



Similarity conquers all: A dyadic study of the Big Five's extraversion similarity and the Michelangelo phenomenon on marital satisfaction in the Thai context

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Abstract

Young adults striving to succeed in life tend to build romantic relationships that will lead to personal growth as key mechanisms in the Michelangelo phenomenon (i.e., goals, dreams, and aspirations). Such relationships are a key to success. In this research, we investigated the dyadic influence of the similarity effects of the Big Five's extraversion trait and marital satisfaction mediated by the Michelangelo phenomenon. Using the data of 201 Thai newly married couples (aged 24–39 years, married less than 5 years, $N = 201$ dyads, $M = 31.49$ years; $SD = 4.35$). A cross-sectional Actor-partner Interdependence model revealed that an extraverted husband who provides affirmation to his spouse increases his own marital satisfaction. This could imply that providing affirmation portrays his masculinity, fulfilling his manhood. Likewise, an extraverted wife who receives and provides affirmation to her husband increases her marital satisfaction, suggesting that positive expressions enhance her marital satisfaction. Evidence shows that partner affirmation was at the core of the Michelangelo phenomenon. Moreover, extraversion similarity suggests that the higher the similarity in extraversion for couples, the higher the marital satisfaction via partner affirmation in the Michelangelo phenomenon. This aligns with attraction similarity theory. It thus appears the Michelangelo phenomenon could be replicated in collectivistic cultures.

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Introduction

A relationship maintenance mechanism is essential to sustaining marriage (Miller, 2015). Marital satisfaction is

a key to maintaining the relationship, particularly in young couples. The Michelangelo phenomenon is the interpersonal process of bringing out the best qualities in a romantic partner and facilitating them in becoming closer to their ideal self (Drigotas et al., 1999). It fosters understanding between husband and wife and enhances marital satisfaction by complementing one another's needs (Bohns et al., 2013). Furthermore, similarity attraction theory suggests that personality similarity plays

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a significant role in marital satisfaction, particularly for extraversion (Barelds, 2005; Luo, 2017; Rammstedt & Schupp, 2008).

Research Objectives

This research explores how personality similarity and the Michelangelo phenomenon could contribute to marital satisfaction in newlyweds in the Thai context. This research aims to understand the role of personality similarity for the Big Five's extraversion trait i.e., similarity couples (both high or low extraversion) in comparison to complementary couples (one high extraversion and one low extraversion), and the role of partner affirmation in the Michelangelo phenomenon that influences marital satisfaction in young married couples in Thailand.

Literature Review

Marital Satisfaction in Young Adults

Newly married refers to couples in the first five years of marriage, which is a crucial transition period from spouse to parent. This is a common time for divorce among young people (Doss et al., 2009). Marital satisfaction is crucial for marriage, yet it is challenging to sustain long term.

Young adults aged between 18–35 years strive for personal growth and seek to establish long term romantic relationships that support their personal goals (Lerner et al., 2005). Several studies have demonstrated that goal

pursuit in romantic relationships is positively associated with relationship satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2014; Holding et al., 2019; Lemay et al., 2021). They highlight that providing mutual support in personal goal pursuit is a crucial element in developing intimacy in romantic relationships (Lemay et al., 2021). Partner affirmation of the ideal self mutually promotes personal growth and marital satisfaction (Rusbult et al., 2009). This process is also known as the “Michelangelo phenomenon”, one of the key concepts in the relationship maintenance that prolongs relationships (Miller, 2015).

The Michelangelo Phenomenon

The Michelangelo phenomenon plays a significant role in personal growth in romantic relationships as it also strongly correlates to life satisfaction (Drigotas, 2002; Rusbult et al., 2009). People conceive their ideal self based on hopes, aspirations and wishes. The ideal self is defined as a constellation of dispositions, values and behaviors that people ideally strive to attain (Bühler et al., 2020). The Michelangelo phenomenon is an interdependent process in which a romantic partner influences or “sculpts” another to bring out the “ideal self” as closely as possible in real life (Drigotas et al., 1999). People who experience a large discrepancy are disappointed, emotionally distressed and dissatisfied (Higgins, 1987).

