

Overview of divorce factors analysis: a case study in Watmuri Village, Tanimbar Islands Regency



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ABSTRACT

This article presents a comprehensive analysis of divorce factors, focusing particularly on Watmuri Village in the Tanimbar Islands Regency. The study investigates key contributors to divorce, namely infidelity, disputes, and continuous conflicts. Through scrutiny of two hundred and thirty-eight divorce cases adjudicated in the General Court of Dobo, patterns and trends were identified. Additionally, data sourced from the Office of Religious Affairs highlighted twenty-three divorce cases associated with infidelity, disputes, and economic challenges. Employing a qualitative approach, specifically a case study methodology, the research delved deeply into the intricacies of divorce dynamics. This method facilitated an exhaustive examination of programs, events, processes, and activities pertinent to individuals undergoing marital dissolution. Through meticulous data collection procedures conducted over an extended timeframe, researchers closely aligned their observations with the temporal and behavioral patterns of the subjects. The findings of this study contribute significantly to the understanding of divorce dynamics in Watmuri Village and provide valuable insights into the factors influencing marital breakdown in the Tanimbar Islands Regency. Furthermore, the qualitative approach employed offers a nuanced perspective on the complexities inherent in divorce proceedings, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of marital discord.

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1. Introduction

Marriage considered a divine institution facilitating the reproduction of life in the natural world, is deeply embedded within human culture and social life evolution. While simpler societies exhibit a straightforward, limited, and insular marriage culture, modern societies demonstrate a more complex, inclusive, and expansive marital framework [1]. Violation of marital norms or failure to meet its foundational principles and conditions can lead to divorce, imposing significant consequences on both the individuals involved and their families [2]. Despite the earnest pursuit of marital bliss, divorces persist in reality, underscored by various research findings. Burhan and Khoirul, analyzed divorce factors, particularly economic ones, highlighting the escalating prevalence of divorces. Badruddin Nasir identified multiple divorce triggers in Sungai Kunjang District, Samarinda City, attributing them to factors such as education level, occupation, economic status, moral crisis, domestic violence, and forced marriages. Notably, couples with a general high school education exhibited a higher divorce rate. The analysis further revealed that divorces predominantly occurred within the age range of 25-30 for husbands and 18-24 for wives, with laborers and private employees facing heightened divorce risks. Early marriages, spanning 0-5 years, were also susceptible to divorce, predominantly influenced by economic strains. Contrary to secular perspectives, religious views often diverge significantly on divorce matters, reflecting differing ideologies and values [3].

In Christianity, divorce is prohibited as it conflicts with religious law, a stance underscored by the disfavor of divorce by the Lord Jesus, except in cases of adultery or when death intervenes (Matthew 5:32; 19:9). According to Philip R. Leineweber, adultery, understood as sexual transgression, warrants divorce as it violates the sanctity of marriage [4]. Doctrinally, Christian marriage draws from both the Old Testament and the New Testament [5]. In the Old Testament, marriage symbolizes and emulates God's guidance [6], with spouses reflecting divine love in their relationship [7]. Conversely, the New Testament portrays Christian marriage as an enduring and obedient union mirroring Christ's love for his church [8]. Divorce, the legal dissolution of marriage, is adjudicated in both religious and civil courts [9]. Despite its legality, divorce is perceived as a social issue in many societies, often viewed as a failure due to the termination of a sacred union [10]. Since the enactment of Law Number 1 of 1974, marriages are governed by this legislation [11]. Nonetheless, there is a prevailing belief that the religious aspect remains paramount in determining the validity of marriage, echoing the principles outlined above.

