

Our Different Differences: Qualitative Study of Cognitive Dissonance on Different Religion Spouses

Muhammad Fitrah Ramadhan Umar and Suryanto Suryanto

Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Airlangga, Campus B, Jl. Airlangga no. 4-6, Surabaya, Indonesia

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Abstract: The marriage of different religions in Indonesia current is still seen as a disgrace in the society that is supported by the absence of rules governing different religions legislation, as a result, couples who do different religions experience cognitive dissonance. In this cognitive dissonance, the couple is experiencing confusion between having to follow values in society or having to build a family. Anderson (1995) suggested that cognitive dissonance can occur in all aspects of life with individual beliefs contrary to those found in society. This research aims to analyze the psychological dynamics toward the couples who experience cognitive dissonance in the selection of couples of different religions and attempts to reduce cognitive dissonance experience. This study uses a qualitative approach, especially intrinsic case studies using the collection of observation and interview data for participants who do interfaith marriages. The analysis used thematic analysis techniques. The conclusion in this study is that the psychological dynamics of different religious couples who experience cognitive dissonance indicate that they know what they are doing wrong and that they want to maintain their marriage. In addition, they also received the rejection from their families and communities who viewed interfaith marriage as a disgrace. How to reduce cognitive dissonance by changing the cognitive elements of the environment and convincing yourself that what is done is right. Suggestions in this study are expected that couples of different religions who experience cognitive dissonance in order to reduce cognitive dissonance by changing the cognitive elements of the environment, and ensure that what is done right and advice for the marriage institution to enact rules about interfaith marriage.

1 INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a union between men and women in a family bond and works together in forming a family. Duvall and Miller (1985) a marriage is a socially recognized relationship between men and women for sexual intercourse, childbirth, and making a division of labor between partners. In Indonesian law in Article 1 of Law No. 1 of 1974 concerning marriage, namely "marriage is a birth and inner bond between a man and a woman as a husband and wife with the aim of forming a happy and eternal family based on the Almighty Godhead." The

The phenomenon today is that many individuals do marriages with different religions. Yahya and Boag (2014) suggested the phenomenon of inter-religious relations in Indonesia which consists of social, economic, governance systems and emotional relationships between individuals. One of the individual emotional relationships between religious

people is a love or marriage relationship between men and women of different religions. Hutapea (2011) argues that marriage of different religions is difficult to avoid due to heterogeneous conditions of association and socialization between individuals and increasingly close interactions between individuals. Feuer (Cigdem, 2015) argues that interfaith marriages are marriages between male and female couples who admit that the two partners recognize interfaith marriages. But the phenomenon of interfaith marriages creates controversy because the values are quite different between one religion and another. Joanides (Juneman & Rahardjo, 2013) argues that interfaith marriages are a complex phenomenon and create a controversy in society. Cavan (Juneman & Rahardjo, 2013) suggested marriage conducted by individuals who have different beliefs, one of whom would feel the values of their beliefs are threatened.

The interfaith marital relations will have a complex impact on the couple. Anjani and Suryanto (2006) suggested that the differences in beliefs in religion affect disputes and quarrels among individuals in the household. Hutapea (2011) suggested that the religious differences in a marriage can lead to marital dysfunction in the couple. Marriage dysfunction is to distort a marriage or marriage relationship. Horowitz (Calvina & Yusuf, 2012) suggested that the problem which may be faced by couples in different religions is a negative reaction and lack of understanding of the couple's family.

Another impact of interfaith marriages is the poor perception of people in Indonesia towards marriages of different religions and social judgment. Calvina and Yusuf (2012) suggested that people's views on marriage with different religions are not ideal, because they see in term of religious-based discourse that marriage has accountability before God. This view is reinforced by the risk of problems that arise because of interfaith marriages, one of which is the result of the marriage. The spiritual aspect lead to the assumption that children from interfaith marriages will experience confusion over the different religions held by their parents. Based on the explanation above, the impacts of different religions are social judgment from the community, easier to occur in domestic disputes, marital dysfunction, and family rejection.

Based on the explanation above that the impacts of interfaith marriages are easy disputes and quarrels, marital dysfunction, family rejection, and poor people's perceptions of interfaith marriages.

These impacts caused discomfort from the decisions made by the couple. This inconvenience comes from problems that is caused by the community to the decisions which is they make. The couples of different religions know the negative effects of marriage and also, they try to maintain the marriage they live. This condition is commonly called cognitive dissonance. Festinger (1957) argued that cognitive dissonance is a condition in which psychological discomfort is caused by two or more cognitive sources which have an impact on the gap amongof two elements so that it impacts on the behavior produced. Baron and Byrne (2004) suggestedthat cognitive dissonance is a universal aspect of human thought, although the factors and magnitude can be influenced by culture. Anderson (1995) suggested that cognitive dissonance can occur in all aspects of life with individual beliefs contrary to those found in society.

