Preliminary Study: Does Marital Satisfaction Predict Divorce Intention during Covid-19 Pandemic?

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Abstract: COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way people live, including families. In some families, this condition has brought out marital conflicts, which may lead to divorce. One of the causes of divorce is marital dissatisfaction. However, it is still unclear whether marital dissatisfaction predicts divorce intention during the pandemic. This study aims to determine the relationship between marital satisfaction and divorce intention during the pandemic and whether there was a relationship between demographic characteristics and divorce intention. Using the EMS questionnaire developed by Fowers and Olson (1993) and the Divorce Intention questionnaire developed by Ardian et. al (2018), the study found a negative relationship between the two variables. While marital satisfaction is low, divorce intention is high. Marital satisfaction predicts the rise of divorce intention. A total of 23 participants (56%) expressed their desire to divorce. More than half of the participants (60%) reported marital problems during the pandemic, such as communication problems, conflicts with spouses and children, mental health problems, and gadget addiction. Recommendations are to prevent divorce during the pandemic by implementing communication and problem-solving training to improve the couple's skills in managing marital conflicts. Future studies can measure others variables that predict divorce intentions, particularly during a crisis.

1 INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has created tremendous short-term and possibly long-term effects on people's behaviour. It is undeniable that the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world order radically, from health, education, economic, social life, and family lives. According to Hamermesh (2020), the pandemic had a significant impact on the way people work and live, which has changed the well-being of their individuals. The changes of work location for being at home and the partial closure of restaurants, hotels, theatres, museums, and sports arenas significantly impact family life.

Nowadays people are spending most of their time at home, from working, school, to parenting. The important thing about spending time was whom the time spent with could affect our happiness (Hamermesh, 2020). The typical activities can be enjoyed within others people's presence. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the social restriction imposed on people forced them to spend most of their time with their families. People's satisfaction with life is different, depending on what they do and with whom they do it (Hamermesh, 2020). Previous study shows, the educator's happines is different before and during COVID-19. In which educators are happier before pandemic (Mardhatillah & Rahman, 2020).

The COVID-19 crisis has forced married couples to spend more time together and less time alone. It also means less time socializing with other people, friends, or colleagues (Maiti and Innamuri, 2020). These conditions make family interactions more intense than in previous days (Maiti & Innamuri, 2020). Some families feel the positive impact of this closure by increasing the intensity of communication and increasing the intimacy of their relationship (Apriasari & Al-jannah, 2021). They also use this opportunity to get to know each other better among their family members. On the other hand, some families feel the negative impact of more family

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problems (Apriasari & Al-jannah, 2021), worsening the conflict and leading to divorce.

Luetke from The School of Public Health at Indiana University Bloomington Lehman (2020) found that 34% of the couples involved in the study reported experience more conflict with their partners since the pandemic began. Marital conflict and reduced intimacy were more likely to happen in couples who live under the same roof. The survey also found that couples with increased conflicts were more likely to feel lonely and depressed. A decrease in sexual intimacy indicates it. At the same time, sexual intimacy was crucial to individual well-being and marital satisfaction between partners. Another result was that sexual satisfaction was associated with better mental health outcomes (Lehman, 2020). The social restrictions have further exacerbated marital conflicts (Maiti & Innamuri, 2020). When couples face conflict, it will not be possible for them to implement coping strategies such as temporarily separating or diverting to other activities or meeting other people, which can exacerbate their conflict further. Even couples who live together will experience excessive anxiety and stress because of each other's guilt.

The COVID-19 pandemic has left many marriages more vulnerable and increased marital conflict to its height. According to Lehman (2020), there is an increasing phenomenon of divorces as couples struggle with emotional and economic downturns over the past 11 months. In Indonesia, the divorce rate has increased to 5 per cent (Tristanto, 2020). Out of the 34 provinces, three reported a significant increase in divorce cases (Tristanto, 2020). The three provinces were West Java, Central Java, and East Java. West Java was the province that contributed the most to divorce rates. Meanwhile, there are no significant increases in divorce cases outside Java Province (Yusuf, 2020).

Director-General of the Religious Courts of the Supreme Court, Aco Nur, stated that divorce cases increased from 20 thousand cases in April and May to 57,000 in June and July 2020. Based on the data from some regions, several regions reported an increase in divorce rates as if Semarang reported a threefold increase in divorce cases. Meanwhile, the Bojonegoro Religious Court (Pengadilan Agama Bojonegoro) recorded an increase in divorce cases by 14.57% from January to June this year compared to last year.

