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## Exploring emotional availability and psychological adjustment in newlywed men in Malaysia: A qualitative study

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### Abstract

The early years of marriage play a crucial role among newlyweds, as they predict the strength and longevity of the relationship. Current statistics indicate an increasing trend in divorce rates in Malaysia, rising from 6.1% to 6.7%, which highlights a significant research gap concerning its underlying factors. While previous studies have emphasized the importance of emotional availability and psychological adjustment during early marriages, most have focused on women, thereby overlooking men's perspectives. To address this gap, this qualitative study aimed to explore the factors influencing emotional availability and psychological adjustment of newlywed men, along with the potential barriers they face in seeking support. Data were generated from ten in-depth semi-structured interviews and analyzed through the lens of Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory. Thematic analysis revealed that societal expectations, emotional intelligence, and communication styles influenced emotional availability, whereas motivational styles, conflict resolution strategies, and family acceptance shaped psychological adjustment. Additionally, newlywed men who exhibited high self-reliance, selective emotional disclosure, and fear of judgment usually avoid seeking professional support. The findings suggest that sensitive marital subjects like men's emotional availability remain taboo in Malaysian society. To address this, it is essential to raise awareness of men's emotional and psychological needs through pre-marital workshops and by offering couples counseling to newlyweds, such as through the Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP).

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## **1. Introduction**

Marriage remains a central institution for meeting the emotional and relational needs of individuals; however, recent statistics indicate a decline in marriage rates among adults. For instance, in the U.S., only 6.0 individuals per 1,000 are currently married [1]. Similarly, in Malaysia, the crude marriage rate declined from 6.6 per 1,000 population in 2022 to 5.7 in 2023, marking a 12.5% decrease [2]. This decline raises questions about the challenges faced within modern marriages. Newly married couples experience a mix of positive and negative aspects of marriage, with roughly 40% facing emotional unavailability.

The presence of emotional unavailability emphasizes the importance of exploring its underlying causes. Factors influencing this unavailability include fear of intimacy, societal expectations, and attachment styles [3, 4]. Despite existing research on women's emotional and psychological roles in marriage, there is a critical gap in understanding men's experiences, particularly within the Malaysian context, where societal norms may prevent men from expressing their emotional and psychological needs. This gap also highlights the need to examine how these societal factors contribute to emotional and psychological barriers in men.

Psychological adjustment contributes to a healthy functioning marriage, and it is crucial for maintaining harmony and satisfaction among couples. Men's ability to adapt psychologically within marriage is often influenced by societal and individual pressures. Kalkan and Odacı [5] suggest that men adhering to traditional masculine norms often demonstrate lower levels of psychological adjustment in their marriages. Such adherence can have far-reaching consequences, including behavioral challenges. This underscores the need for examining how rigid gender norms affect men's emotional and behavioral patterns in marriage. Previous research has also examined how conflict resolution strategies [6] and motivational styles influence men's psychological adjustment [7]. Together, these findings highlight the complex interplay of societal expectations, personality traits, and behavioral strategies in shaping psychological outcomes for men in marriages. By focusing on these elements, this research aims to address gaps in understanding men's marital experiences.

Addressing these gaps is vital in Asian culture, as men often encounter difficulties in expressing their emotional and psychological needs within marriage, yet they still view marriage as a key source of emotional support [8]. By investigating these influencing factors, we can gain insights into newlywed couples and aid in the creation of targeted interventions. These interventions are essential for promoting healthy marital relationships among newlyweds and may also motivate mental health professionals to design couple therapy programs that encourage acceptance-oriented behaviors in partners [9].

Previous researchers have also explored the important role of acceptance from intimate partners that affects psychological adjustment and emotional support in marriage [9]. Acceptance-oriented behaviors have been linked to improved relationship satisfaction, highlighting their relevance in addressing emotional and psychological challenges in marriage. This study will utilize the Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory framework to examine whether newlywed men's emotional and psychological needs are accepted or rejected by their partners.

Subsequently, this research focuses on two key psychological dimensions in newlywed marriages, which are emotional availability and psychological adjustment, both of which are critical to marital well-being and will be explored in detail in the following sections.