The cognitive dissonance in married couples has not been widely studied. Previous researchers discussed that cognitive dissonance in couples who are dating. The results of a study conducted by Fauzi and Putra (2016) on two respondents who did different religious courtship revealed that respondents significantly experienced cognitive dissonance which resulted in psychological discomfort. The dissonance factor in the two respondents were the cultural values and public opinion of the people who did not support their relationship. The efforts to reduce dissonance are done differently by each respondent, but how to add the new cognitive elements is a method that is equally used by the two participants

Based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers with one of the interfaith marriages in Surabaya namely:

"I know that different religions are not in accordance with the norms in society, but I am the one who is undergoing this marriage so I have to maintain this marriage because I love my partner very much"

The purpose of this research was to find out the factors that influence interfaith marriages and know the sources of cognitive dissonance in interfaith couples and how to reduce cognitive dissonance.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Cognitive Dissonance

Solomon (1992) suggested that the cognitive dissonance is one of the most important approaches to behavior based on the principle of consistency. Solomon suggests that individuals are motivated to reduce the state negative by making the state in accordance with one another. The cognitive element is something that is believed by someone to originate himself, his behavior or also observations of his surroundings. Reduction of dissonance can arise either by removing, adding to, or replacing cognitive element elements.

East (1997) suggested that cognitive dissonance is a confusing condition that occurs to someone when their beliefs are not in line with those found in the individual's environment. This condition encourages them to change their thoughts, feelings, and actions to be in accordance with renewal. Dissonance is felt when someone is committed to himself in carrying out an action that is inconsistent with their other behaviors and beliefs.

Festinger (1957) argued that cognitive dissonance is a condition when the individual psychological discomfort is caused by two or more cognitive sources which have an impact on the gap between the two elements so that it impacts on the behavior produced. Cognitive dissonance refers to any form of knowledge, opinion, or belief about the individual or the environment. Cognitive elements relate to real things or individual experiences in the surrounding environment and things contained in individual psychology.

Baron and Byrne (2004) suggested that the cognitive dissonance is a universal aspect of human thought, although the factors and magnitude can be influenced by culture. Vaughan and Hogg (2005) suggested that cognitive dissonance is a condition of discomfort from psychological distress when individuals have two or more information that is inconsistent or not the same as one another.

The causes of cognitive dissonance experienced by couples of different religions consist of various sources. Festinger (1957) suggested sources of cognitive dissonance, namely logical inconsistency, namely dissonance that occurs due to discrepancies between cognitive elements and logical things in the environment, culture mores, namely cultural differences causing cognitive dissonance, opinion generality that is dissonance which occurs when the opinions adopted by many people are forced on individual opinions, and past experience that is when individual cognition is inconsistent with the knowledge of the individual's past, dissonance will emerge.

When individuals experience cognitive dissonance, the individual tries to reduce the cognitive dissonance. Festinger (1957) suggested that the individual's way of reducing cognitive dissonance is changing the cognitive elements of behavior, changing the cognitive elements of the environment, and adding new cognitive elements.

The conclusion of the presentation above is cognitive dissonance, namely the condition of the individual having two or more thoughts originating from himself and from the surrounding environment and individuals are required to choose these thoughts.

2.2 Marriage Different from Religion

Robinson (2005) argued that the marriages among two individuals who embrace different religions called interfaith marriage, mixed marriage, mixed faith marriage, or interreligious marriage. Mandra & Artadi (Eoh, 1996) suggested that interfaith

marriages are inner-birth ties between a man and a woman who each have different religions and maintain their differences as husband and wife with the aim of forming a happy and eternal household based on the Almighty God.

Sukarti (2003) argued that the interfaith marriages are marriages between men and women of different religions. Eoh (1996) argued that the interfaith marriages as a marriage conducted by people who embrace religion and belief differ from one another The

The factors that influence interfaith marriages are based on the theory put forward by Makalev (2013), which is daily life association-day in community life, parental religious education, the marriage background of parents of different religions, freedom to choose a partner that fits the criteria regardless of religion and increasing globalization.

Paramitha (2002) argued that the problems that arise as a result of religious differences with couples in interfaith marriages, among others, namely religious background, family relationships, worship, sexuality, daily life, face difficulties in teaching religion to children.

