

Marriage may make people happier

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A study led by Michigan State University researcher Stevie C.Y. Yap suggests marriage may make people happier in the long run. Credit: Michigan State University

Married people may be happier in the long run than those who aren't married, according to new research by Michigan State University scientists.

Their study, online in the *Journal of Research in Personality*, finds that although matrimony does not make people happier than they were when they were single, it appears to protect against normal declines in happiness during [adulthood](#).

"Our study suggests that people on average are happier than they would have been if they didn't get married," said Stevie C.Y. Yap, a researcher

in MSU's Department of Psychology.

Yap, Ivana Anusic and Richard Lucas studied the data of thousands of participants in a long-running, national British survey. They set out to find whether personality helps people adapt to major life events including marriage.

The answer, essentially, was no: [Personality traits](#) such as [conscientiousness](#) or [neuroticism](#) do not help people deal with [losing a job](#) or having a baby.

"Past research has suggested that personality is important in how people react to important life events," Yap said. "But we found that there were no consistent effects of personality in how people react and adapt to these major events."

In general, similar-aged participants who did not get married showed a gradual decline in happiness as the years passed.

Those who were married, however, largely bucked this trend. It's not that marriage caused their satisfaction level to spike, Yap noted, but instead kept it, at least, stable.

Provided by Michigan State University

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