

Perception of Marital Quality among Young Married Couples in Selangor

¹*Siti Marziah Zakaria, ²Asila Nur Adlynd Mohd Shukry, ³Salina Nen,
⁴Nor Ba'yah Abdul Kadir

ABSTRACT-- *The divorce rate in Malaysia is on the rise due to deterioration in the quality of marriage among young married couples. The objective of this study is to explore perceptions of marital quality among young married couples in Selangor. This qualitative study uses the phenomenological approach with the involvement of 11 informants who have been married from one (1) to ten (10) years. They are selected through the purposive sampling method. The semi-structured interview method is used in the data collection process. Data are analyzed using the thematic analysis. Results of the study show five (5) key themes to describe the quality of marriage: tolerance, mutual understanding, complementary, sense of respect, and life management as derived from the data. Themes found are fundamental to the building of a strong marriage. The findings of this study can meet the needs of related parties such as the Islamic Development Department of Malaysia (JAKIM) to further strengthen modules for pre- and post-marriage courses. Findings can also be used by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development in devising an action plan to improve the quality of marriage for young married couples in Malaysia. This study can also help counsellors in developing appropriate interventions that could help young married couples. Findings can be used as inputs for comprehensive plans and solutions that may indirectly contribute to reducing the divorce rate in Malaysia.*

Key Words-- *Quality of marriage, young couples, tolerance, divorce*

I. INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a commitment and responsibility that a married couple must bear together (Hariri & Raihanah 2014). Having an eternal marriage has always been one of the goals of married couples (Siti et al. 2018). A bond is formed in relationships when couples are actively involved, giving the best of themselves and accepting one another, and influencing each other (Johnson, Makinen & Milikin 2001). Johnson, Makinen, and Milikin (2001) also state that the bond formed will create a sense of security, comfort, and intimacy between the individuals.

¹*Centre of Research for Psychology and Human Well-being, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, National University of Malaysia.,marziah@ukm.edu.my.

²Centre of Research for Psychology and Human Well-being, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, National University of Malaysia.

³Centre of Research for Psychology and Human Well-being, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, National University of Malaysia.

⁴Centre of Research for Psychology and Human Well-being, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, National University of Malaysia.

Most couples wanting to get married put the concept of love as one of the important criteria in choosing a marriage partner. According to Suzana, Suhaimi, Sarah, and Chong (2012), love is believed to be the vital agent of happiness in a marriage. However, the experience of love after marriages has changed, with many couples feeling that they are no longer in love with and being loved by their spouses. With time, the euphoric experience of romantic love felt by most newlyweds will eventually change to a more committed one after the marriage.

According to Suriyani, Fatahyah, and Aina (2009), marriages will be successful when both spouses commit to each other and cooperate in any situation. Researchers have studied the factors that distinguish acceptable and good marriages from bad and poor quality marriages. However, couples' perceptions of the criteria of a good marriage are still mostly unexplored. Changing times also bring about changes in expectations and perceptions of good and fulfilling marriages.

Negative experiences in marriage can be an obstacle to building and maintaining a long-lasting marriage and family. These negative experiences can affect the quality of a marriage. Previous studies have found that unhappily married individuals experienced negative effects such as health disorders (Robert et al., 2005) and depression (Ismail, 2004; Low & Stocker, 2005). This situation, of course, also has great implications for their families and careers. Unfulfilling and bad marriages also have a significant impact on the well-being of children's emotional and mental development.

As a result, many marriages ended in divorce. In Malaysia, the rate of divorce among the Malays has been on the increase annually. The situation is alarming as statistics have shown that there has been an increase in divorce registrations every year over the last three years. Divorce rates are increasing among the newlyweds. According to the National Population and Family Development Board (LPPKN), an agency under the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (KPWKM), as many as 1/3 of divorce cases occur within the first five years of marriage. Divorces certainly harm family members and are associated with poor quality of parent-child relationships (Yu, Petit, Lansford, Dodge & Bates 2010).

Hence, this article will explore the perception of marital quality among young married couples (within 1 to 10 years of marriage) in Selangor. Their perceptions of the quality of marriage will assist relevant parties in planning the modules of post-marriage courses and programs to help young couples in maintaining their marriages. The results of this study can also serve as an input for policymakers in updating the National Family Policy.