### *1.1. Emotional Availability*

Emotional availability refers to engaging in a supportive emotional connection and understanding each other's needs and intentions. It encompasses a broad spectrum of emotions beyond responsiveness to a partner in distress [10]. When one partner struggles to express emotions, the other may perceive them as emotionally unavailable. This presents challenges, as it becomes difficult to recognize, express, and differentiate feelings, further weakening the marriage [3].

In the context of marriage, emotional experiences shape the level of intimacy between partners [11]. Research has explored the relationship between emotional availability and fear of intimacy, defined as a limited ability to express thoughts and feelings [3, 12]. Traditional gender roles in Malaysia, where husbands are seen as leaders and providers and wives as nurturers and caregivers, further compound the emotional availability of men [13].

### *1.2. Psychological Adjustment*

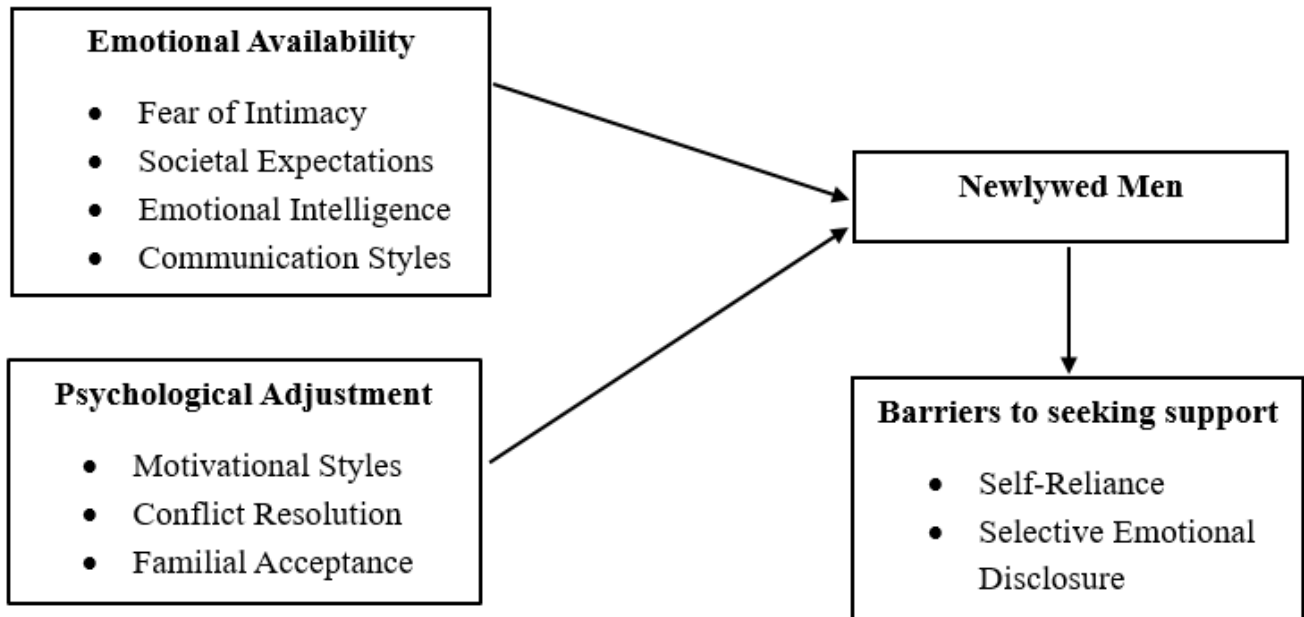
Psychological adjustment involves an individual's capacity to manage relationship challenges and align with mutual values and expectations. An individual finds adjustment in the relationship through intrinsic motivation, whereby partners engage in activities for mutual enjoyment [14, 15]. Couples with self-determined motivation view conflicts as challenges rather than burdens, which enhances their feelings of love and commitment [15, 16].

Conflict is also a consistent and significant issue in newlywed marriages, as couples face increased disagreements during their early transition into married life. However, the style of conflict, rather than its frequency, plays a crucial role in psychological adjustment. Gender differences in conflict resolution also impact partners' adjustment in marriages [6]. Furthermore, another factor influencing psychological adjustment is familial acceptance, which states that healthy in-laws' relationships promote cohesion and support, while dysfunctional in-laws can create challenges in adjusting to marriage [17].