The causes of divorce are complex. Based on the Ministry of Communication and Information website (Kominfo, 2020), most divorce cases that went to court during January-August 2020 were continuous disputes and disagreements between husbands and wives, economic factors, and wife or husband leaving the other. Deputy Chairperson of the Semarang Class 1A Religious Court, Muhamad Camuda, stated the increased number of divorces was due to unemployment, laid-off workers, which causing household conflicts due to economic difficulty. The Bojonegoro Religious Court reported that the main reasons were the husband's inability to provide money for his wife, unpreparedness on mental and psychological, and the inability to deal with marital conflicts. Previous research also found that various factors trigger divorce during this pandemic, for example, the decline in the economy, conflicts, and domestic violence (Apriasari & Al-jannah, 2021).

Divorce has severe implications for families. Among the negative impacts was the decline in family members' physical and psychological well-being (Khumas et al., 2015). Children were the most affected family members as a result of divorce. Research in Norway on children whose parents have divorced, they have health problems and self-concept. They tend to have lower self-confidence (Meland et al., 2020). Another study in France found that parental divorce was associated with decreased academic performance in 5 years old children. The decline in academic achievement is also following by motivation, autonomy, and agility (Nusinovici et al., 2018). Dong et al., (2002) studied children whose parents have divorced in China and found that they tend to have lower adaptability than children from intact families. In addition, children from divorced families also showed higher anxiety and experienced behavioural problems such as delinquency, aggressiveness, and attention disorders than children from families with complete parents.

Another study also found that divorce affects the life of a husband or wife. Research in Egypt found that wives were the most affected. They felt helpless, sad, socially isolated, considered a failure as wives, and experienced emotional emptiness (Mendoza et al., 2020). Meanwhile, husbands or men experience the short-term effects of divorce. One of the effects is the decline in well-being and life satisfaction (Leopold, 2018). Divorce also has social impacts such as narrowing social networks that could affect decreasing social support, causing negative life experiences and psychological suffering, and economic hardship for women (Johnson & Wu, 2002). Therefore, divorce has a negative impact both on the individual and social levels.

During the pandemic, families are more likely to conflict. If this continuously happens can increase

the possibilities of divorce. Previous research has found that crises in life such as war or having a severe illness exacerbate stress levels and are more likely to lead to the termination of marriage ties (Prime, et. al., 2020 in (Turliuc & Candel, 2021)). During the crisis, the characteristics of the vulnerable groups is lower socioeconomic and lower levels of marital satisfaction (Turliuc & Candel, 2021). In Indonesia, research during the pandemic found that the factors behind divorce were economic factors with the characteristics of young women, low education background, unemployed, duration of marriage under five years, and having one child (Wijayanti, 2021). Under the Marriage Law, dissolution of marriage is regulated (Undang- Undang Pernikahan Nomor 16 Tahun 2019). There are several reasons for divorce, husband/wife commits adultery or gambles, one of them leaves without any news for two years, and one side commits severe abuse (verbal or physical).

Divorce always begins with the divorce intention. Desire alone is not enough to make a couple of divorces but must be followed with behaviour that could make divorce happens. According to (Khumas et al., 2015), divorce intention is the degree of stability of the wife to end the marriage bond based on the rules of the Marriage Law in Indonesia. In the Indonesian Religious Affairs Court for Islamic believers, there are two types of divorce, the divorce filed by the wife and the divorce proposed by the husband. (Khumas et al., 2015) only discusses divorce in the women of the Muslim population. While in other religions, divorce can be filed by the wife or husband (Khumas et al., 2015). In this study, our purpose is to measure divorce intention on husband or wife, so we define divorce intention as the extent to which the husband or wife wants to end the marriage bond.

The theoretical framework in this research to measure divorce intentions is the Theory of Planned- Behavior. This theory is suitable to analyze social and individual conflicts in divorce proposed by Fishbein and Ajzen (in Mirzaei et al., 2013). This theory can predict the behaviour of couples who want to divorce through four aspects: the intention or desire to divorce from partner members, perceived behaviour control which is the ease with which members of a partner decide to divorce; the subjective norm is the social norm of the divorce itself, and attitude which is the beliefs perceived about divorce (Ardian et al., 2018). The theory has two notable assumptions, 1) individuals make decisions based on logic and reasoning

analysis from available data, and 2) individuals make decisions based on the consequences of their behaviour (Mirzaei et al., 2013). The theory of Planned- Behavior was relevant because it can analyze the internal factors that make a husband or wife want to divorce, such as the perception of the marital conflict they experience. In addition, the wife will think about the impact or consequences of receiving stigma (from parents, extended family, and relatives).