Methodology

II. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study selected several locations around Selangor where informants worked in government. This study used the qualitative method by in-depth interviewing individuals who are married within one (1) to 10 years. This method was chosen to explore the quality of marriage through conflict and adjustment of marital life. Thus, this method is very useful because it enables researchers to obtain and digest more detailed information than the quantitative method which focuses only on numerical data using statistical means.

The researchers used phenomenological design in this study for the data collection and analysis, and subsequent reporting. Phenomenological design means an understanding of a concept or phenomenon (Othman, 2017). The phenomenon refers to a situation, event, concept or experience. According to Othman (2017), this phenomenological design is a theoretical framework that focuses on how daily experiences influence and shape human behaviour. It involves the understanding of how informants interpret events and accord meaning to events that occur in their daily lives.

Phenomenologists view human behaviour as it is said and done as a result of how humans interpret their world (Taylor & Bogdan, 1997). The phenomenological design aims to understand research informants through their views and perspectives (Othman, 2017). This is because people tend to reflect on what they do and say when they are conscious and this gives meaning to everything they experience in their daily lives.

III. RESEARCH SAMPLING

The sampling method used by the researcher was non-probability sampling, using a purposive sampling method in which the researchers have predetermined the information or characteristics required of the informant. The sample size for qualitative studies cannot be determined from the onset of such studies using the quantitative method because the sample selection and data analysis are on-going processes to discover a saturation point where no new information is found (Othman, 2017). This sampling technique is a sampling procedure where only a group of subjects with specific characteristics will be selected intentionally as informants of the study based on the criteria set and the specific purpose of the study. According to Bernard (2002), this purposeful design assists the researchers in recruiting knowledgeable informants who are willing to provide the experience and information suitable to the research.

In this study, researchers have used the sampling techniques aimed at finding married couples. Research informants have to meet the characteristics set by the researchers so that they can provide the information needed. Therefore, several criteria have been set for selecting the informants of the study which are a couple who have been married for one (1) to ten (10) years and living in the state of Selangor. The period of marriage within one (1) to ten (10) years was set as the criterion for selecting informants because this period is the starting point for married couples to adjust to the marital life. They should also be legally married under the Malaysian's religions and law. The informants were ensured to be monogamous, with relationships consisting of only one male/female spouse.

IV. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The main research instrument for this qualitative study was the researchers themselves. Therefore, the researchers needed to have some effective strategies to carry out the study to gather a lot of important and meaningful data in finding answers to the research questions. The researchers were also required to ensure that there was no element of bias and injustice during the evaluation process throughout the study.

Additionally, a voice recorder was instrumental in carrying out the data collection. It helped in the process of collecting data as it recorded every detail of conversations with an informant without limitation because every piece of information provided by an informant was important for the study. The researchers have also prepared ten (10) semi-structured interview questions that have been put through the verification process for construct and content validity.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is one of the most important processes in a study after data collection has been completed as it enables good and useful findings based on the answers provided by the informants. Othman (2017) argues that data analysis is an analytical process in which the researchers examine the meaning of human words and actions. This refers to the process of interpreting the responses and answers provided by informants to produce accurate and meaningful data. Data analysis is a process that involves the process of organizing, structuring and interpreting the data collected. The data for this study were analyzed using the thematic analysis to extract key themes from the data. Findings and Discussion.

VI. BACKGROUND OF THE INFORMANTS

The study involved 11 informants living around Selangor. The informants consisted of four (4) men and seven (7) women. They were married based on love and some marriages were arranged by family. They were between 23 and 44 years old. The duration of the marriage was between one and ten years (Table 1).

All informants were married women aged between the 30s and 50s. The informants lived in several districts around Selangor, including Rawang, Banting, and Seri Kembangan. All of them were full-time working women in the private or government sectors and have at least two (2) children. They held different positions ranging from the lowest level (cleaning workers) to the highest-level positions such as managers in the private sector and deputy directors in the government sector.

Table 1: Demographic Information of Informants

	Informant's Age	Spouse's Age	Marriage Period (Year)	Race	Location of residence
Informant 1	23	23	1	Malay	Bangi
Informant 2	23	29	1	Malay	Klang
Informant 3	25	31	1	Malay	Dengkil
Informant 4	23	23	2	Malay	Bangi
Informant 5	23	23	2	Malay	Sungai Buloh

Informant 6	25	28	1	Malay	Kajang
Informant 7	25	25	1	Malay	Sepang
Informant 8	44	40	10	Malay	Dengkil
Informant 9	39	23	1	Malay	Petaling Jaya
Informant 10	33	40	10	Indian	Sepang
Informant 11	28	28	5	Malay	Bangi

VII. QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

The quality of marriage among married individuals has revealed five key themes derived from the analysis of the interview data (See Table 2). The themes are (i) tolerance, (ii) mutual understanding, (iii) complementary, (iv) sense of respect, and (v) life management.