The Michelangelo phenomenon consists of 3 chronological processes: (1) partner perceptual affirmation; (2) partner behavioral affirmation; and (3) self-movement towards the ideal self (Figure 1). Firstly, partner perceptual affirmation is the degree to

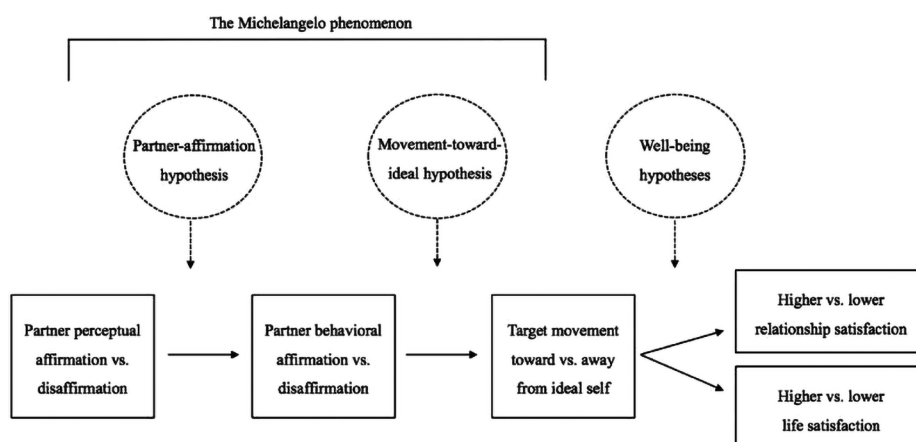


Figure 1 The Michelangelo phenomenon, relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction; based on Bühler et al. (2020); Drigotas (2002); and Drigotas et al. (1999)

which an individual can perceive that their partner's self is congruent with their ideal self. Secondly, partner behavioral affirmation describes the degree to which the partner's behavior affirmation of the self is congruent with the ideal self; the more closely matched the partner's affirmation, the more the target's actual self moves towards the ideal self. Consequently, behavioral affirmation fosters self-movement toward the ideal self, the last process. A person who provides affirmation to their romantic partner is referred to as a *sculptor* while the one who receives affirmation and experiences self movement toward the ideal self is referred to as a *target*. This shows that partner affirmation in the Michelangelo phenomenon is a beneficent unfolding process of the behavioral confirmation concept, which is crucial for flourishing romantic relationships that promote satisfaction in young couples (Bühler et al., 2020; Drigotas, 2002; Rusbult et al., 2005). Additionally, Bühler et al. (2020) also disclosed that the Big Five personality is positively linked to the Michelangelo phenomenon, particularly agreeableness, extraversion and emotional stability.

Extraversion Trait and the Michelangelo Phenomenon

A personality trait is defined as a relatively stable disposition consisting of thoughts, feelings and behaviors (Allport, 1937). The trait concept is mostly known as the Big Five traits (Costa & McCrae, 1994). These domains are openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Extraversion refers to the traits of a person who is warm, gregarious, assertive, active, excitement-seeking and has a positive affect (John & Srivastava, 1999) whereas, low extraversion, or introverted, refers to a person who is reserved and quiet with a limited number of intimate friends (Larsen & Buss, 2018). In this research, the focus was only on extraversion as several findings show a positive link between extraversion, marital satisfaction and life satisfaction longitudinally, but few papers have deeply examined its link (Barelds, 2005; White et al., 2004). Also, little is known about the concept of the Michelangelo phenomenon related to personality traits, and it has never been replicated in Asia where most countries are highly collectivist, meaning they prioritize group goals rather than their individual needs (Triandis, 2001). Therefore, it is worth examining in Asian countries to extend novel insights in the interpersonal relationship literature. Extraversion similarity facilitates the Michelangelo phenomenon and marital satisfaction. Similarity attraction theory suggests that an individual tends to attract and

choose another person who is similar in values, attitudes, lifestyle, and background (Myers & Twenge, 2017). Being similar to their significant other can be beneficial because both may have comparable experiences, perceptions and emotions, thus, they interact and understand each other better, which increases intimacy and validation (Gonzaga et al., 2007; Weidmann et al., 2017). However, some suggest that complementary couples facilitate goal pursuit better because they agreed to pursue goals together after discussion while similar couples who have mutual goals avoid disputes rather than having a proper discussion (Bohns et al., 2013). This leads to the question whether similarity in personality relates to the Michelangelo phenomenon or not, and how extraversion personality similarity facilitates the Michelangelo phenomenon promoting marital satisfaction, which has not been studied. Taken together with the proposed model of the Michelangelo phenomenon, extraversion personality similarity influences marital satisfaction, mediated by the Michelangelo phenomenon. Hence, it was predicted that

H₁: Extraversion of husband and wife, and extraversion personality similarity positively predict marital satisfaction of husband and wife.

H₂: Extraversion positively predicts marital satisfaction, mediated by receiving affirmation and movement toward the ideal self. There is a partner effect of extraversion on marital satisfaction.

