subjects have already success with your multi-ethnic marriage, they could share their experience to their children and teach them to be more open with the diversity. For couples who were in pre-marital relationship, since this period found to be one of the dominant factor for marital satisfaction, so they have to spend it with mutual learning activities about each ethnics and persuasively introduce their partner to their parents in order to start a good relationship with the families. For marriage counselors, what this study found could improve their knowledge about specific factors that should be concern about multi-ethnics marriage, especially Javanese and Chinese.

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