### *1.3. Barriers to Seeking Support*

Most newlywed men prefer to manage their emotional issues independently, without seeking external support, due to a strong sense of self-reliance [18]. However, some men often rely on receiving emotional support from their wives and close relationships more than on distant ones [19]. Moreover, newlyweds often fear judgment, as sharing their emotions may

draw attention to the negative aspects of an experience. Such barriers not only hinder men's access to emotional and psychological support but also perpetuate cycles of marital dissatisfaction and emotional isolation, impacting overall family well-being.



**Figure 1.**  
Conceptual Framework of Emotional Availability and Psychological Adjustment of Newlywed Men.

#### 1.4. Current Study

This study makes a significant contribution by addressing the intersection of emotional availability and psychological adjustment among newlywed men, an area that has been largely overlooked within the Malaysian context. It also explores the barriers men face during the early stages of marriage. By focusing on the emotional and psychological dimensions, the research offers detailed insights that can inform tailored interventions to promote marital well-being.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Method and Design

This study adopted a qualitative research approach to capture in-depth insights into the personal experiences of newlywed men, with a specific focus on their emotional availability [19] and psychological adjustment [3]. As Creswell [20] Highlights, Qualitative research is particularly effective for exploring lived experiences, allowing researchers to delve deeply into participants' perspectives and responses. To achieve this, a phenomenological research design was employed, as it is well-suited for investigating the lived experiences of individuals [13] and to gain a comprehensive understanding of the unique challenges and experiences faced by newlyweds across Malaysia's diverse ethnic groups.

**Table 1.**

Demographic Background.	
Characteristics	No. of Participants
Years of Marriage	
4 years	3
3 years	3
2 years	2
A year	2
Age	
20-25	1
26-30	6
31-40	3
Race	
Indian	3
Malay	4
Chinese	2
Chinese-Malay	1

## 2.2. Sample and Location

This study involved 10 newlywed men from Kuala Lumpur, aged between 20 and 40 years, representing Malay, Chinese, and Indian ethnic backgrounds. All participants had been married for four years or less, ensuring their experiences were recent and relevant to the study's focus. Participants were purposively selected to ensure cultural and social diversity, which was essential for exploring the influence of ethnicity on marital experiences. To minimize cultural bias, individuals from various socioeconomic backgrounds were included, and only participants without known mental health conditions were eligible, ensuring that the data reflected a broad range of typical marital experiences without being confounded by pre-existing psychological issues. Details of the participants are presented in Table 1.

## 2.3. Research Procedure

The study followed a structured research procedure while adhering to ethical guidelines. Participants were informed about the study's purpose, their rights, and the voluntary nature of their participation, with anonymity guaranteed to build trust. In-depth online interviews were conducted, divided into sections covering demographic information, emotional availability, psychological adjustment, and barriers to seeking support. Interview questions were guided by the research questions and informed by key themes found in existing literature. Then, it was reviewed by field experts to enhance credibility and ensure alignment with the study's aims.

## 2.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis followed a six-phase thematic model [21] to explore factors influencing emotional availability and psychological adjustment among newlywed men. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed through open, axial, and selective coding to identify key themes. These codes were organized into broader themes, ensuring internal and external homogeneity [22]. Each theme was defined to reflect its significance, and the final phase involved writing a comprehensive report, integrating all the narratives of participants [21]. This systematic approach ensured that the data were meaningful and reflective of participants' experiences.

# 3. Results

This section presents the key findings of the study, organized into three main categories: (1) factors influencing emotional availability, (2) factors influencing psychological adjustment, and (3) barriers to seeking support.

## 3.1. Factors Influencing Emotional Availability

Thematic analysis revealed three primary themes influencing emotional availability among newlywed men, such as societal expectations, emotional intelligence, and communication styles.