Table 2: Themes and Sub-themes of Marital Quality

Theme	Sub-themes
1. Tolerance	i. Distribution of house chores ii. Discussion iii. Financial management
2. Mutual understanding	i. Understanding individual roles ii. Accepting spouse's strengths and weaknesses
3. Complementary	i. Openness between spouses ii. Minimising ego
4. Sense of respect	i. Seeking spouse's consent ii. Respecting spouse's decision
5. Life management	i. Work-family life balance ii. Self-improvement

VIII. TOLERANCE

Tolerance is the key theme derived from the research data. All informants emphasised the importance of tolerance in relationships. They needed to be tolerant in almost every aspect of life after marriage. Without

tolerance, conflicts would inevitably arise with each one going their chosen ways. For husbands with working wives, this principle of tolerance has been practiced since the first year of marriage. They tolerated several key issues: (i) division of house chores (ii) discussion, and (iii) financial management.

i) Division of house chores

Most informants explained that they feel that their marriage was of good quality because there was an equal division of house chores between spouses. For them, house chores needed to be done together to ease the stress of a tired spouse. Informant 1 said, “So, we have divided the house chores la. Because we both work and are tired, so we do it together la. Haa like that.”

Informant 10 explained that the division of house chores did not require guidelines as it relied on their common sense to do something without being asked because they were clear about their roles and responsibilities. Informant 10 also pointed out that the division of house chores eased the burden on them as an exhausted couple after the day's work.

We divide our chores but not like I put the guidelines like my wife has to do this and that. No! Because it's like common sense that if I do this she would be like oh ok she thinks she should do like this. I won't tell her to do everything. Because if you want to talk about tiredness, no because both are tired and we both work. So, the division of house chores is not a problem.

(Informant 10)

ii) Discussion

Researchers also found that some informants have expressed that their marriages were good because they had a tolerant attitude in every discussion. In Informant 7's context, her marriage to the spouse did not go through the romance phase as they got married without dating and without truly getting to know each other first. Therefore, being tolerant during discussions was very important after getting married, especially in marriages such as those who got married without taking the time to know each other. They needed to adjust to the spouse's way of life and refrained from doing something that the spouse did not like to avoid conflict in the marriage. Discussions were very important in decision-making and problem-solving. All decisions made must be mutually agreed upon.

We did not date for a long time, or actually, we did not go on dates as we got married right away. So, there were so many things we didn't know about the other person. But slowly I saw he didn't like this and that as we lived together, so I avoid doing things he doesn't like. As long as we can adjust or follow his way, then it will be easier to avoid conflict.

(Informant 7)

Informant 4 agreed to that notion and said the same thing when the Informant showed a tendency to make decisions such as taking turns in visiting their families. They also learned to adapt to the spouse's home situation so as not to cause any conflict in the relationship.

And after we got married, we each take turns in going back to the family's home every week like whose turn this week and then next week's turn. So, each of us has to adapt to the new situation to avoid any conflict.
(Informant 4)

iii) Financial management

Some informants believed that a marriage will be of good quality when each couple be tolerant of each other by helping to ease the financial burden. This is in line with what Informant 8 said, "In terms of the financial management for the household, we use a single fund using my money, but if it is not enough, then we use hers". Informant 8 and his spouse have shared the household financial burden by having a family fund and tolerance for financial management by first using the husband's money before using his spouse's fund for household expenses.

Based on the informants' statements, it is evident that there was an attitude of tolerance between spouses that can influence the quality of a marriage. The researchers found that most of the informants had a tolerant attitude toward the spouses in various aspects such as the division of house chores, discussion, and financial management. The three aspects were very important in a marriage as these kept the marriages from any conflict that may affect the quality of marriage.