H₃: Extraversion positively predicts marital satisfaction, mediated by providing affirmation and receiving affirmation.

H₄: Extraversion personality similarity positively predicts marital satisfaction in both husband and wife, mediated by receiving affirmation from husband and wife, and the perception of movement toward the ideal self from husband and wife, and mediated by providing affirmation from husband and wife, and the perception of spouse movement toward their ideal self from husband and wife.

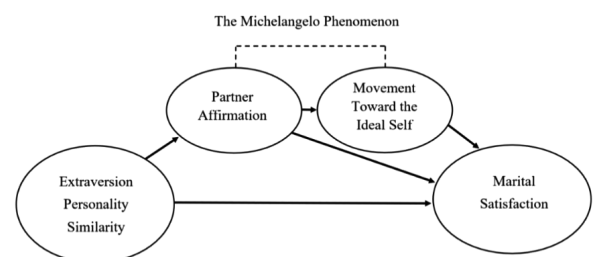


Figure 2 Hypothesized model

Methodology

Participants

The sample for this study was newlywed couples who had been married less than 5 years residing in Thailand, notably in Bangkok ($N = 201$ dyads). 201 newly married couples (402 individuals; 201 males and 201 females) volunteered to participate in the research, male and female with an age range 24–39 years ($M = 31.49$ years; $SD = 4.35$). Marriage duration was between 1 month and 5 years ($M = 1.51$ years, $SD = 1.24$), relationship duration before marriage between 22 months and 19 years ($M = 5.33$, $SD = 3.84$), 74.6 percent of respondents registered their marriage while 25.4 percent were not registered, and 67 percent had no children. Of all participants, 53.7 percent had graduated with a bachelor degree, and 40 percent earned 15,001–30,000 Baht per month.

Research Design and Procedure

This study used a cross-sectional actor-partner interdependence model (APIM) to examine causal effects and the similarity effects of the Big Five's extraversion trait and marital satisfaction mediated by the Michelangelo phenomenon. Specific terminology for the effects that were tested in the APIMs included: (1) *actor effects* which captured the correlation between an individual's extraversion personality, the Michelangelo phenomenon variables, and his or her own level of marital satisfaction; and (2) *Partner effects* capturing the correlation between an individual's personality and a partner's movement toward their ideal self, and his or her partner's level of marital satisfaction. In addition, personality similarity was analyzed using intraclass correlation (ICC) to capture the similarity effects in extraversion between couples. It is noteworthy that the couple or dyad was used as a unit of analysis.

The present research implemented purposive sampling by seeking people who showed marriage status or displayed dyadic profile photos on Facebook. Subsequently, samples were collected at marriage registration offices in 3 Bangkok districts including Bang Rak, Bang Sue, Lad Krabang, in addition to an antenatal care department, Nawabutr Medical Center clinic. The research instrument used in this study was a questionnaire in Thai language. All participants consented to participate in the research. Prior to collecting data, this research was reviewed and received ethics clearance (COA No. 224/2563) from a Research Ethics Committee at Chulalongkorn University.

Measures

Extraversion

Extraversion was assessed with the Thai version of the Big Five Inventory Scale (BFI) developed by Maneesri and Bunlue (2010). 12 questionnaire items were selected to measure the level of extraversion for each individual. An example of an item was "Have friends easily" (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree) ($\alpha = .87$). To measure the similarity effects, a raw score of 12 items were calculated and converted into intraclass correlation (ICC) of extraversion in each couple used to measure level of similarity.

Partner affirmation

This part was divided into two parts; providing affirmation (8 items) ($\alpha = .91$) and receiving affirmation (8 items) ($\alpha = .96$) in Thai language to measure the first step of the Michelangelo phenomenon. The Thai receiving affirmation scale originally derived from "My Partner and My Goal Pursuits" by Rusbult et al. (2009). Respondents rated statements such as "My partner behaves in ways that help me become who I most want to be." The Thai providing affirmation scale was translated from "Me and My Partner's Goal Pursuits" scale (Patrick, 2018,) but modified as "I," for instance, "I see my partner as the person he/she ideally would like to be". Both measured on 7-point Likert scales (1 = least and 7 = most).