Based on the explanation above, interfaith marriages are a process of unification between men and women who have religious differences in a marriage bond.

3 RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with intrinsic case study methods. The criteria of respondents in this study were husbands and wives who had different religions or beliefs and experienced cognitive dissonance. Respondents in this study were early adults to middle adulthood which ranged from 21-45 years. The couple's length of marriage is around 6 months to 10 years. This is in accordance with the research conducted by Anjani and Suryanto (2006) that the age of marriage under 10 years is the initial period in marriage and is considered appropriate in representing a picture of cognitive dissonance in couples of different religions. The respondents of this research also live around the city in Surabaya and its surroundings. The selection of respondents is done by snowball sampling, which is looking for information from other people in a chain. The data extraction techniques in this research were carried out by interview techniques. The interview method which was used in this study was in-depth interviews. The data analysis technique which was used in this

research was thematic data analysis with approach theory driven. Triangulation of data in this research that is using the significant others is integrating significant others data with data obtained from respondents. The main questions in this research are what factors influence interfaith marriage? what makes cognitive dissonance happen? how to reduce cognitive dissonance?

This study involved 2 pairs of subjects with aspects namely gender, age, religion, occupation and length of marriage. The first pair had the initials AA and AL who were 40 and 38 years old while the second pair had the initials AF and EN aged 35 and 30. The first couple of Christian Protestant husbands and wives were Muslim while the second pair of husbands were Muslim and Protestant Christian wives. The first couple of their marriage was 5 years old and the second couple was 3 years old. All respondents work as employees in a private company. This research sought to determine the factors that affect interfaith marriage, knowing the sources of cognitive dissonance on interfaith couples and find out how to reduce cognitive dissonance on a couple of different religions.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Factors for Different Religion of Religion

The first pair was a husband with the initials AA Christian Protestant and his wife with the initials AL having the religion of Islam carrying out interfaith marriages due to his decision given the freedom to choose. AL explained that himself was acquainted with AA and was arranged by Allah SWT. Their marriage has been running for five years. Previously he resigned because he never married because AL thought he was a woman who was covered in sin. And after the AL evening prayer and finally the AL was given instructions that the match was AA. Just like AL, AA also not think that will marry with AL. AA was introduced to the AL by his friend and then finally got close and decided to get married. Their marriage procession initially they married in the mosque then blessing in the church and then doing a marriage contract. After getting married as if they found their soulmates.

"hmmm I chose to marry my husband well on my own accord, because at first I tried to not marry because I was not young anymore. I kept praying and asking God for guidance. and finally my

husband met me, I thought God sent him to be my husband and God answered my prayer..." (W2:AL:6)

"if I don't think I'm going to get married to Alfie ... First, just add it to a friend, we are suitable ... it's already like that And after a while I finally ventured to propose to my wife" (W1:AA:4)

In the second couple, the husband was the initials AF with the name Islam and the wife with the initials EN Christian Protestant. The couple is conducting interfaith marriages to avoid adultery and cohabitation, the decision to get married is their own decision, and see their co-workers who also carry out interfaith marriages and can live in harmony. AF believes he wants to marry EN because they love each other and avoid adultery while EN thinks that he wants to marry AF because he loves AF and agrees with AF to avoid adultery. The couple's marriage has been running for three years. The beginning of the pair's meeting began when AF wandered in Jakarta from the village to change his destiny. AF works hard to find work in the capital. Finally, AF got a job at a private company in Jakarta. At the company AF finally met with EN who was his co-worker. AF and EN are getting closer and they fall in love with each other. The procession of marriage is done by the procedures of the religion Protestant in the Church and doing blessings. In the wedding procession that was present at the procession were the EN family and the AF family represented by brother AF.

"I married my wife because I like each other and I and my wife are migrants who are afraid to become slander in the community" (W3:AF:10)

"I married him because I already felt right with my husband and that was my own decision" (W4:EN:10)

4.2 Cognitive Dissonance

Sources of cognitive dissonance are based on the theory put forward by Festinger (1957) is logical inconsistency, namely dissonance that occurs due to a mismatch between cognitive element elements and logical things in the environment, culture mores, namely cultural differences lead to cognitive dissonance, opinion generality, which is dissonance that occurs when the opinions held by many people are imposed on individual opinions, and past experiences when individual cognition is

inconsistent with knowledge in the past, the dissonance will appear.