### 3.1.1. Societal Expectations

Participants emphasized that societal norms and cultural upbringing play a significant role in shaping their emotional openness or reluctance to express emotions. Many described the stigma associated with male vulnerability as a barrier to emotional expression:

*"Men can't be moody and sad all the time. This stigma or, like, maybe some kind of bias in my head that I can't complain much. Men can't show emotions that much; I really believed in it."* (Participant 1)

Others shared how cultural expectations influenced communication patterns, especially in resolving conflicts:

*"It's better to reciprocate as soon as possible. That's the way I have been brought up. Regardless, if there's any dispute, then bring it up immediately. Emotions have to be brought up always."* (Participant 8)

Two participants from Indian backgrounds noted that their upbringing made emotional expression feel awkward, even within intimate relationships:

*"Society thinks that we should have that conversation frequently with our partners, just to make sure that we both understand how we're feeling. How we were brought up and it was like an Indian family household, so it's a bit awkward expressing."* (Participant 6)

### 3.1.2. Emotional Intelligence

Participants highlighted the importance of regulating their emotions before expressing themselves to their spouses to avoid conflict.

*"If I don't like something about her friends or anything else, I could say it, but in the beginning, it was a very touchy subject to say to my wife. I just need time to cognitively frame my thinking, so I don't say the wrong thing."* (Participant 1)

Participants also expressed being emotionally vulnerable to their wives, sharing that while feelings may be unclear at times, honesty is essential to building an emotional bond:

*"We know that our feelings aren't exactly how we think about them. I will communicate everything about how I felt at that time. I'll be open. I'll be honest. If you still don't accept that, then I need you to help me explain, help me understand why you don't see that."* (Participant 2)

Few participants avoided emotional conversations to prevent conflicts, despite intending to remain open and transparent with their partners:

*"I choose not to speak up (emotions), sometimes I feel like that just to avoid an argument. So, I'd rather not say anything. Just to keep the peace. It's more likely to avoid the conflict between me and my partner."* (Participant 6)

### 3.1.3. Communication Styles

Participants emphasized the importance of emotional control during conversations, sharing that they communicate in an organized and direct manner:

*"We explain in a very organized, systematic way, without trying to get all emotional. There's a bit of directness, but we're not completely direct. We are straight to the point, but we are controlled. At the same time, we pick our words carefully."* (Participant 2)

Two participants further emphasized the importance of being direct and transparent, preferring to address issues immediately rather than letting frustrations build up:

*"You have to resolve it immediately; I will bring it up at any time of the day. I'm very transparent; if we are frustrated, we will be very blunt and upfront about it. There are no hidden frustrations or hidden emotions."* (Participant 8)

### 3.2. Factors Influencing Psychological Adjustment

This study identified three themes: motivational styles, conflict resolution strategies, and familial adjustment, all influencing psychological adjustment.

#### 3.2.1. Motivational Styles

One participant was motivated to understand his partner's likes and dislikes and attempted a psychological assessment to adjust his behavior accordingly:

*"We conducted a psychological assessment to understand what makes her feel appreciated. Once I knew the results, I understood her type, and we made adjustments. I would buy her flowers because I know she enjoys going out for dinner."* (Participant 1)

One participant, influenced by his difficult family background, expressed a strong motivation to avoid divorce, wanting to ensure his children grow up in a stable home:

*"I just don't want a divorce because, for me, my parents are really in a bad marriage. I'm growing up with my mom alone without my father. I also don't want my children to grow up without their mother."* (Participant 5)

#### 3.2.2. Conflict Resolution Styles

Three participants expressed the value of shared leisure activities with their partners to strengthen their bonds and resolve conflicts:

*"We can clean the house, wash the clothes, go to the playground, jog, and run together. My wife also makes me happy with how we can delegate tasks together. We are also planning to travel; we just neglected the conflict situation for a while."* (Participant 10)

Three participants mentioned how engaging in individual activities and hobbies serves as their coping strategy. One participant responded that swimming and socializing allow him to neutralize conflicts:

*"I swim a lot, so I probably like swimming as my coping mechanism. I do go out and meet up with my friends; it puts things on hold."* (Participant 6)

#### 3.2.3. Familial Acceptance

Participants highlighted the importance of adapting to in-laws' values and personalities. One participant found it offensive when his in-laws did not respect his values:

*"In early marriage, where her family didn't quite understand where I'm coming from, this view was a very serious offense to me."* (Participant 2)

Three participants discussed the challenge of balancing time between both families, often feeling pressured to manage commitments to both sides:

*"Trying to balance time with both our families. Whose parents are we going to spend time with this weekend? Sometimes she'll have other plans, like we need to go over to her dad's place. Or sometimes I've been having, like, some functions at my house, my parents' house."* (Participant 6)

### 3.3. Barriers to Seeking Support

This study identified three themes: self-reliance, selective emotional disclosure, and fear of judgment as barriers to seeking support.