Movement toward the ideal self

The last step of the Michelangelo phenomenon was also divided into two parts; movement toward the ideal self ($\alpha = .86$) and perception of spouse's movement toward their ideal self ($\alpha = .89$). To measure this, participants were asked to reflect on their ideal selves (e.g., goals, aspirations, dreams) in 3 domains: career, personality, and relationship. They wrote one short description in Thai on each aspect and rated how much they had: (1) moved closer to these ideal selves; (2) remained unchanged; or (3) moved further away as a result of involvement with their spouses. The Likert scale was used for measurement, ranging from -3 (moved away) through 0 (unchanged) to +3 (moved closer). Likewise, to measure the perception of spousal movement toward their ideal self, participants were asked to briefly describe their spouse's three ideal selves. Similar Likert scales were applied.

Marital satisfaction

Marital satisfaction was measured with a Thai version of the Relationship Assessment Scale or RAS (Hendrick, 1988) ($\alpha = .76$). Participants rated seven items such as “How well does your partner meet your needs?” on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (least) to 7 (most).

Data Analysis

To examine the relationship between extraversion and marital satisfaction mediated by the Michelangelo phenomenon, data were analyzed into two levels: a lower level and an upper level using the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (APIM) via the Mplus 7 program (Kenny et al., 2006). The lower level, or individual level, was used to test actor and partner effects of extraversion on marital satisfaction individually via partner affirmation and movement toward the ideal self. The upper level used intraclass correlation (ICC) to measure the extraversion similarity effects within the couples. Based on the median, husbands and wives were then divided into 4 groups: both low extraversion ($N = 51$ dyads), both high extraversion ($N = 55$ dyads), low extraverted husband and high extraverted wife ($N = 47$ dyads), and high extraverted husband and low extraverted wife ($N = 48$ dyads).

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation. Generally, the mean in all the variables is relatively high except for extraversion at 4.65 for husbands and 4.61 for wives. It can be seen that movement towards ideal self in both wives and husbands has the highest mean among all variables with 5.94 and 5.91 respectively.

Table 2 presents Pearson’s correlation between the key variables (i.e., extraversion traits, the Michelangelo phenomenon, and outcomes). Most variables are correlated significantly. There are few variables that are highly correlated, namely, the husband providing affirmation and receiving affirmation is .86 while the wife providing affirmation and receiving affirmation is .85. It is worth noting that interdependent relationships influence the behavioral confirmation in couples (Rusbult et al., 2005).

Hypotheses Testing

First, we tested the model fit of both upper and lower levels. The goodness-of-fit indices for the lower level was $\chi^2 = .01$, RMSEA = .06, CFI = .98, and for the upper level was $\chi^2 = .05$, RMSEA = .005, CFI = .99. Both models fit the data well.

Lower Level

The influence of extraversion towards marital satisfaction mediated by the Michelangelo phenomenon in Thai newlyweds was investigated using the APIM SEM Model for the two levels. Table 3 shows the lower level.

Table 1 Means, and Standard Deviations

Variables	Husband		Wife	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Extraversion	4.66	1.07	4.62	1.00
Receiving Affirmation	5.49	1.20	5.60	1.18
Providing Affirmation	5.47	1.08	5.49	1.02
Movement toward the ideal self	5.91	1.02	5.94	0.96
Perception of Spouse Movement toward their ideal self	5.85	1.07	5.89	0.99
Marital Satisfaction	5.70	0.87	5.69	0.86

Table 2 Zero-Order Correlation between extraversion trait, variables of the Michelangelo phenomenon, and marital satisfaction

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Extraversion	.08	.21**	.23**	.12	.17*	.28**
2. Receiving Affirmation	.28**	.28**	.85**	.42**	.44**	.57**
3. Providing Affirmation	.34**	.86**	.22**	.40**	.44**	.57**
4. Movement toward the ideal self	.28**	.36**	.42**	.19**	.72**	.27**
5. Perception of Spouse Movement toward their ideal self	.27**	.43**	.46**	.84**	.15*	.25**
6. Marital Satisfaction	.18**	.47**	.52**	.30**	.30**	.35**

Note: Correlations for husband are displayed below the diagonal (in gray) and correlations for wife are shown above the diagonal. The diagonal shows correlations between two partners.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, two tailed.