A COVID-19 pandemic is a stressful event that husbands or wives do not see as just a personal burden but as one that also affects their relationship (Randall & Bodenmann, 2017). According to Turliuc and Candel (2021), conflict and unstable economic conditions throughout the COVID-19 pandemic strongly correlate with the appearance of chronic stress and low marital satisfaction in couples. According to Bodenmann (1995), in the systemic-transactional (STM) model, stressors arising outside the relationship can spread, generating internal stress. Together, these two types of stress are associated with significant decreases in the quality of romantic relationships (Randall & Bodenmann, 2017). Stress spillover affects relational satisfaction through several mechanisms, such as reducing the time spent together by couples, reducing perceptions of mutuality, reducing communication, or increasing the possibility on some problematical traits such as anxiety, depression, and rigidity (Bodenmann, 1995).

Divorce intentions factors vary from marital dissatisfaction, economic problems, extreme differences in beliefs, personality differences, cultural differences, addiction, infidelity, lack of attention to gender identity and sexual orientation, differences in family to family interference on marital problems (Hoseini F, Rezapour M, 2015). One of the things is the internal factors of couples in perceiving dissatisfaction in marriage, which triggers divorce intentions. According to Baumeister et al., (2007), marital satisfaction is defined as the subjective satisfaction felt by married couples based on aspects of marriage. Marital satisfaction reflects the perceived benefits and disadvantages of marriage for the couple. The more losses that one of the partners has, the more unhappy the marriage is. Similarly, the greater the perceived benefits, the more satisfied a person's marriage and spouse (Baumeister et al., 2007).

Marital satisfaction theoretically decreases along with the duration of the marriage. The highest marriage satisfaction at the wedding

ceremony tends to decrease as the duration of marriage increases (Hirschberg et al., 2011). Marital satisfaction is compound by very complex things. According to Fowers and Olson (1993), ten aspects underlie marital satisfaction: Personality Issues, Equalitarian roles, Communication, Conflict resolution, Financial management, Leisure activities, Sexual relationship, Children and marriage, Family and friends and Religious orientation. The aspect that underlies marital satisfaction has a wedge with the intention to divorce according to the Theory of Planned-Behavior, which measures the internal and external aspects that affect a person's intention to divorce.

Therefore, based on previous research, we propose three research questions:

1. is there any correlation between marital satisfaction and the intention to divorce during the COVID-19 pandemic;

2. is there a relationship between demographic characteristics and the intention to divorce; and

3. how was the marital satisfaction and divorce intention during the pandemic?

2 METHOD

2.1 Research Design

To answer the research questions, we used a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional study. The sampling technique uses purposive sampling by specifying the characteristics of the participants. This research aims to understand how marital satisfaction predicts divorce intention during the COVID-19 pandemics. We also want to know whether the socio-demographics of participants predict divorce intention. We want to know how participants measure their marital satisfaction and divorce intentions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.2 Hyphoteses

We hypothesized there is a correlation between marital satisfaction and divorce intention during the COVID-19 pandemic. We predict that if marital satisfaction is low, divorce intention is high. We also hypothesized that socio-demographic characteristics such as duration of marriage, gender, ethnicity, employment, having a children, and educational background predict divorce intentions.

2.3 Participants

Participants were recruited via online media. Research flyers were announced and shared with marriage/couple counsellors and psychologists through the psychological institution. To participate in the study, participants had to meet two inclusion criteria: 1) in the past three months have been consulted marriage problems with a counsellor or psychologist; 2) married or have ever been married. This criterion chosen because one of the items on the divorce intention scale asks psychologists or counsellors' role in helping them cope with marital problems. With these criteria, we suspect that a husband/wife who has consulted with a psychologist or counsellor has problems in their families and is considering options to divorce. The participants who agreed to fill the questionnaires contacted then given informed consent along with the questionnaires. We stated the risks to the participants, including uncomfortable items that may trigger their past experiences. The data collected using Google Forms. After that, participants submitted the questionnaires.