#### 3.3.1. Self-Reliance

Participants expressed a strong belief in managing their marital issues independently, indicating a preference for self-reliance over professional support:

*"I don't think I need professional support. I think I can go for a walk and then think about it on my own. I can handle it myself."* (Participant 4)

One participant emphasized that not resolving issues himself would hurt his pride, believing that marital problems should be handled independently or jointly by both partners:

*"What would hesitate me is that I was not able to resolve it myself. Getting help is good; to make the marriage work, ideally, it should be two people working on the marriage."* (Participant 9)

One participant considers himself to be old-fashioned, believing that professional support is only necessary in severe situations:

*"I'm a bit old-fashioned in this sense, but I don't think it's necessary unless it's a dire situation. Every couple has its bumps, and this is just a bump." (Participant 7)*

### 3.3.2. Selective Emotional Disclosure

Two participants turned to family for support. One participant found it easier to open up to his wise and encouraging brother than to a mental health professional:

*"My brother, he's very wise. So that's why I can open up to him because he is encouraging of such talks. It takes a lot of effort to plan out what I want to say and channel it out to somebody else." (Participant 2)*

While four participants relied on their wives as a support system for expressing their problems, one noted that his wife's receptive and understanding nature made it easier for him to communicate his emotions:

*"Most of the time I talk about it, my wife is very receptive; she understands the situation, so it's easier for me to communicate." (Participant 9)*

### 3.3.3. Fear of Judgement

Participants hesitated to seek professional support, with two expressing reluctance due to past experiences of feeling judged by strangers:

*"But if I go to anyone else, I can tell that they're like, it's not that hard bro. Just show who's the man, who has the house, and who has the pants." (Participant 1)*

Two participants expressed reluctance to seeking support as they feared judgement from their families, with one mentioning that his mother-in-law perceives him as a stressful person:

*"I have experienced (judgement) from my mother-in-law. She thinks I'm very stressful, I have mentioned a few times that my thinking style is different." (Participant 10)*

Interestingly, one participant expressed discomfort opening up to strangers, believing professional advice is often too general for each couple's unique situation:

*"I don't wanna open up about how I feel and get vulnerable to someone that I don't really know, because you get that feeling that the opinion or suggestion is very general." (Participant 6)*

## 4. Discussion

The research aims to provide deeper insights into men's emotional expression, psychological adjustment, and cultural or societal barriers to seeking support, and how these factors shape their marriages. The findings highlight the complex interplay between societal norms and emotional expression among newlywed men in Malaysia, revealing that men often feel pressured to adhere to traditional masculine norms, which hinder their emotional openness and vulnerability [19, 23]. This supports previous research that links restrictive gender norms to emotional suppression and limited interpersonal connection, especially in collectivist cultures.

Furthermore, the cultural environment, particularly Indian households, contributes to the awkwardness surrounding emotional discussions. This reflects Khanna [3] claim that cultural, familial, and attachment factors significantly influence emotional expression within marriages. However, while some individuals noted discomfort rooted in cultural upbringing, others recognized the value of emotional openness for resolving conflicts and maintaining marital harmony. This duality underscores the tension between traditional gender expectations and the growing recognition of emotional openness for marital satisfaction.

Moreover, emotional intelligence has emerged as a key factor in navigating emotional expression. While some men effectively regulate and process their emotions to communicate constructively, [24] others adopt emotional suppression to avoid conflicts. This could be influenced by attachment styles formed in childhood. For example, men with secure attachment styles are generally comfortable sharing their emotions, whereas those with avoidant attachment styles may view relationships as unfulfilling, thereby limiting emotional expression [3]. Additionally, children who fear emotional or physical harm often learn to suppress their feelings, a learned behavior that can continue into adulthood and hinder emotional openness, creating distance between partners in early marriages.