When entering marriage, no one anticipates experiencing divorce. Nonetheless, certain circumstances may arise that render the continuation of the marriage untenable, necessitating the dissolution of the union. Divorce, therefore, is permitted only in dire situations to mitigate further harm, serving as an emergency exit for the greater good. The increasing divorce rate raises questions about governmental policies that seemingly facilitate divorce. Consequently, marital discord often prompts individuals to resort to divorce as a solution, contrasting sharply with the societal preference for resolving conflicts privately. Individuals with lower economic and educational backgrounds often handle marital issues internally. Various factors contribute to divorce, including unhealthy work dynamics, moral crises, jealousy, forced marriages, irresponsibility, economic strain, early marriage, abuse, genetic factors, political influences, third-party interference, disputes, quarrels, and disharmony. The legal dissolution of marriage, governed by Law 1 of 1974, is contingent upon specific provisions outlined in Articles 38 and 39. According to Article 39, divorce proceedings can commence only after attempts at reconciliation fail, with justifiable reasons for irreconcilable differences stipulated. The procedural aspects of divorce are delineated in supplementary regulations. A discrepancy arises between civil and religious laws regarding divorce. While the Marriage Law permits divorce, Christian religious doctrine, as articulated in Matthew 19:5-6, emphasizes the indissolubility of marital bonds. Nevertheless, court rulings legally terminate marriages, leading to divorce despite religious injunctions.

Currently, there is a notable surge in divorces within Watmuri Regency, particularly in my village. Over the past three years, there has been a significant increase in divorce rates documented at the Saumlaki Court office. In 2022 alone, 238 divorced couples were recorded. Efforts to prevent and address divorces can be undertaken, particularly in the realm of counseling. Premarital counseling and family consultation services offer potential avenues for intervention. These services aim to address various familial issues such as marital discord, communication breakdowns, financial strains, misunderstandings, sexual conflicts, infidelity, and instances of Domestic Violence. Similar challenges have also arisen within several families residing in RT 003/RW 001, Galai Dubu Village, Nirunmas District. Preliminary assessments, conducted through observations and telephone inquiries, have revealed that infidelity, frequent disputes, domestic violence, economic hardships, lack of harmony, and parental interference were key contributors to marital breakdowns within these households.

2. Method

The research methodology employed in this study is qualitative, with a particular emphasis on utilizing a case study approach. According to Darke *et al*, case study research involves conducting an extensive examination of programs, events, processes, and activities involving one or more individuals [12]. Each case within the study is intricately linked to the temporal and procedural aspects of the research process, requiring researchers to undertake comprehensive data collection utilizing various methodologies over an extended period. Data collection for this study involved multiple methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research subject. Firstly, primary data was gathered through direct observation of the

phenomenon under investigation. Researchers observed and documented relevant programs, events, and activities related to divorce within the study area [13]. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including divorcing couples, family members, and community leaders, to obtain rich, firsthand perspectives on the issue. To enhance the validity and reliability of the data, several strategies were employed. Firstly, data triangulation was utilized, whereby information from multiple sources and methods was cross-verified to confirm consistency and accuracy [14]. This approach helped mitigate potential biases and errors inherent in individual data collection methods. Furthermore, member checking was conducted, involving the validation of findings with participants to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the data collected. This process allowed participants to confirm the accuracy of their responses and provide additional insights or clarifications where necessary [15]. Following data collection, a thorough process of data analysis was undertaken to derive meaningful insights and conclusions. Firstly, all collected data, including observations, interviews, and any relevant documents or records, were systematically organized and coded [16]. This coding process involved identifying key themes, patterns, and categories within the data. Subsequently, a thematic analysis was conducted, wherein common themes and patterns were identified and interpreted to elucidate underlying trends, relationships, and dynamics pertaining to divorce within the study context. The qualitative case study methodology employed in this research facilitated a detailed exploration of divorce factors and their impacts within the study area. Through rigorous data collection, validation, and analysis procedures, the study aimed to provide valuable insights into the complex phenomenon of divorce and contribute to the existing body of knowledge in this field.

3. Results and Discussion

Based on the research findings obtained at the location, several factors and the impacts of divorce are evident, significantly affecting the lives of family members. The causes of divorce encompass various factors, including:

