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Socio-Economic Factors Leading to Divorce in Gunungkidul Regency

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Abstract---This research aims at: (i) analyzing the main issue leading to divorce in the family; (ii) analyzing the socio-economic factor causing the divorce; and (iii) identifying what the families need to prevent divorce. This research employs the method of the qualitative-descriptive survey with 5 respondents, consisting of 20 men and 32 women who are divorced. Data collection was conducted using questionnaires. The quantitative findings were investigated with a qualitative approach by interview, exclusively with the respondents who had given their consent to provide information in a face-to-face setting. Based on the field data, it is found that the main factors leading to divorce are the economy (37.04 percent) and extramarital affairs (29.63 percent). Meanwhile, the main socio-economic factors that cause divorce include low family income (29.55 percent), household debt (18.18 percent), distrust in household financial management (11.36 percent), unemployed husband/wife (9.09 percent), and greater concern about the family of origin (9.09 percent). As a measure to avoid divorce, most of the respondents (34.67 percent) feel the need for a pre-marital seminar, 22.67 percent of them need marriage counseling services, 22 percent consider marriage age maturation necessary, and 16.67 percent need household financial management training.

Keywords---divorce prevention, divorce, household income, socioeconomic.

Introduction

The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia (2016) defines the family as the smallest unit of society which consists of the head of the family and several people who live together in the same place in a state of being interconnected with each other (Wiratri, 2018). A family is understood as a primary group consisting of two or more people interconnected by interpersonal interactions, blood relations, marital relationships, and adoption. Therefore, a family is united by the ties of marriage, blood, or adoption. A family is legalized through marriage and aims to bring prosperity and happiness to its members. However, there is no guarantee that all marriages will end with happiness. Some families end up in divorce. Divorce is the culmination of bad marriage settlements and occurs when a husband and a wife can no longer find any solution that can satisfy both parties (Widodo, 2014).

Statistics Indonesia reports that the divorce rate in Indonesia in 2021 reaches 447,743 cases, which consists of 110,400 cases of talaq divorce and 337,343 cases of contested divorce. This number is higher compared to that of the two preceding years, in 291,677 cases in 2020 and 493,002 cases in 2019. Gunungkidul is one of the regencies with a high divorce rate in Indonesia. Based on the data from the Chairman of the Religious Court of Gunungkidul Regency, in 2009 there were 1,000 marriages ending in divorce. The main factor that contributes to such a high divorce rate is the economy. Amid the current economic situation, it is common that both husband and wife must serve as the breadwinners of the family. As a result, there could be a gap between the incomes contributed by the husband and the wife, which potentially leads to an argument, particularly when the head of the family does not have any job or source of income. Household spending and financial management are fundamental elements in a

household. The poor financial allocation might trigger an argument between husband and wife. The burden of debt borne by a family could be a result of improper household financial management (Boyce & Wood, 2011; Karjono et al., 2017; Eddy, 2017).

Another significant cause of divorce is the unpreparedness of the married couple for dealing with various problems around marriage (Matondang, 2014). Many young couples had not made proper preparation, both financially and mentally, before entering married life. They are not ready when facing the challenge of fulfilling the physical, mental, spiritual, economic, and sociocultural needs of the spouse to carry out their financial and sociocultural responsibilities (Amalia et al., 2018). When dealing with family problems, they fail to seek the best solution to maintain their marital union and tend to end in divorce. Therefore, it is crucial to manage the potential causes of divorce as this choice of action will have a serious impact on the level of happiness and on the development of the children in the family. It is highly necessary to find the root causes of divorce, take an in-depth overview of the socio-economic factors, and identify possible solutions to prevent the occurrence. Based on the problems mentioned above, this research aims at: (i) analyzing the main issue leading to divorce in the family; (ii) analyzing the socioeconomic factor causing divorce; and (iii) identifying what the families need to prevent divorce.

Literature Review

Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage states that Marriage is “an inner and outer bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife with the aim of forming a family (household) to be happy and eternal based on God Almighty”. In line with this definition, the general purpose of a family or a household is to achieve prosperity and resilience.

A family, which is built on marriage, has at least five functions (Friedman, 1992): first, the affective function, which is necessary for the individual and psychosocial developments of the family members; second, the socialization function, which develops the children’s ability to socialize with their surroundings; third, the reproduction function, which refers to the production of offspring (generation); fourth, the economic function, which aims to fulfill the essential needs of the family; and, fifth, the health care function, which aims to bring about a condition beneficial for the health and personal development of the family members.

Nonetheless, not in all cases do the functions work well. Oftentimes, disputes and quarrels between husband and wife occur and lead to divorce. As per Law of the Republic of Indonesia No.1 of 1974 concerning Marriage, divorce is “the termination of the marriage bond between two people following a court’s decision, which is legally binding since the legalization of the marriage.” Death and divorce are two conditions that could terminate the marriage. A divorce can only be done before the Court after the Court tries and does not succeed in reconciling the couple. To execute a divorce, there has to be a strong reason explaining why the husband and the wife can no longer maintain the marriage unity, along with a list of explanations. According to Nurhalisa (2021), there are four factors which cause a divorce, namely:

- 1) The socio-Economic factor, e.g., the conditions where the husband is unemployed, both husband and wife have to work, and the wife’s income is greater than the husband’s.
- 2) Demographic factors, e.g., concerning marriage age, childbirth or pre-marital pregnancy, history of marriage or cohabitation, family background, sexual incompatibility, lack of intimacy, lack of communication, extramarital affair, domestic violence, or physical and psychological abuse.
- 3) Educational factors, e.g., concerning the education degree of the husband and wife.
- 4) Cultural factors, e.g., concerning religious points of view regarding the act of divorce, acquisition of a child, and acquisition of son in the family.