In the first pair AA and AL the source of their cognitive dissonance came from the family or found in sources of cognitive dissonance namely logical inconsistencies, opinion generality, and cultural values. AA and AL get rejection by both families. This is because the cultural and religious values embraced by the two families are very thick. The AA family is a family who diligently performs worship in the church every week and the AL family is a family that is very devout five times a day and is religious. Whereas from their friends they strongly support their relationship. AA and AL knowing what they are doing is wrong because it does not conform to the norms of social and religious norms prevailing in Indonesia but they also know that they must maintain their relationship and move on to the wedding. AF and AA do not think about marriage laws in Indonesia. This couple found it difficult to undergo a relationship when there were people around him who discussed religious issues.

“At first I was not accepted from my wife's family, and here I was confused between following my wife's parents' words or maintaining my relationship. If you are around, I will support you...” (W1:AA:12)

“I know why this interfaith marriage is not in accordance with the rules, but it is the one who has this relationship, right.” (W2:AL:14)

In the second pair the source of cognitive dissonance comes from logical inconsistencies, cultural values, and opinion generality. The logical inconsistency is that the couple is aware that they are different in their beliefs and they are trying to maintain their love. The second source of cognitive dissonance is cultural values, which, as stated in logical inconsistencies, they realize that they differ in their beliefs, which causes cognitive dissonance, then the last source of their cognitive dissonance is public opinion. The general opinion here is the opinion of the family. The AF family strongly rejected the relationship among the two partners, especially the two parents AF. AF nurtured since childhood in the Islamic religion is very strong, but the family EN supportive relationship between the two, while the EN parents only give advice once a request that both should be able to build a harmonious family. The couple also received rejection at the Office of Religious Affairs. The refusal was due to not allowing interfaith marriages according to applicable law in Indonesia. AF

initially wanted to falsify EN religion to simplify matters at the Office of Religious Affairs, but EN did not approve it because he did not want problems going forward and sinned again because EN considered what he had done violated religion and of course it was sinful and EN did not want to add the sin he committed.

“my parents refused me to marry my wife because my parents took care of me from a small age and came from a religious family. but I have to maintain my relationship. so I'm confused about wanting to follow my parents or maintain my relationship” (W3:AF:14)

“I got a rejection from my husband's family. they don't want to accept me because of religious differences. but if from my family, I am very supportive because of my happiness” (W4:EN:12)

4.3 How to reduce dissonance Cognitive

After experiencing dissonance cognitive the couple reduces the cognitive dissonance experienced. The individual way to reduce cognitive dissonance is based on the theory put forward by Festinger (1957) that is first is to change the cognitive elements of behavior that is when dissonance occurs between elements of environmental cognition with behavioral elements, dissonance can be eliminated by changing the cognitive elements of behavior so consonants with environmental elements. The second is to change the cognitive elements of the environment, namely to change the environmental elements so that consonants with cognitive elements of behavior can be done to reduce or even eliminate the cognitive dissonance that occurs. This is of course more difficult than changing the element of behavior because individuals must have sufficient control over their environment. Finally, adding new cognitive elements, namely cognitive dissonance can also be reduced by adding new cognitive elements to consonants with other cognitive elements. By adding new cognitive element, the dissonance is likely to decrease by reducing the level of the importance of the dissonance. In addition to going through three ways to reduce cognitive dissonance proposed by Festinger in 1957 the individual can also reduce cognitive dissonance by convincing himself that what he has done is correct. Breckler, Olson, & Wiggins, (2006) how to reduce cognitive dissonance can also be done through rationalization, which is to convince yourself that the behavior that is done now or in the past are all reasonable and acceptable.

The first couple reduces their cognitive dissonance by changing the cognitive elements of the environment and they convince themselves that what they are doing is right. The couple managed to convince their family that it was their choice and were ready to accept the consequences of what they did. AA was very persistent and very patient in convincing the two families to accept their decision. Finally, their family accepted their decision to get married. AA almost every day goes to the AL house and meets the parents of the AL, while the Navy supports what is done by her husband and helps her husband in convincing his parents. AL also ignores the words of the people around them and considers what they do with their husbands is the right thing. And now they live happily, calmly and peacefully. Now they are blessed with one child. The couple advised the different religious couples who were still dating so that they thought carefully before making decision to get married and they also suggested looking for a partner who was a believer.