Table 3 Actor-partner Interdependence Model (APIM) in individual level or lower level

Variable	Husband				Wife			
	Actor effect		Partner Effects		Actor effect		Partner Effects	
	B	b [95% CI]	p	β	b [95% CI]	p	β	p
Direct effects								
EXT →Rcv Aff	0.28	0.16	0.46	0.000				
EXT → Pro Aff	0.31	0.18	0.44	0.000				
Rcv Aff → Me Move	0.32	0.16	0.37	0.000				
Pro Aff → Me Move				-0.01	-0.10	0.08	0.82	
Pro Aff → S Move	0.45	0.32	0.57	0.000				
EXT → RAS	-0.003	-0.10	0.10	0.96	0.04	-0.06	0.12	0.52
Rcv Aff → RAS	0.05	-0.12	0.20	0.65				
Pro Aff → RAS	0.39	0.12	0.50	0.001	0.06	-0.05	0.14	0.34
Me Move → RAS	0.10	-0.10	0.26	0.38				
S Move → RAS	0.03	-0.15	0.19	0.81				
Indirect effects								
EXT → Rcv Aff →RAS	0.02	-0.04	0.06	0.65				
EXT → Pro Aff → RAS	0.12	0.02	0.17	0.007	0.02	-0.02	0.04	0.35
EXT →Rcv Aff→ Me Move→RAS	0.008	-0.01	0.02	0.40				
EXT →Pro Aff→ S Move→RAS	0.004	-0.02	0.03	0.81	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.825
					-0.009	-0.02	0.01	0.29
					0.006	-0.01	0.02	0.38
					0.06	0.00	0.11	0.03
					0.06	0.00	0.10	0.04
					0.06	0.00	0.05	0.07
					0.06	0.00	0.07	0.02
					0.06	0.00	0.06	0.27
					0.07	-0.07	0.20	0.36
					-0.09	-0.22	0.06	0.26

Note: $N_{\text{obs}} = 201$. CI= Confidence Interval. EXT = Extraversion, Pro Aff = Providing affirmation, Me Move = Movement toward the ideal self, S Move = Perception of spouse movement toward their ideal self RAS = Marital satisfaction.
Significant results are presented in bold ($p < .05$).

Direct effects of each individual were examined to see the actor and partner effects. There was an actor effect for wife extraversion and wife's marital satisfaction ($\beta = .16, t = 2.87, p < .01$), while there was no statistically significant effect between husband extraversion and husband marital satisfaction ($\beta = -.003, t = -0.05, p = .96$). This indicated that the higher the extraversion for a wife, the higher the marital satisfaction for that wife; whereas, extraversion for a husband had no effect on his marital satisfaction. Interestingly, the results revealed that a wife's variables had stronger effects than a husband's variables in the model. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was partially supported only on the wife's side. Examining the direct effects of the Michelangelo phenomenon in detail, all variables were correlated and associated with extraversion in both genders. Extraversion in wives positively predicted receiving affirmation ($\beta = .21, t = 3.07, p < .01$) and providing affirmation ($\beta = .23, t = 3.46, p < .001$). Receiving affirmation predicted the movement toward the ideal self in a positive direction ($\beta = .38, t = 6.61, p < .001$) as well as providing affirmation positively correlated with the perception of a spouse movement toward their ideal self ($\beta = .44, t = 7.80, p < .001$). On the other hand, extraverted husbands had a strong direct effect on receiving affirmation ($\beta = .28, t = 4.25, p < .001$) and providing affirmation ($\beta = .30, t = 4.88, p < .001$). This suggests that there was an effect of the Michelangelo phenomenon in Thai newlywed couples. Hypothesis 3 was supported.

The indirect effects of the Michelangelo phenomenon were further tested as shown in Table 3. Results showed that receiving and providing affirmation mediated the association between extraversion and marital satisfaction for a wife; however, only providing affirmation mediated the association between a husband's extraversion, and his marital satisfaction ($\beta = .12, t = 2.71, p < .01$). There was an actor effect for wife extraversion and her marital satisfaction was fully mediated by receiving affirmation ($\beta = .06, t = 2.06, p < .05$), but there was no partner effect. In contrast, providing affirmation had both actor effect and partner effect between extraverted wife and marital satisfaction in positive directions. The actor effect of a wife's extraversion and a wife's marital satisfaction was fully mediated by a wife providing affirmation ($\beta = .06, t = 2.11, p < .05$) while the only partner effect in this model illustrated that a wife providing affirmation was the mediator that positively predicted a husband's marital satisfaction ($\beta = .05, t = 2.27, p < .05$). In other words, providing affirmation was the only mediator that had actor effects in both genders and had the partner effects on the husband's marital satisfaction. Additionally, it was found that the estimated values of providing affirmation

in both husband and wife were higher than receiving affirmation, and positively predicted marital satisfaction in both husband and wife. This suggests that providing affirmation plays a more important role than receiving affirmation. Thus, hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Upper Level