- **Economic Factors:** A woman's primary entitlement to her husband is sustenance, encompassing basic necessities such as food, clothing, shelter, and care. Economic-related divorces are prevalent when husbands fail to fulfill these obligations due to irresponsibility or insufficient effort. Alternatively, some divorces occur when husbands fulfill their duties, but their wives demand an extravagant lifestyle beyond their means. According to Talcott Parsons' functional structural theory, society comprises interrelated elements. Consistent with the research findings, a husband's failure to provide for his family undermines his functional role as the household head, contributing to marital discord [17].
- **Domestic Violence Factors [18]:** Domestic violence is a significant contributor to divorces, often affecting women disproportionately. Forms of violence include physical abuse (*e.g.*, hitting, kicking), emotional or psychological abuse (*e.g.*, threats, name-calling), economic abuse (*e.g.*, financial control), sexual abuse (*e.g.*, forced intercourse), and restrictions on activities. Many women endure possessive, controlling, and threatening behavior from their partners. Conflict, as noted by Dahrendorf, is inherent within families. He suggests that societal order stems from the influence exerted by a select few, indicating the complex dynamics underlying domestic relationships.
- **Person Factor (Cheating):** Infidelity serves as a primary catalyst for the dissolution of romantic relationships and marriages. Typically, extramarital affairs involve married men engaging with single women. Patterns indicate that these affairs often involve established men with families, attracting women who are drawn to them due to economic considerations. Presently, divorces resulting from infidelity frequently stem from interactions on platforms such as Facebook and other social networks. These platforms are commonly utilized by individuals seeking solace from dissatisfaction, leading them to seek new connections or reconnect with former partners, thereby betraying their current ones through deception [19].

3.1. The impacts that occur after divorce

Divorce can induce emotional distress in both partners [20]. Children born of these marriages may also experience adverse effects stemming from their parents' separation [21]. According to Talcott Parsons' theory of structural functionalism, functional structural theory underscores the equilibrium of familial and societal systems, wherein each family member assumes distinct roles and functions [22]. For instance, the father assumes the role of the household's breadwinner, while the mother manages domestic affairs, including cleaning, cooking, and caring for the children and her spouse. The children, in turn, partake in learning and assisting their parents. Any disruption in these roles can adversely affect other functions within the family structure, as evidenced in cases of divorce. In such instances, one spouse may fail to fulfill their designated role, leading to marital dissolution. For example, if the husband fails to provide for the family financially, he becomes dysfunctional in his duties towards his wife and children. Similarly, if the wife neglects her household duties, she fails to fulfill her role as a wife and mother. This theory posits that any discrepancy in role fulfillment can disrupt the entire family dynamic.

- **Impact on Husband and Wife:** The consequences of divorce for ex-husbands and ex-wives are significant. Women, post-divorce, may no longer receive financial support from their ex-husbands, while men may lack the care and support they once had. Additionally, divorce alters the marital status of both parties, leading to separate living arrangements. Asset division is another critical aspect of divorce proceedings, involving the distribution of acquired, inherited, and jointly held assets. While individually owned assets typically pose no complications, jointly acquired assets require equitable division as per mutual agreement. Joint assets, accumulated during marriage, are divided equally between ex-spouses. In some cases, a portion of assets may be allocated for the child's welfare, subject to their capability to manage the funds effectively.
- **Impact on Children:** Divorce often stems from conflicts and quarrels, which children may witness, causing distress and adversely affecting their mood. Witnessing parental discord can be unsettling for children, who prefer harmony in their family environment. Divorce can inflict emotional wounds on children, who may struggle to comprehend the changes and adjust to a new lifestyle. The transition to a single-parent household can evoke feelings of insecurity and loneliness among children, who may yearn for the presence of both parents. Children may also grapple with feelings of guilt and rejection, especially if one parent assumes custody, leading to potential emotional trauma. Furthermore, children may experience anger as they navigate the emotional upheaval triggered by divorce, often expressing rebellion against their altered circumstances.

3.2. The implications of pastoral counseling regarding divorce

- **Implications of pastoral care in the Old Testament:** (1) God's original plan was marriage for life, without divorce. In fact, regarding divorce according to the Old Covenant, God's primary intention for humans was not divorce, but lifelong marriage. This was evident in the blessing bestowed upon the first humans, Adam and his wife Eve, who became one flesh. The scripture emphasizes, "what God has joined together, let no man separate" (Genesis 2: 21-25). (2) Since humans fell into sin, divorce has become frequent. The second fact about divorce according to the Old Testament is that after Adam's fall into sin, divorces became more common. For instance, King David divorced his wife Michal. Additionally, Michal was divorced from her husband when David reclaimed her as his wife (2 Samuel 3:12-16). (3) God allowed divorce to occur but provided guidelines. The third fact about divorce according to the Old Testament is that God established rules or criteria for divorce. Although God does not desire divorce for His people, He did provide guidelines for it. This was to ensure that the practice of divorce did not bring harm to the woman. The rule stipulated that a man seeking divorce must issue a certificate of divorce to his wife (Deuteronomy 24: 1-4). (4) Adultery is the sole condition for divorce permitted by God. The fourth fact about divorce according to the Old Testament is that God permits divorce only in cases of adultery. Divorce is permissible if the wife discovers something indecent, which is generally understood as adultery (Deuteronomy 24: 1-4).