While some men learned to suppress their emotions, others expressed their willingness to be vulnerable with their wives, recognizing the importance of emotional availability in building intimacy and trust [19, 25]. However, the fear of vulnerability and judgment remains a significant barrier for them because, while they may desire honesty and openness, the fear of being judged or misunderstood causes them to withhold certain emotions or thoughts. This tension between the desire to connect emotionally with their partner and the instinct to protect themselves from emotional risks reflects a strong need for interventions that encourage emotional safety within marriages.

Emotional safety can be achieved through open communication among couples. The findings revealed diverse communication styles among newlywed men, particularly the balance between emotional control and a preference for bluntness during conversations. Men who exhibit emotional control, commonly reflecting traits of agreeableness, use constructive communication styles to avoid being vulnerable to their partners so they can maintain harmony and stability in the relationship. This aligns with the notion that controlling emotional expression prevents perceptions of helplessness [19].

Conversely, men who preferred bluntness viewed direct communication as effective for conflict resolution, a trait commonly associated with extraversion. While appearing emotionally detached, their bluntness reflected an upfront emotional engagement with their partner. These patterns suggest that personality traits such as agreeableness and extraversion significantly shape how men communicate and express emotions in marriage [26].

Alongside these personality traits, newlyweds employed various motivational styles to adapt to their newly married life. Some men adjusted their behaviors to align with their wives' preferences, reflecting Tartakovsky [16] claim that mutual care and support are central to relational motivation. This self-transcendent approach demonstrates a willingness to prioritize the partner's needs above one's own, which is a key aspect of marital satisfaction. Conversely, one participant was motivated by a fear of divorce, stemming from his experience of parental separation, which compelled him to proactively address unresolved issues. This finding aligns with Abreu-Afonso et al. [7] 's assertion that individuals driven by intrinsic motivation maintain faith in the potential for relationship growth and marital stability.

To facilitate relationship growth, newlywed men adopted adaptive conflict resolution strategies, including shared activities such as household tasks and leisure activities, to strengthen their bond and resolve conflicts. This supports Abreu-Afonso et al. [7] 's assertion that balancing personal and partner's needs during conflict allows men to compromise effectively. Conversely, some individuals used personal hobbies as a coping mechanism to process conflicts internally before re-engaging with their partner. Similarly, this aligns with Chang et al. [27] suggestion that individuals who prioritize superficial harmony may suppress negative emotions temporarily to maintain peace. They would avoid confronting difficult feelings to sustain surface-level tranquility in the relationship.

Familial acceptance also emerged as a significant factor influencing psychological adjustment. The findings highlight that difficulties in adapting to the differing values and personalities of in-laws can contribute to stress among newlywed couples [28]. In collectivist cultures, where familial bonds and shared values are paramount, this stress becomes even more pronounced. Interestingly, while wives often adjust to accommodate in-laws, husbands are less likely to reciprocate, potentially due to perceptions that familial harmony is not their responsibility or fears that doing so may compromise their autonomy [27].

The study also explored barriers to seeking professional support. Newlywed men expressed a strong preference for addressing emotional issues independently, with higher levels of self-reliance linked to decreased willingness to seek professional assistance [29]. This tendency was particularly pronounced among men, who viewed autonomy and resilience as markers of competence and strength within their relationships.

Although newlywed men valued their autonomy in managing emotions, some often preferred sharing their feelings and emotions within trusted social circles rather than seeking professional support. Carbone et al. [30] found that men are more likely to disclose feelings to close friends than to professionals or even their wives. This behavior reflects the psychological need for competence, whereby newlywed men often rely on trusted circles for emotional support, as these safe spaces help build confidence, while seeking support from their wives or professionals may threaten their sense of competence. This reluctance to seek professional help may also reflect societal perceptions that vulnerability undermines masculinity, particularly in cultures that emphasize toughness and self-reliance.

Finally, the fear of damaging their masculinity by disclosing emotions was a significant barrier. Participants hesitated to seek professional help due to fears of judgment from families and concerns about appearing vulnerable to strangers. This supports Carbone et al. [30] findings indicate that men often withhold emotions to maintain their self-image and seek validation of their masculinity. Addressing these perceptions is therefore crucial for encouraging men to access professional support and fostering healthier emotional expression within marriages.