To examine the influence of extraversion similarity in Thai newly married couples, intraclass correlation raw scores (ICC) were used to measure the extraversion similarity of each couple and classified into four groups to examine similarity effects influencing marital satisfaction mediated by the Michelangelo phenomenon. As seen in Table 4, it was found extraversion similarity had a direct, significant effect on a wife's marital satisfaction ($\beta = .16, t = 2.75, p < .01$). For mediation effects, a wife receiving affirmation was fully mediated with extraversion similarity and marital satisfaction in both actor and partner effect (actor effect $\beta = .10, t = 2.51, p < .05$, partner effect $\beta = .05, t = 2.39, p < .05$), while a wife providing affirmation had only actor effect with similarity in extraversion and marital satisfaction ($\beta = .08, t = 1.95, p < .05$). Conversely, there was no direct or indirect actor or partner effect for husbands, which also means that his receiving affirmation and providing affirmation were not mediated with marital satisfaction. This suggests that the higher the profile similarity within couples, the higher marital satisfaction in both husband and wife when a wife receives affirmation or provides affirmation. Hence, hypothesis 4 was partially supported only on the mediation effects between extraversion similarity and providing affirmation and receiving affirmation. In addition, novel findings were identified while analyzing the upper level, namely, that providing affirmation had a positive direct effect with movement toward ideal self significantly on both wife ($\beta = .28, t = 2.77, p < .01$) and husband ($\beta = .53, t = 6.13, p < .001$), but there was no indirect effect. The second level mediators, which are movement toward the ideal self and perception of spouse movement toward their ideal self, did not have a direct effect on marital satisfaction in husband or wife, and were not mediating between extraversion, partner affirmation and marital satisfaction in both levels. The findings showed that movement toward the ideal self and perception of spouse movement toward their ideal self were not predictors of marital satisfaction directly or indirectly. Only receiving affirmation and providing affirmation were mediators; therefore, the hypothesis 4 was rejected only on the part of the second level mediator.

Table 4 Actor-partner Interdependence Model (APIIM) on couple level or upper level

Variables	Husband				Wife			
	Actor effect		Partner effects		Actor effect		Partner effects	
	β	<i>b</i> [95% CI]	<i>p</i>	β	<i>b</i> [95% CI]	<i>p</i>	β	<i>b</i> [95% CI]
Direct effects								
Ext Sim → Rcv Aff	0.12	-0.77	13.39	0.08			0.28	7.63
Ext Sim → Pro Aff	0.09	-2.00	10.73	0.18			0.33	8.72
Rcv Aff → Me Move	-0.13	-0.24	0.02	0.09			0.14	-0.03
Pro Aff → S Move	0.46	0.33	0.58	0.00			0.44	0.31
Pro Aff → Me Move	0.53	0.33	0.67	0.00	-0.01	0.08	0.28	0.08
Ext Sim → RAS	0.04	-3.10	5.86	0.55			0.16	1.72
Rcv Aff → RAS	0.06	-0.12	0.21	0.59	0.05	0.11	0.34	0.09
Pro Aff → RAS	0.38	0.12	0.49	0.001			0.23	0.01
Me Move → RAS	0.08	-0.11	0.24	0.45			0.07	-0.08
S Move → RAS	0.01	-0.17	0.18	0.94			-0.09	-0.22
Indirect effects								
Ext Sim → Rcv Aff → RAS	0.01	-0.80	1.37	0.61	0.006	0.78	0.10	0.76
Ext Sim → Pro Aff → RAS	0.04	-0.76	3.41	0.21			0.08	-0.02
Ext Sim → Rcv Aff → Me Move → RAS	-0.001	-0.19	0.10	0.52			0.003	-0.17
Ext Sim → Pro Aff → S Move → RAS	0.00	-0.33	0.36	0.94			-0.01	-1.38
Ext Sim → Pro Aff → Me Move → RAS	0.004	-0.30	0.59	0.51	0.00	0.02	0.007	-0.33
							0.001	0.81

Note: $N_{dyads} = 201$. CI = Confidence Interval, Ext Sim = Extraversion Similarity, Pro Aff = Providing affirmation, Me Move = Movement toward the ideal self, S Move = Perception of spouse movement toward their ideal self, RAS = Marital satisfaction. Significant results are presented in bold ($p < .05$).