2.4 Measures

The ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale (EMS) was used to measure marital satisfaction. This questionnaire developed by (Fowers & Olson, 1993) has 15 items that include ten aspects of the marital issue; personality issue, equalitarian roles, communication, conflict resolution, financial management, leisure activities, sexual relationship, children and marriage, family and friends, and religious orientation. Response choices scale, 1) Strongly disagree; 2) Disagree; 3) Neutral; 4) Agree; to 5) Strongly agree. Sample question from questionnaire; "My partner and I understand each other perfectly", "I am pleased about how we make decisions and resolve conflict", "I feel great about how we each practise our religious beliefs and values".

The Indonesian-language questionnaire from previous studies was used. The Cronbach Alpha from the previous study was = .962 (Soraiya et al., 2016). The internal consistency of this study was =.920. This measure has good reliability, and all items are valid.

The divorce intention was measured using a questionnaire developed by (Ardian et al., 2018). This questionnaire analyzes the characteristics of divorce applicants in Iran using the theory of planned-behaviour. It gives a suitable framework on how to understand the behaviour behind the divorce.

It can predict, change, and explain why a couple desires to divorce. The divorce intention scale consists of 50 items, including four aspects, attitude (13 items), perceived behaviour control (21 items), subjective norm (10 items), and intention (6 items).

The scale adaptation process begins with translating 50 English items into Indonesian. After being translated, we give the Indonesian language scale to the translator to check the propriety. After that, the scale was tested for validity with content validity and item validity. The validity test is used to determine the accuracy and precision of the scale measurement (Hendryadi, 2017). Content validity with face validity uses a rater from expert judgment, psychologists and counsellors—the results of content validity the scale can be used for measurement. Then to find out whether the scale is statistically valid, we use item validity. The results of the first round analysis found that eight items did not meet the excellent standard (r = .312), so we eliminated these items (r(39), p>.05). After the first round, 42 valid items were used, which covered attitude (10 items), perceived behaviour control (18 items), subjective norms (8 items), and intention (6 items). Next, we conducted a second round of analysis, which resulted in no dropped items, so in the data processing, we used 42 items. The Cronbach Alpha on this study = .932. Example items of questionnaires, "For me, divorce is the last solution of my life", "My parents support me to divorce", "I intend to reconcile since I decide to divorce in a hurry". The response was 5 Likert Scale from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree.'

There are three additional questions; the first question asking about the couple's problems during the past three months, such as gadget addiction, communication, conflict with husband/wife or extended family, parenting, infidelity, economic, mental health, and verbal or physical abuse—the second question asking whether this problem happened recently during the COVID-19 pandemic. The last question was the participants thought of divorce. This question was to understand the urge to divorce in participants.

2.4 Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis on this study using SPSS (*Statistical Package for Social Science*) program for Windows 22.0 version. The data were analyzed using Pearson correlation to understand the correlation between marital satisfaction and divorce intention. A Chi-square test uses to assess whether there is an association between socio-demographic characteristics and divorce intention.

3 RESULT

3.1 Participants Characteristics

Forty-one participants between the ages of 23 and 54 (M = 38.2, SD = 9.27) was recruited. The majority were female (80.4%). Educational background of participants, high school graduate (34.1%), bachelor degree (43.9%), and post-graduate (21.9%). Half of the participants were housewives (51.2%), while the other half were self-employed, teachers, civil servants, and employees. Duration of marriage from under ten years to more than twenty years. More than half participants (82.9%) had children. Socio- demographic characteristics are present in **Table. 1**

A total of 23 participants (56%) had an urge to divorce. Participants choose more than one problem that is currently happening. The most problems choose by participants were communication problems (41.4%), gadget addiction (34.1%), conflicts with spouse, children (26.8%), and mental health problems (29.2%). We also asked are this problem happened recently during the pandemic; 10 participants (24.3%) answered Yes, while the remaining 31 participants (75.6%) answered No. Participants also asked if the pandemic worsened their problem; 15 participants (36.5%) answered Yes.

3.2 Categorization of Marital Satisfaction and Divorce Intention

Data on marital satisfaction scores and divorce intentions are split into low, high, and moderate categories. Hypothetical norms are methods in data categorization. The hypothetical norm uses a scale's maximum score as a reference. Participants' high and low scores depending on their position in the range of maximum scores on a scale (Widhiarso, 2014).