## **5. Implications**

The study contributed to the existing body of literature by deepening the understanding of emotional availability and psychological adjustment from the male perspective, an area that remains underrepresented in marital research, particularly within Malaysia. By using Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory (IPAR Theory), the study extends the theory's application to early marital dynamics, demonstrating its relevance in understanding how perceived acceptance or rejection influences men's emotional openness and adjustment.

Counsellors can promote partner acceptance behaviors through skills training programs like the Prevention and Relationship Education Program (PREP). Newlyweds can adopt reciprocal behaviors, including physical, verbal, and non-verbal expressions, to enhance their emotional connection, communication, and overall marital satisfaction.

The insights gained from the study also highlight the need for culturally sensitive interventions that foster emotional receptiveness and psychological adjustment among newlyweds, such as creating safe spaces for men to explore and express their emotions. These spaces can support the development of emotional literacy while challenging entrenched gender stereotypes. Such spaces can be provided through pre-marital workshops that offer opportunities for men to share their experiences and learn strategies for emotional expression within their marriages. These initiatives may help reduce the stigma surrounding emotional vulnerability and encourage men to build stronger emotional connections with their partners.

Individuals were also found to have high self-reliance characteristics, which may limit men's willingness to seek help or contribute effectively within their relationships. Counsellors working with couples can apply positive psychology to reframe this trait, showing that while self-reliance is important, it is not always beneficial for marriage. For instance, assertiveness can be reframed as confidence, helping men express their needs more constructively, while competitiveness can be viewed as a drive for personal growth and achievement. By focusing on these strengths, counsellors can help men improve their communication styles with their partners, fostering both personal and relational development.

## **6. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Study**

The research focuses on a small sample of newly married men in Malaysia. While the study provides valuable and detailed insights into the challenges faced by newly married men, its limited sample size restricts the generalizability of the findings to a broader population, such as individuals who have been married for a longer period, as their experiences could

differ significantly. Therefore, future studies should exercise caution when drawing conclusions beyond the specific group studied.

As the study largely depends on qualitative methods and self-reported data, there is a risk of memory bias or inaccurate recall from participants, especially on sensitive issues such as emotional vulnerability and conflict resolution. Some participants also felt uncomfortable discussing the judgments they received from their social circle and occasionally avoided the question.

Another limitation of the study is that participants may not accurately perceive their adherence to societal expectations, even if they are aware of those societal norms. This misalignment could result from self-infiltration, where individuals misinterpret societal expectations as their own subjective values. For example, societal expectations placed on emotional availability and psychological adjustment in marriage may not align with their own personal values, potentially affecting the accuracy of the self-reported data.

Future researchers can conduct longitudinal studies involving 20-30 newly married men from Malaysia over a period of three years. The study will assess how cultural norms and expectations influence emotional expression within early marriages. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, such as interviews, six-month interval surveys, and psychological assessments, can be used to monitor changes in the emotional expression of newlywed men.

## 7. Conclusion

This study explored the emotional availability and psychological adjustment of newlywed men in Malaysia, providing valuable insights into their experiences within a collectivist cultural context. Key findings highlighted the influence of societal expectations, emotional intelligence, and communication styles on emotional availability. While some men demonstrated emotional regulation and openness, others adhered to traditional masculine norms, suppressing their emotions to avoid vulnerability. Transparent communication was identified as essential for fostering emotional bonds, although many men struggled to implement it consistently.

Psychological adjustment was influenced by motivational styles, conflict resolution strategies, and familial acceptance. Participants commonly employed adaptive conflict resolution techniques, such as shared activities and hobbies, to manage stress and maintain harmony in their relationships. However, differences in values and personalities among in-laws emerged as a significant source of stress, emphasizing the critical role of familial acceptance in early marriage.

Barriers to seeking professional support, including self-reliance, selective emotional disclosure, and fear of judgment, further complicate these dynamics. Most men preferred confiding in trusted social circles, such as their wives or close friends, rather than accessing professional help. These findings underscore the complex interplay between emotional and psychological challenges in early marriage and highlight the importance of culturally tailored interventions to support newlywed men in fostering healthier relationships and emotional well-being.

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