Discussion

In the present research, we strived to discover how the Michelangelo phenomenon and extraversion could yield marital satisfaction in young Thai newlywed couples. We discovered several novel findings that fill the literature gap of the Michelangelo phenomenon. The findings reveal that the Michelangelo phenomenon occurred in Thai young newlyweds through partner affirmations (i.e., providing affirmation and receiving affirmation) that were strongly associated with marital satisfaction. Partner affirmations mediated the association between extraversion and marital satisfaction in positive directions in both genders and both levels, except a husband receiving affirmation that was not predicted, hence the hypothesis 3 was supported. Partner affirmation is the most important component of this phenomenon. Rusbult et al. (2005) stated that partner affirmation was the core of the Michelangelo phenomenon that sculpts the other in order to unveil the hidden ideal self into the actual self as close as possible, which is beneficial for personal well-being and couple well-being. Our results implied that, for the first time, the Michelangelo phenomenon could be replicated in a highly collectivistic culture like Thailand, a Southeast Asian country. Regardless of the cultural differences, the Michelangelo phenomenon plays a pivotal role in marital satisfaction, which consistently proves that it is a quintessential mechanism of relationship maintenance. Providing affirmation in romantic couples in the present research extended the definition of partner affirmation in the Michelangelo phenomenon. Previously, the Michelangelo phenomenon mainly highlighted the importance of receiving affirmation, but few papers discussed the importance of providing affirmation. Kumashiro et al. (2007) emphasized that by providing affirmation, skilled sculptors facilitate an environment for growth and encourage targets to pursue their goals. This result was in line with previous research that providing affirmation played a more significant role than the receiving affirmation because providing affirmation validated the self-concept and motivated the pursuit of dreams, which nourishes relationships and enhances marriage quality (Deci & Ryan, 2014). Furthermore, partner affirmation increased relationship satisfaction when individuals were intrinsically affirmed by their romantic partners, particularly the intrinsic qualities such as cheerful, supportive, and loyal (Gordon & Chen, 2010). Aligning with the results, providing affirmation was strongly correlated with marital satisfaction, supporting hypotheses 3 and partially supported

hypothesis 4 as there was no movement toward the ideal self and perception of spouse movement toward their ideal self.

The findings show that providing affirmation mediated extraverted husband and his marital satisfaction. It is interesting that on the husband's side, this was the only effect. The concept of manhood proposed by Gilmore (1990) states that a successful man needs to fulfill three pillars: procreate, provide and protect. This manhood concept has been recognized in every culture including in Thailand, where men are expected to have descendants, to be the providers of their families and tribes, and provide protection (Rybicki & Jastrzębski, 2021). Analyzing the results, it is plausible that providing affirmation is another way that men implicitly show their masculinity since it demonstrates psychologically, they are capable of providing for their families and tribes. Supporting this, there was a positive partner effect of extraversion similarity and husband marital satisfaction mediated by a wife receiving affirmation on the upper level as shown on Table 4 ($\beta = .05$, $t = 2.39$, $p < .05$). It means that the higher the level of extraversion similarity within couples, the higher the husband's marriage satisfaction when he sees his wife receive affirmation. Conversely, receiving affirmation did not mediate a husband's extraversion and his marital satisfaction on both levels. This suggests that men like to portray their manhood by being the provider of the family, but when they receive partner affirmation it might weaken their masculinity because they are seen as receivers. In the present research, the relationship between masculinity and partner affirmation was not examined, so this could be a future direction of study.

Extraversion is strongly associated with the Michelangelo phenomenon in both wife and husband on the lower level. Possibly that positivity of extraversion created positive vibes whereby the partner shared activities and feelings daily that led to the Michelangelo phenomenon process (Bühler et al., 2020). The findings highlighted that there was an actor effect of the wife's extraversion and her marital satisfaction via the Michelangelo phenomenon. The results were consistent with the findings of Bühler et al. (2020) that highly extraverted women tend to perceive their partners in a positive light, which facilitates partner affirmation, partner behavioral affirmation, movement towards the ideal self, and consequently promotes relationship satisfaction through the components of the Michelangelo phenomenon. As a result, they were happier with their relationship and life.

Moreover, extraversion is positively connected with emotional expressiveness notably in females. This could be related to Riggio and Riggio's findings (2002) that women express emotions more than men. Thus, this can explain our findings that a wife's extraversion had stronger effects on the Michelangelo phenomenon than the husband's extraversion in the lower model. On the upper level, extraversion similarity positively predicted only a wife's marital satisfaction, but not a husband's marital satisfaction. This suggests that a highly extraverted wife explicitly expresses her love and positive emotions through partner affirmation thus yielding higher marital satisfaction.

On the other hand, a highly extraverted husband had no relationship with his own marital satisfaction via the Michelangelo phenomenon. This might be because other traits of men in the Big Five are more associated with the Michelangelo phenomenon. Bühler et al. (2020) reported that agreeableness and conscientiousness were the top traits reported as men's ideal selves. This study did not examine other traits in the Big Five so it is possible that other traits in the Big Five are more correlated with a husband's marital satisfaction such as agreeableness and conscientiousness in the collectivistic context, something to be further explored in the future.