Tolerance is one of the themes that most informants agreed upon. The division of house chores could improve the quality of a marriage as it can ease the burden of the spouse. On the other hand, previous studies suggest that the opposite may occur when an increase in marital sharing by husbands can reduce the quality of the husbands' marriage but it improves the quality of marriage among wives (Amato et al. 2003). Being open to discussions also plays an important role in determining the quality of a marriage as it involves the effectiveness of communication between couples. The quality of marriage also depends on the communication style of the couple as communication plays an important role in the relationship (Lavner & Bradbury, 2016). Communication is one of the mediums in decision making, problem-solving, discussion and the medium of reaching an agreement (Siti Marziah et al., 2018; Lavner & Bradbury, 2016).

Tolerance in the management of household finances is also very important among couples because the financial element is one of the important factors in establishing a marriage. Financial problems can be linked to conflicts in a marriage. However, some studies consider financial problems to be less of a contributor to divorce as it contributes no more than 5% to the divorce variance (Siti Marziah et al., 2018; Kendal, 2003).

IX. MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

Mutual understanding is also the key to a quality marriage. Mutual understanding needs to be built and worked on. It is not easy to reach an understanding because married couples come from different backgrounds with contrasting cultures and values. Many people gave up on a marriage because they felt they had no mutual understanding. Therefore, this aspect should always be maintained in a marriage. This can be achieved by (i) understanding individual roles and (ii) accepting the strengths and weaknesses of the spouse.

i) Understanding individual roles

Based on the data, a number of informants said that the quality of their marriages improved when they began to understand their responsibilities and roles after marriage. Besides that, they felt more at ease in dealing with their problems and at the same time, their financial management improved as they understood their roles without causing any conflict. Informant 7 echoed this statement with “Alhamdulillah, we are better off as we begin to understand our responsibilities, our finances thankfully are getting better every day, and soon we will have a baby. And we're starting to be better and more confident in facing problems”.

ii) Accepting the strengths and weaknesses of the spouse

Researchers also found that many informants reported a higher quality of their marriages when couples understood each other and accepted each other's strengths and weaknesses. This is in line with what Informant 9 has stated where after getting married, they have come to understand the spouse better and have begun to recognise the weaknesses and strengths of the spouse. She also said that they were beginning to understand the needs of their partners.

The quality of the marriage has improved because I think that down the road we tend to understand each other very well because we live together, and we accept that each has a weakness and strong points. We know which particular thing our spouse doesn't like. So we give and take a lot la. He does the same la.

(Informant 9)

The statements provided by the informants indicate that their marriages were considered of higher quality because they have a mutual understanding. This is especially important in a marriage as it can avoid misunderstandings about their roles and responsibilities. Couples who understood each other will be at peace with each other. After a relatively long period of marriage, the quality of a marriage was reported to have improved due to this attitude and their acceptance of one another.

When both husband and wife work fulltime, the marriage is likely to face challenges in fulfilling the tasks and roles of the workplace and the household. Therefore, each couple must understand each other's workload and stresses so that a happy and good quality of marriage can be achieved. In marriage, apart from love, a deep understanding and willingness to accept the partner's background as also a part of his/her personality is vital (Anjani & Suryanto 2006). Anjani and Suryanto (2006) dully emphasise that each couple must continue to learn about life together. They should be mentally prepared and have the self-control to accept the strengths and weaknesses of their spouses.

X. COMPLEMENTARY

The next major theme is that couples who complement each other will be able to build a better marriage. This can be seen when there was (i) openness between spouses, and ii) minimising ego.

i) Openness between spouses

Most informants have shown openness between spouses in various aspects such as willingness to learn and teach the spouse in every aspect for the betterment of the spouse and themselves. Informant 7 relayed that she and her spouse have this attitude when they helped each other and were willing to learn from the spouse on how to manage their household needs and chores. Therefore, they needed to be aware of the weaknesses of the spouse to be helped and the strength of the spouse that can be shared.

Every spouse has weaknesses and strengths so make sure you know what his weaknesses and advantages are. So like my husband and I, he lacks the management skills so I help and teach him slowly how to manage. I lack the knowledge of housekeeping skill so he is the one teaching to me to do things at home. So, each one should know the weaknesses and strengths of the partner.

(Informant 7)

The Informant also emphasised that the process of learning from the partner was very important in a relationship to maintain the quality of the marriage.

But in my 10 years' period, now, when I am with my husband who is very structured, so I learn from him. So I learn from him and then now people see my changes that are very positive and good *la*. Then in terms of my husband, he was kind of a quiet person, so I can see he has changed from being a very introvert person. There's a lot of improvement *la* because he's started to accept people because he learned from me because he saw me like that *la*.

