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Is Commitment Related to Marriage Stability?

Soerjantini Rahaju^{1,2}, Nurul Hartini³, Wiwin Hendriani⁴
^{1,3,4} *Universitas Airlangga, Indonesia*
² *University of Surabaya, Indonesia*

This study of 145 heterosexual married persons found that marital commitment related to marital stability through marital quality. However, husbands and wives differed on the strength of the three dimensions of marital commitment.

We hypothesized that marital commitment is the major factor that influences marital quality and stability. Marital commitment serves as a protective factor, as a dedication that encourages individuals to engage in altruistic and pro-social behaviors, such as cooperation, dyadic coping, willingness to sacrifice, increasing family and social responsibility (Cao, et al. (2016; Landis, et al., 2014; Monk, 2014; Wieselquist, 1999).

Marital commitment is a construct composed of three dimensions: attraction, moral commitment, and a constraining commitment (Adams & Jones, 1997; Johnson, Caughlin, & Huston, 1999). Attraction consists of love, devotion and satisfaction. The moral commitment is a sense of personal responsibility for maintaining the marriage, and a belief that marriage is an important social and religious institution. Constraining commitment is concerned with social, financial and emotional losses in the event of separation.

Marriage in Indonesia is governed by moral and religious values. This study aimed to complement the research on marital commitment in Indonesia by using a tripartite measure of marriage commitment.

Author info: Correspondence should be sent to: Soerjantini Rahaju, Doctoral Student in Psychology Department, Universitas Airlangga, Indonesia soerjantini.rahaju-2016@psikologi.unair.ac.id
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METHOD

Data were collected from 145 heterosexual married people (51% husbands and 49% wives) in Surabaya, Indonesia. Husbands' mean age was 44 years ($SD = 7.341$) and wives' mean age was 41 years ($SD = 7.44$). The average marriage length was 15 years ($SD = 7.34$). All husbands were fully employed, and 81.7% of the wives were fully employed. Most participants were Muslims (66.2% husbands, 70% wives).

Marital commitment ($N=145$, $M= 343.3$, $SD = 46.108$, $Skewness= 0.997$) was measured using a 50- item scale adapted from the Dimensions of Commitment Inventory (Adams & Jones, 1997). Marital quality ($N=145$, $M= 39.85$, $SD = 5.921$, $Skewness= -1.79$) was assessed with six items from the Quality Marital Index (Norton, 1983).

Marital stability ($N=145$, $M= 2.31$, $SD = 2.984$, $Skewness= 3.361$) was measured with a 15-item scale adapted from the Marital Instability Index (Booth, Johnson, & Edwards, 1983). Data were analyzed in Structural Equation Model using AMOS V.24. The estimator method was Maximum Likelihood Estimator.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of model I testing showed good fit [$\chi^2 = 6.68$ (df: 5), p-value = .246; RMSEA = .048; CFI = .995; GFI = .985; AGFI = .938].

The result of model II test also revealed good fit [$\chi^2 = 2.71$ (df:5), p-value = .751, RMSEA = .000, CFI = 1, GFI = .988, and AGFI = .950]. Furthermore, the good fit was also indicated in the model III [$\chi^2 = 6.466$ (df :5), p-value = .263, RMSEA = .035, CFI = .971, GFI = .992, and AGFI = .978]. Model 1, 2, 3 showed in Figure 1.

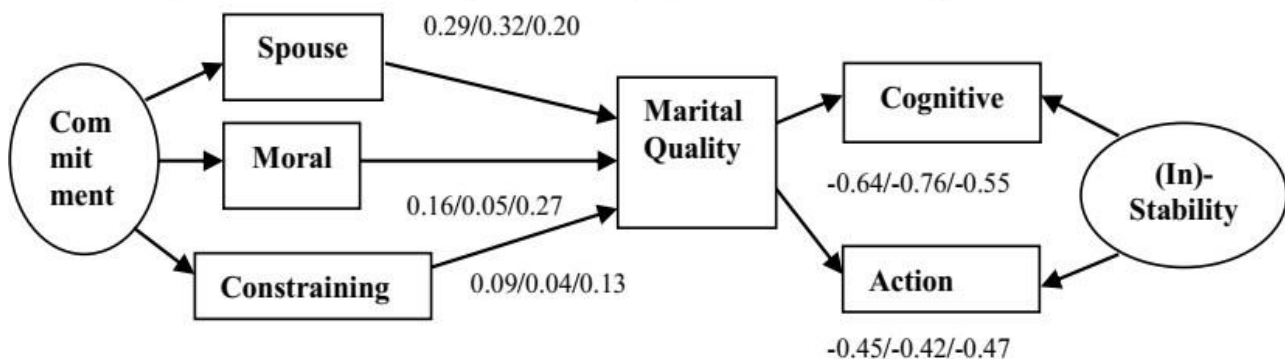


Figure 1. The Association Model between Marital Commitment & Marital Stability Through Marriage Quality (model 1)/ Only for Husband (model 2) /only for Wives (model 3)

The assumption that commitment could lead to marriage stability was shown indirectly through marital quality. The stability of marital bonding was mediated by the quality of relationships between couples. For husbands, the commitment of marriage to the spouse (attraction dimension) was the strongest one, while for the wives moral commitment was the strongest dimension. Wives were more sensitive to the pressures of moral and social values than husbands.

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