The categorization found that marital satisfaction tended to be moderate (56.0%) and low (24.3%), similar with divorce intention also tended to be moderate (65.8%) and low (2.4%). Data categorization is present in **Table 2**.

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics.

Characteristic	Full sample	
	n	*%*
Gender:		
Female	33	80.4
Male	8	19.5
Educational background:		
High school graduate	14	34.1
Bachelor degree	18	43.9
Post-graduate	9	21.9
Children[a]	34	82.9
Employment:		
Housewife	21	51.2
Self-employed	6	14.6
Civil servant	5	12.1
Teacher	2	4.8
Employee	5	12.1
Student	2	4.8
Ethnicity:		
Javanese	19	46.3
Sundanese	8	22.2
Padang	4	9.7
Bugis	3	7.3
Melayunese	5	12.1
Betawi	2	4.8
Have thought a divorce[a]	23	56.0
Duration of marriage (years):		
1 – 10	19	46.3
11 – 20	10	24.3
21 – 30	11	26.8
What problems have you faced in the last 3 months?:		
Gadget addiction	14	34.1
Economic	10	24.3
Communication	17	41.4
Conflict with husband/wife or extended family	11	26.8
Parenting	8	19.5
Infidelity	6	14.6
Verbal or physical abuse	4	9.7
Mental Health	12	29.2
Are this problems happened during pandemic Covid-19?[ab]	10	24.3
If Not, is the pandemic worsened the problems?[ab]	15	36.5

Note .N = 30 participants [a]Reflects the number and percentage of participants answering "yes" to this question.
[b]There are 5 missing data of participants.

Table 2: Categorization of Marital Satisfaction and Divorce Intention.

Category	Marital Satisfaction		Divorce Intention	
	N	%	n	%
Low	10	24.3	14	34.1
Moderate	23	56.0	27	65.8
High	8	19.5	1	2.4

3.3 Percentage of Yes Answers on Desire to Divorce Question with Divorce Intention Scale Score

The participants' data was analyzed to find a correlation between the Yes/No answers and divorce intention score's. As a result, 18 participants who answered Yes, had moderate divorce intention (43.9%) and 8 participants who answered No, with low divorce intention (19.5%). Nine participants answered No, but the divorce intention was moderate (21.9%). Meanwhile, one participant who answered Yes, had high divorce intentions (2.4%). The data are present in **Table 3.**

Table 3: Percentage of Yes Answers on Desire to Divorce Question with Divorce Intention Scale Score.

Have you thought a divorce?	Categorization					
	Low		Moderate		High	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	0	0	18	43.9	1	2.4
No	8	19.5	9	21.9	0	0

3.4 Correlation between Marital Satisfaction Score with Divorce Intention Score

We tried to find out the correlation between marital satisfaction scores and divorce intention scores. Interestingly, 5 participants who reported high marital satisfaction had low divorce intentions (12.9%). Meanwhile, only 1 participant who reported a low level of marital satisfaction had a high divorce intention (2.4%). The data also found that participants who experienced moderate marital satisfaction had moderate divorce intentions (41.4%). The data are present in **Table 4**.

Table 4: Correlation of marital satisfaction score with divorce intention score.

Marital Satisfaction Category	Divorce Intention Category					
	Low		Moderate		High	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Low	2	4.87	7	17.0	1	2.4
Moderate	6	14.6	17	41.4	0	3.33
High	5	12.9	3	7.31	0	0.00

3.5 Correlation between Marital Satisfaction and Divorce Intention

Table 5 presents the correlation data between the two variables. The results show a correlation between marital satisfaction and divorce intention, $r(39) = -.414$ p<.01. The two variables were negatively correlated. This result shows that marital satisfaction predicts divorce intentions. If marital satisfaction is low, then divorce intentions are high.

Table 5: Correlation between marital satisfaction and divorce intention.

Variable	M	SD	R	Sig.
1. Marital Satisfaction	43.29	12.44	-	-
2. Divorce Intention	108.49	28.0	-.414	.007

3.6 Correlation between Divorce Intention and Socia-demographic Characteristics

A Chi-square test is used to determine the socio-demographic characteristics associated with divorce intention. The characters included in the chi-square test are gender, education level, occupation, ethnicity, number of children, duration of marriage, and urge for divorce.

The Chi-square test results found that gender, ethnicity, education level, occupation, duration married, and the urge to divorce did not predict the divorce intention. In contrast, the number of children predicts the occurrence of divorce intention, $X^2 (160, N = 41) = 174.54, p < .05$.