(Informant 8)

ii) Minimising ego

Most informants tried to lower their egos when dealing with their spouses and prepared to receive a rebuke from the spouse for mutual benefit. Researchers found that Informants 9 and 10 have expressed their views on this subject as per their experiences. Informant 9 explained that she would lower her ego every time conflicts occurred, asking the husband to explain what was wrong with her so that she could improve and maintain their relationship. The 9th Informant related that "... I actually went down, I really had no ego at that time and just told him *la* to tell me what I did wrong so that I can change it *la*..."

In corroborating this, Informant 10 said a similar point but in a different situation where he lowered his ego and accepted his wife's corrections in reciting the Quran, saying, "In recitation also, sometimes she really corrected me a lot. So sometimes I'll lower my ego *la*. So, it's complete *la*."

Therefore, from the perspective of informants, the higher quality of a marriage can be achieved if the couple complemented each other by minimising their ego and being open-minded. Some informants reported openness to learn something from their spouse for self-improvements such as in terms of home and personal managements. This attitude was very important in the relationship as it helped the couple to change for the better and to maintain the marriage.

In the context of the Muslim couples, husbands and wives should complement each other in the religious aspect, in terms of improving the quality of worship and faith. Previous studies have shown that the involvement of husband and wife in religious activities can increase the sense of responsibility and commitment to the spouse, contributing to reduce disputes that can lead to divorce and at the same time, increasing marital satisfaction (Nurhanisah & Raihanah, 2016; Brandt & Sarah, 2003).

XI. RESPECT

The fourth major theme of this study is the respect married couples desired in the household. Husbands demanded that wives respect their husbands as heads of the family and preserve their good names. The wives also expected their husbands to respect their rights as wives and protect their dignity. Respecting each other is one of the most important aspects of the quality of a marriage. Among the sub-themes under this theme are (i) seeking spouse's consent, and (ii) respecting spouse's decision.

i) Seeking spouse's consent

Informant 4 said that there has been a change in the decision-making process after marriage. Before marriage, she was free to make decisions for herself without the need to get input from other people, but after marriage, she tended to seek the permission of her spouse before doing anything or discuss before the decision was made. This indicates that Informant 4 has a respectful attitude toward her partner in every issue.

In terms of decision-making, before this, I can do whatever I want to, no matter what because I didn't have to think of anyone else but when we got married anything we have to talk about it. I mean, ask for permission to do something so we have to talk about it *la*.

(Informant 4)

ii) Respecting spouse's decision

Most informants reported better quality of their marriage because they respected the decision of the spouses. Informant 9 related that after a long period of marriage, her husband respected her and began to accept the ideas she presented because her ideas were better than his. Informant 9 explained: "So now, he respects me more *la* and he starts to accept my decision because he thinks that my idea is probably a good decision than his."

Similarly, Informant 10 submitted that his wife has the right to give her opinion on every aspect of their lives. According to him, his wife has the responsibility to correct the wrongdoings because he was a normal human being who made mistakes. Therefore, he was ready to accept his wife's rebukes and views:

Like me, I put my wife as my advisor, I told my wife that before marriage. I'm not like the captain of the ship and you have to listen to me, no! Sometimes I make mistakes because I'm also human and sometimes I don't see the mistakes that I make, she sees that and she will correct me. Then you have to lower your ego and accept, but the decision is always a man's, but she always has the right to give her opinion.

(Informant 9)

Respecting each other is also an important factor in determining the quality of a marriage. Maslow's theory also describes that notion where individuals will strive to achieve the need for self-esteem by gaining recognition, position, and respect from others. This aspect can be achieved when married individuals seek the consent and agreement of the spouse before making a decision.

Therefore, couples need to give and get opinions before making any decision. A study conducted by Anjani and Suryanto (2006) found that among the factors in supporting marriage adaptation is that couples have to practise tolerance, mutual respect, harmony, and mutual understanding. Along the same line, the Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems posits that respect and consideration are related to the affective aspects of communication and problem-solving skills in families and spouses.

XII. LIFE MANAGEMENT

The last major theme of the findings is life management. After marriage, both husband and wife experience many changes in life. They must manage their lives and families wisely to ensure a successful and blissful marriage. Many aspects require adjustment after marriage, namely time, finances, commitment, and lifestyle. In general, the analysis has succeeded in producing two sub-themes under the theme: (i) work-life balance, and (ii) self-improvement.

i) Work-life balance

Most informants related that they attained maturity when they succeeded in balancing their careers and family. Work-family life balance needed to be emphasized because of their importance in a marriage. Occupation was an important aspect of marriage as work allows an individual to support the family by providing for the necessities of life including housing and food. However, if an individual was too busy working to the point of neglecting the family, the quality of marriage will decline (Siti Marziah et al., 2018). Therefore, each individual needed to have a work-life balance. This notion is supported by Informants 1, 9 and 10.