Remarkably, the novel findings revealed that providing affirmation positively predicted the movement toward ideal self significantly for both wife ($\beta = .28$, $t = 2.77$, $p = .004$) and husband ($\beta = .53$, $t = 6.13$, $p < .001$) directly, but there was no indirect effect as shown in Table 4. This suggests that when a sculptor provides affirmation to the target, they also experience their own movement toward their ideal self, especially in highly extraverted couples. Such is consistent with previous literature that when the romantic sculptors 'do the locomotion' with the targets, it fosters personal growth and their partners' growth and relational well-being (Kumashiro et al., 2007). Also, considering the short descriptions of their relationship ideal self (i.e., trait 3) in our questionnaire, the findings revealed the top ideal self of male respondents was "to be a good husband", "to be a good husband who can take care his wife and his children", "to become a dependable family leader that makes home sweet home", while the most popular answer from wives was "to be a good wife", "be supportive of my husband", "to be a good mother", "to have a happy family". Analyzing together with the correlations and relationship ideal self reports, this showed that to fulfill their role as a life partner (i.e., to be a good husband/wife) was their ideal self. Thus, when they provide affirmation to their spouses, they are also moving toward their ideal self.

Furthermore, while investigating the role of extraversion personality similarity in Thai couples, the findings suggest that similarity in extraversion positively regressed the Michelangelo phenomenon indicating that couple similarity in extraversion facilitates the Michelangelo phenomenon more effectively than complementary couples. Consistent with previous literature's overwhelming support for similarity attraction theory, assortative mating predicts marital satisfaction because both partners have comparable emotions, perception, and experiences so are better attuned better to each other's emotions (Gonzaga et al., 2007; Luo, 2017; Rammstedt & Schupp, 2008; Weidmann et al., 2017). Thus, our hypotheses were supported.

In exploring extraversion similarity in depth, a post hoc test using Bonferroni was done to see the mean differences in 4 groups. It was discovered that couples who were both high in extraversion had highest marital satisfaction; whereas, both low extraverted couples (or introverted couples) had lowest marital satisfaction among the four groups. This suggests that high similarity extraverted couples have higher marital satisfaction than complementary couples. Linked to the upper level, extraversion personality similarity regressed the Michelangelo phenomenon in positive directions, hence the findings are consistent with the previous research stating that assortative mating is associated with marital satisfaction (Larsen & Buss, 2018; Luo, 2017). Our findings support this and further elaborate that couple similarity and partner affirmation of the Michelangelo phenomenon promote the marital satisfaction in the Thai context.

It is worth noting that the second level mediators (i.e., movement toward the ideal self, perception of spouse movement toward their ideal self) did not predict marital satisfaction in both, and they did not act as mediators in both levels. Usually both movements occurred over time; however, this research was cross-sectional, so it was likely that they occurred later in wave 2 or wave 3, suggesting the need for a longitudinal study in the future.

Conclusion and Recommendation

These results demonstrate that extraversion positively predicts marital satisfaction via the mediating role of the Michelangelo phenomenon, particularly in partner affirmation. In a cross-sectional APIM model in both levels, a wife's extraversion has stronger effects than a husband's in both direct and indirect effects. Within the Michelangelo phenomenon construct, providing affirmation plays a more vital role than receiving

affirmation, which is regarded as a new finding that explains the mechanism of partner affirmation from a sculptor's perspective. It also shows that when couples provide affirmation to their significant others, they also move closer toward their own ideal self. Furthermore, a high level of couple similarity has higher marital satisfaction and influences marital satisfaction via the Michelangelo phenomenon, but not for the complementary couples. These novel findings extended the previous research revealing that the Michelangelo phenomenon occurred in a highly collectivistic country like Thailand, highlighting that partner affirmation is a powerful tool consolidating the romantic relationships of newlywed couples. The warmth and positive emotions of extraversion are linked to the Michelangelo phenomenon contributing to marital satisfaction.

Reflecting these insights, we recommend couples to use verbal or behavioral affirmation to support one another because those affirmations, especially from loved ones, motivate that person to overcome any obstacles in order to accomplish his/her personal goals or dreams. Next, as a couple, one should promote their extraversion by creating joyful vibes and express positive affects toward their romantic partner in daily life. This will lead to long-term marital satisfaction. As for the government sector, it is recommended these findings be publicized to marriage couples via seminars, posters, and social media platforms about how they can support each other via the Michelangelo phenomenon mechanism for sustaining a happy marriage.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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