4 DISCUSSION

The COVID-19 pandemic, which is a period of crisis, impacts the family's condition as a whole (Panzeri et al., 2020; Spinelli et al., 2020; Overall et

al., 2021). Previous research (Bradley et al., 2020) states that the pandemic has disrupted family life worldwide, violence in families, and the increasing number of divorces (Mazzaa et al., 2020). Stanley and Markman (2020) also found that crises affect intimate relationships. Prime et al., (2020) show that families have a responsibility to protect their spouses and all family members from distractions and fears due to the uncertain situation. Individuals with high satisfaction in relationships have less impact on social restrictions. If couples cannot manage negative emotions well, such as stress and fatigue, it will affect their psychological condition and relationships.

In this period, the family faced the challenge of spending more time at home. The problem that often occurs is that families tend to find it challenging to balance work with family because they did work, school, and other activities at home, so it is not easy to set boundaries between work and family. As a result, families are more easily tired physically, emotionally, and psychologically. Fatigue experienced also can trigger conflict. Conflicts that occur continuously will trigger the couple to want to end the marriage or divorce.

A Chi-square test uses to find out the relationship between demographic variables and divorce intention. The results found no relationship between the divorce intention with gender, ethnicity, occupation, last education, and duration of time of marriage. The participants do not consider the socio-demographic conditions as the reason to divorce intention. Furthermore, most of the participants were women who became housewives want a divorce with a relatively varied level of education ranging from high school to post-graduate. This result indicates the role of education in the emergence of divorce intentions. Education provides opportunities to improve mindsets, change behaviour, and bring new perceptions. A high level of education makes a person more rational in decision-making, but this matter did not happen in this study (Lontaan & Kusmiyati, 2014 in (Wijayanti, 2021)).

The duration of marriage does not guarantee the couple's integrity; 11 out of 21 (42%) participants with a marriage duration of more than ten years wanted a divorce. Meanwhile, participants with a duration of marriage of fewer than ten years are more likely to file a divorce suit. This result is in line with previous research (Wijayanti, 2021), which found that couples filed 44% of divorce cases with a marriage age of fewer than five years, and 11% of couples with a marriage duration of more than fifteen years wanting a divorce. The causes of

divorce that occur in the early years of marriage are incompatibility, values differences, and personality characteristics differences. In contrast to couples with a longer marriage duration, the causes of divorce that arise are due to problems such as boredom, raising children, slowly changing different interests and attitudes (Amato & Previti, 2004). At the beginning of marriage, couples are expected to overcome problems such as balancing family and work, building social relationships, distribution in household tasks, communication and conflict resolution, and financial problems (Risch et al., 2003). Couples who can overcome these problems will grow more resilient.

While the number of children is known to be related to the divorce intention, this result contradicts previous research (Wijayanti, 2021), which found that the number of children was not a consideration for couples to divorce. Other studies have found that the absence of children is related to the cause of divorce (Matondang, 2014). Parents are hoping for children because, with their presence, marriage becomes complete. Couples tend to conflict more often if they do not have children, and wives often become victims.

Regarding problems during the pandemic, participants chose more than one type of problem that triggered the desire to divorce. This shows that the causes of the urge to divorce are very complex, not only based on one problem. The most chosen problems by the participants were communication, gadget addiction, mental health problems, and conflict with spouses, children, and extended family. According to (Amato & Previti, 2004), the cause of divorce is more than one. The most chosen causes are infidelity, incompatibility, addiction, living apart, lack of communication, and personality problems. Other studies that support the complexity of the causes of divorce have found a lack of commitment, cheating, and frequent conflicts to cause the desire for divorce (Scott et al., 2013).

Participants choose communication as one of the problems that trigger the desire to divorce (46%). In line with this research, according to (Rijavec KlobuČar & SimoniČ, 2017), the lack of communication between partners is the cause of divorce. Type of lack of communication was lack of conversations in the family, misunderstandings in receiving information and cues, unwillingness to listen to each other, and personality misunderstandings. Communication between partners is essential because it can increase the connectedness of the couple. Lack of communication impacts closeness, so couples move

away from each other, which further strengthens the desire for divorce.