Informant 1 emphasised that these two aspects are very important. In her opinion, a career was important in a marriage because she needed to earn a living to support her family. She also said that family was very important throughout someone's life. Therefore, she managed her time wisely so that both aspects can be handled effectively and none was being neglected.

There are times when the family matters most, but if we put more focus on our careers, we tend to neglect the family. So, to me, both are important because this career is for our future as is our family, who will be there for the rest of our life. So, I focus on both but of course, we have to be good at managing our time *la* so how do we arrange our schedules. *Inshaallah* things will go well and both can be focused on *lah*.

(Informant 1)

Informant 10 also expressed the same opinion as Informant 1 where careers were seen as an important part of the family's future as he can meet family daily needs such as housing, food, and clothing. A stable career helped to strengthen a marriage. Therefore, work-life balance was crucial in ensuring the well-being and stability of both.

Actually, when we look at it from the worldly aspect, both are important. Career because we want to generate income to support family life. When looking at it from the religious aspect, our worldly work is not really our duty. Our duty is to take care of the family, the kids. That's truly is our duty in Islam. Because of this duty, you need to generate the income to get your duty done. When we have no money, how can we raise the family, buy food, cloth and shelter?

(Informant 10)

On the other hand, Informant 9 believed that a career should be reconsidered if it has taken too much time and began to negatively affect the family. The husband or wife can switch careers or find alternatives if his or her career has disrupted the well-being of his or her family. However, she also said that career was a must for every woman if the individual could maintain a balanced career and family with the support of the individuals around her.

Career is important. Just have to look at how much it actually taking out their time. If the career is going to the level like umm ... the individual can't handle his or her own time and the family then the career needs to be taken into consideration. If you feel like you can handle it well, get the support of others, and can take care of everything so I think career is a must la for the women.

(Informant 9)

ii) Self-improvement

The years of marriage should provide more maturity to both the husband and wife. Self-improvement is the benchmark to signify that they have established quality and meaningful marriage (Ahmad Hariri & Raihanah, 2014). Self-improvement such as in terms of time, emotional, stress and child management should be the focus and goal for every year of the marriage.

Informant 6 stated: "For me, the quality of my marriage is okay because I think emotionally, I am better than before marriage. Also for in my way of thinking, I feel better, more positive and more mature than I thought before". She believed that after getting married, she experienced a change in maturity towards various aspects such as emotions and way of thinking. For example, after her marriage Informant 6 was better at controlling her emotions, and she became more positive and mature.

Informant 8 agreed to the notion that after being married for a long time, she and her husband experienced better and positive changes as a result of learning from each other. For example, her husband has undergone a more positive attitude towards interacting with the people around him. This was the result of his observation of the open and friendly personality of Informant 8. On the other hand, she became a more structured and neat person as she learned from her husband about more-structured life management.

Therefore, the findings of this research have supported previous findings on marital quality, marital satisfaction and marital stability. The criteria of marital quality suggested by the informants are fundamental for marital

stability. Their perceptions were based on their experiences in marital life. As young couples, they are struggling to balance work and life and to be the best spouse for their life partner. Nevertheless, they are learning and seeking for improvement in fulfilling each other's expectations. As Anjani and Suryanto (2006) suggested that the young couples need to adapt and adopt to safeguard their marriage. They have to make life adjustments in the initial phase of marriage.

XIII. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the quality of marriage depends on both the husband and wife. It requires effort and commitment. The findings of the study have presented some important criteria in describing the quality of marriage. The criteria inferred are based on the perception of the informants after going through the early years of the marriage. Tolerance, mutual understanding, sense of respect, complementary and life management are the benchmarks in assessing the quality of marriage. These themes can also be fundamental to the development of training modules for strengthening the marriage institution. Married couples should continue to attend courses and workshops to strengthen their marriages to avoid divorce. Incentives should be given to couples attending post-marriage courses such as fees' sponsorship, leave provision to attend such courses, and the inclusion of children to the said courses.

XIV. APPRECIATION

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