“my husband was persistent and patient to convince my parents and finally my parents accepted my husband ...” (W2:AL:20)

“I go to Alfie's house every day ... meet her parents ... first I was rejected ... but I tried to keep on going to her house ... maybe her parents were bored so much so I was allowed to explain that I was serious with her child” (W1:AA:20)

The second pair reduces cognitive dissonance by changing cognitive elements in the environment and by convincing themselves that what they are doing is correct. Changing cognitive elements in the environment by means of AF convinced his parents that his strong determination to do marriage and AF gave the opinion that their marriage was to avoid cohabiting. AF also stated that he had a colleague who was married to a different religion as well and they lived in harmony and now had big children. Seeing the seriousness of AF and parents seeing AF as adults and able to make their own choices finally the AF parents blessed the AF and EN relationship even though the AF parents only sent the AF brother to represent the family to propose and witness the couple's marriage, while EN also helped AF to convince the family AF and explain to parents and family AF that he really loves AF and is ready to build a family. EN also helps AF in introducing to his extended family even though he has been accepted by his family but EN thinks AF still has to get closer to his family. As explained in the source of cognitive dissonance, the Office of Religious

Affairs rejected their marriage, but in churches where EN often worshiped interfaith marriages could be held. They get a referral letter from the church to carry out the marriage. Before getting a referral letter they meet the requirements first, namely to take a marriage course and they go tests canonical. In this test AF is asked whether AF wants to be truly married to EN. And finally, they got a letter of recommendation and a marriage took place. After they carried out their marriages, they arranged their marriages at the Civil Registry Office, and the Civil Registry Office did not question the religious differences held by this couple. And finally, they live peacefully and happily and the reef is blessed by one child. AF and EN give advice to couples who are still dating and different religions to keep their love and keep fighting for their love.

“...I talked with my parents that I have married friends of different faiths and they live happily. then I say that it is more dangerous when I live at home but not get married” (W3:AF:22)

I helped my family to convince his family. and I said that I was ready to have a family with his child” (W4:EN:20)

5 DISCUSSION

Based on the results of interviews conducted, it was found that the factors that caused respondents to conduct interfaith marriages were based on their own volition and were given the freedom to choose, avoid adultery, and see individuals around the respondents who did the same. This is in accordance with Makalev (2013) who argued that the factors that influence interfaith marriage are daily living relationships in community life, parental religious education, marriage background of parents of different religions, freedom to choose a partner that fits the criteria regardless of religion and the increase of globalization, meaning that there is a wide openness of social relations between the people in Indonesia and the people outside Indonesia. Indonesian society is not closed the possibility of choosing partners who come from abroad despite different religions.

From the factors that have been found from the results of the interview, there are also things that cause cognitive dissonance. Based on the results of interviews conducted on couples with different religions, the two partners received a source of cognitive dissonance that came from logical inconsistencies, cultural values and opinion

generality. Festinger (1957) suggested sources of cognitive dissonance are logical inconsistencies, cultural values, general opinions and past experiences. But in both partners, there is no source of cognitive dissonance from past experience.

Respondents who experience cognitive dissonance can reduce the cognitive dissonance they experience. Based on the results of interviews conducted, it turns out that these two partners reduce their cognitive dissonance by changing the cognitive elements of the environment and they convince themselves that what they are doing is correct. This is in accordance with Festinger (1957) suggesting the way an individual carries out cognitive dissonance is changing the cognitive elements of behavior, changing the cognitive elements of the environment, and adding new cognitive elements. The two pairs above reduce cognitive dissonance by changing the cognitive elements of the environment so that consonants with cognitive elements of behavior can be done to reduce or even eliminate the cognitive dissonance that occurs. Both of these pairs add a factor of self-confidence that is to assume that what they are doing is right. This is in accordance with Breckler, Olson, & Wiggins, (2006) how to reduce cognitive dissonance can also be done through rationalization, which is convincing yourself that the behavior carried out at this time or in the past are all reasonable and acceptable. So that with reducing the cognitive dissonance that is experienced slowly the subject can reduce the cognitive dissonance experienced.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion of this research is that from the two pairs of different religions the factors that influence them to conduct interfaith marriages are from the first couple, the couple is doing it on their own accord and given the freedom to choose a partner, while the second pair is avoiding cohabiting, at their own discretion and they saw the family of their fellow workers who were married to different religions. The source of cognitive dissonance for the first and second pairs has the same source of cognitive dissonance that comes from logical inconsistencies, cultural values, public opinion, and the way the two partners reduce cognitive dissonance by changing the cognitive elements of the environment and successfully convincing themselves that what they did it right. Suggestions from this study are for couples of different religions to keep their marriage because it is their own

decision, for unmarried couples who are still dating to think carefully about different marriages, families are expected to accept decisions that taken by the child, for the public not to negatively view this interfaith marriage, and for the next researcher to use methods other than qualitative, namely by quantitative methods to determine the differences in cognitive dissonance in husband and wife and focus on sources of cognitive dissonance from the past.

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