The limitation of this research is the inclusion criteria. The criteria for participating in this study are clients who have attended counselling sessions or consultations with psychologists or counsellors on marital problems, so researcher's do not yet know the level of their divorce intention. In contrast, previous research measures divorce intention on participants who come to the religious court to file a divorce petition where the intention to divorce must be high (Afshani et al., 2020).

In addition, the small size number of research which was only 41 participants, so it is limited for generalization on a larger population. During the data collection process, several participants who met inclusion criteria refused to fill out the questionnaire because they felt the research topic was sensitive and the questions could remind them of bad experiences during their marriage. Therefore, the issue of marriage is still a sensitive topic to discuss in Indonesia. This study is preliminary, and there will be another study.

Gender imbalance is also a weakness in this study. The participants of this study consisted of 33 women and 8 men. This unbalanced number is because the participants who fill the questionnaire are not couples but husbands or wives who consult about their marital problems. Most were women. The counsellors or psychologists who became our mediators in helping distribute the questionnaires to their clients stated that more women or wives who did counselling on marital problems experienced and had more acquiescence to fill out the questionnaires.

Another limitation of this research is the instruments adaptation process. The divorce intention scale is an adaptation from a previous study in Iran. This scale was used to measure the divorce intention of couples who have filed a divorce suit so that there are items that may not suitable for the participants in this study who still intend to divorce. This can be seen from the number of couples who answered Yes, but the categorization results were mainly in the moderate category, so the probability of marriage to save was higher. In addition, researchers have not gone through all the ideal processes in adapting the divorce intention scale, such as the absence of re-back translation, so it is recommended that adaptation be carried out according to the more ideal stages.

The predominance of this study is using the Theory of Planned-Behavior (TPB) to predict divorce intentions from two factors: internal factors that make individual couples want to divorce, such

as perceptions of marital conflicts they have faced. Secondly, external factors in which husbands or wives think about the impact or consequences of receiving negative stigma in divorcees from their families or relatives (parents, extended family, and relatives) (Ardian et al., 2018).

Another advantage of this research is that 41 participants come from different ethnic groups in Indonesia, such as Javanese, Sundanese, Minangnese, Bugisnese, Betawinese, and Melayunese. This study also categorizes the most common marital problems during the COVID-19 pandemic, from communication problems, gadget addiction, conflict with wife/husband and extended family, and mental health. These topics can be used as training themes to improve the quality of marriage and prevent divorce during the pandemic.

Another strength of this study is selecting criteria for participants who have done marital consultations or counselling to psychologists, counsellors, or religious leaders aimed at early detection of divorce intentions and identifying marital satisfaction experienced by participants during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, researchers and other stakeholders still have high hopes to make programs to improve the quality of marriage and prevent divorce. This is different from the research of (Ardian et al., 2018), which examines interventions given to husbands or wives who have filed a divorce petition to the religious court. After being given the intervention, there was no significant change. Participants still have a high divorce intention. This is possible because they had a high intention to divorce from the beginning, so that when the intervention was given, it was difficult to get a change. So the government or other stakeholders need to pay more attention to married couples who have vulnerabilities in their marriage who still have an excellent opportunity to change after being given an intervention.

5 CONCLUSION

The conclusions of this study are (1) there is a significant relationship between marital satisfaction and the intention to divorce. When marital satisfaction is low, divorce intention high. (2) The demographic characteristic related to the intention to divorce is the number of children. Meanwhile, other variables such as gender, educational background, employment, ethnicity, duration of marriage are not related to the divorce intention. Theoretical suggestions for further research are to adapt the

divorce intention scale according to the ideal stage, using the same instrument to measure the divorce intention in couples who have filed for divorce in the religious court in Indonesia, examine factors other than marital satisfaction to predict divorce intention, increases the number of participants, and examines couples (husband and wife).

Practical advice to the government and other stakeholders is to provide psychoeducation for three different targets in Indonesia. The first target is couples who are likely to divorce with various marital problems by providing structured training to improve marriage quality and prevent divorce. The topics should include preparing for a couples mental health, practical communication skills in marriage, and the types of marital problems that can trigger conflicts in marriage, such as gadget addiction, and how to prevent or solve them. Another target is people who have entered the age of marriage by providing pre-marital education through schools and religious affairs offices. The second target is young couples who have just entered the marriage stage under five years. At this stage, the couple is still in the adaptation stage—training topics are conflict management. The third target is, couples with a marriage age above ten years' training topics are education to maintain marriage quality in old age.

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