3.3. Implications of pastoral care in the New Testament

In the New Testament, Christ taught important principles regarding divorce, not only in response to the Jews who tempted Him but also to emphasize that marriage should align with God's will. Several passages recording Christ's teachings are found in Mark 5:10-12, Luke 16:18, and Matthew 5:27-32, 19:3-9. Mark and Luke both emphasize that individuals who divorce, remarry, and then marry someone else are committing adultery. This confirms that divorce is an action displeasing and hated by God.

3.4. Implications of counseling

- **Premarital Counseling (Pre-Marital Pastoring):** From a Premarital Counseling perspective, the church offers guidance by counselors or pastors to prospective brides and grooms. The aim of marriage counseling is to ensure that the couple establishes a strong relationship, fosters peace and prosperity in marriage, and identifies potential household issues. Participants typically include the prospective couple, their families, and marriage witnesses, with the goal of providing advice to prepare them for marriage, both physically and psychologically, and to enhance mutual understanding.
- **Marriage Counseling (Marriage Shepherding):** From the perspective of Marriage Counseling, or what is commonly known as marriage counseling, the church endeavors to assist prospective couples in developing problem-solving skills through mutual respect, tolerance, and communication. This counseling, often conducted by professional counselors or pastors, aims to foster family motivation, growth, independence, and the well-being of all family members. Additionally, this shepherding is directed at congregational members to uphold the growth of their faith.
- **Family Counseling:** Addressing the implications of Pastoral Counseling in addressing the issues discussed in this thesis, the author examines it from the church's perspective on family counseling, as it is instrumental in preventing divorce. According to Sofyan S. Willis (2011: 89), "Family counseling is an effort to assist individual family members through the family system, improving family communication to optimize their potential development and resolve problems through the willingness and love of all family members."

The objectives of family counseling are outlined both generally and specifically by Sofyan S. Willis (2009: 89) as follows:

- **General Objectives:** (1) Aid family members in understanding and appreciating the emotional interrelation of family dynamics; (2) Foster awareness among family members that individual problems affect the perceptions, expressions, and interactions of others within the family; (3) Strive to achieve equilibrium that fosters growth and improvement for each member; (4) Cultivate a deep appreciation for the influence of parental relationships.
- **Specific Objectives:** (1) Enhance tolerance and support among family members for individual differences; (2) Foster tolerance towards family members experiencing frustration, conflict, and sadness arising from factors within the family system; (3) Foster the development of each family member's motives and potentials through support, encouragement, and enhancement; (4) Foster realistic self-perception of success among parents that aligns with the perceptions of other family members.

The aim of pastoral counseling is to prevent arguments, conflicts, and disharmony that may lead to divorce within the household. Additionally, pastoral counseling aims to foster a harmonious, happy, and spiritually fulfilling family environment characterized by *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *warahmah*.

4. Conclusion

From the research findings concerning the factors contributing to divorce and the ensuing impacts, the following conclusions can be drawn; (1) The factors leading to divorce in Watmuri

Village, Tanimbar Islands Regency, include infidelity, disputes, and constant quarrels. A total of two hundred and thirty-eight divorce cases were adjudicated by the Dobo State General Court. Data from the Office of Religious Affairs revealed that twenty-three divorce cases were associated with infidelity, disputes, and economic problems; (2) The post-divorce impacts affect both the ex-husband and ex-wife. They experience changes in their marital status, with the ex-husband becoming a "widower" and the ex-wife a "widow." Furthermore, they no longer cohabit and live separately. Another significant impact is on the children from their prior marriage, as both parents vie for custody. Children often experience reduced affection from either parent, particularly if they have formed new families. They may also struggle with decreased confidence, difficulty socializing, and feelings of depression, unworthiness, and self-blame.

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