Divorce has a negative impact on various dimensions of human life and the people around it, thus needs to be prevented. Nurhalisa (2021), states that divorce can be prevented by (1) marriage age maturation, (2) pre-marital seminar, (3) personality building for adults who are about to enter into marriage, and (4) seeking ways to prevent disharmony, etc.

Research Methods

This research employs the method of the qualitative-descriptive survey with 5 respondents, consisting of 20 men and 32 men who are divorced. Data collection was carried out using questionnaires. The quantitative findings were

investigated with a qualitative approach by interview, exclusively with the respondents who had given their consent to provide information in a face-to-face setting.

Result and Discussion

Demographic characteristics of the divorced spouses

The divorced spouses in this research refer to the divorced husband and wife collectively. The variables studied include the respondent's gender, age, frequency of divorce, number of children, reasons for divorce, socio-economic factors that caused the divorce, and all measures necessary to prevent the divorce.

Sex and age

The population of divorced spouses in this research is dominated by women (32 people or 62 percent), while men comprise 20 people (38 percent). In terms of age, most of the respondents are above 40 years old, which comprises 29 people (55.70 percent); while the other age groups are 31-35 years old and 35-40 years old, consisting of 9 people (17.30 percent) each; 26-30 years old with 4 people (7.70 percent); and below 25 years old with 1 person (2.0 percent).

Frequency and period of divorce

In terms of frequency, most of the respondents (43 people/82.69 percent) have divorced once, while the others twice (7 respondents/13.31 percent), three times (1 respondent/2.0 percent), and four times (1 respondent/2.0 percent). As for the period of the year when the divorce took place, 7 respondents (13.46%) divorced in 1972-1992, 15 respondents (28.84%) in 2000-2010, and 30 respondents (57.70 percent) in 2011 up to the time when the data were collected.

Number of children

Most of the divorced spouses (24 of them/46 percent) have 1 child, while 13 of them (25 percent) have 2 children, 13 of them (25 percent) have no child, 1 of them (2 percent) has had three children, and the other 1 (2 percent) has 4 children.

Main causes of divorce

In this research setting, the respondents are allowed to mention more than one cause. The cause most frequently mentioned by the respondents in this research are financial problems. This cause has been mentioned by 20 respondents.

Table 1
The main causes of divorce

Cause of Divorce	Number	Percentage
Financial Problem	20	37.04
Extramarital affair	16	29.63
Conflict Involving Religion	2	3.70
Domestic violence	4	7.41
Health Issue	3	7.56
Long-distance marriage	2	3.70
Marital abandonment by husband	1	1.85
Lack of affection due to an arranged marriage	5	9.26
Frequent quarrels	1	1.85
Total	54	100%

The financial problem leading to divorce stems from various conditions, e.g. husbands unable to meet the household needs for not having a permanent job, husbands reluctant to work, and husbands having a job but not providing adequate income. Such conditions have a direct impact on the fulfillment of the family's needs. These situations are far below the marriage expectation of the spouse. The economic factors mentioned in this study are in accordance with the factors expressed by Nurhalisa (2021). They are also in line with the findings of Mahmood et al. (2016), which states that divorce can occur in all groups of communities, from middle- to high-income communities. However, divorce is found to be more common among low-income communities.

The financial problem leading to a high divorce rate could also trigger a series of issues. In some cases, the financial issue leads to extramarital affairs. In this research, 16 respondents report extramarital affairs as the cause of their divorce. Amid a poor economic condition, the head of the family tends to have an argument with the wife and finally tries to find another woman whom he thinks she can understand him better. On the other hand, the wife also seeks another man who can better fulfill the household needs. In most cases, this aggravates the situation in the family (Hanson et al., 1998; Hopcroft, 2021; Herbst-Debby et al., 2023).

The other factors contributing to high divorce rates are conflict involving religion, domestic violence, health issues, long-distance marriage, marital abandonment by husband, frequent quarrels, and lack of affection due to an arranged marriage. Although not dominant, domestic violence is found in a number of cases. The forms of domestic violence commonly found are physical/psychological violence or threats of violence with or without objects. Another significant factor that leads to divorce is disagreement or conflict of belief between husband and wife. When the husband and wife fail to harmonize their thoughts, it would be difficult to bring about peace, happiness, affection, and intimacy in the family. Therefore, like-mindedness plays an important role in setting a firm foundation for a family. Conflicts that occur in marriage are not caused by the differences between the husband and wife, but the inability to cope with such differences. Therefore, divorce can be understood as a failure of the husband and wife in negotiating the solution to the occurring situation (Suhendi & Wahyu, 2001).

Another example of different points of view that might lead to conflict is the perception of the fact that the couple has not been blessed with children. It is natural that married couples aim to produce offspring. In this research, 25 percent of the divorced respondents bear no child. Infertility issues experienced by either spouse can trigger a divorce due to different standpoints. One partner might accuse the other of being infertile and both of them fall into a quarrel. Women are often the ones to blame when talking about infertility. Having been through a long journey of marriage and failed attempts to have a child, the couple can agree to end their marriage and take their own path in life (Kelly, 2000; Buckle et al., 1996; Schaan et al., 2019).

Socio-economic factors leading to divorce

The following are the socio-economic factors mentioned by the respondents. Note that they are allowed to mention more than one factor. The issue of inadequate income becomes the top cause of divorce mentioned by the respondents (29.55 percent).

Table 2
Socio-economic factors leading to divorce

Socio-economic factors leading to divorce	number	percentage
Unemployed husband/wife	4	9.09
Both husband and wife work	1	2.29
The wife's income is greater than husband's	2	4.55
Household debt	8	18.18
Distrust in financial management	5	11.36
Greater concern on the family of origin	4	9.09
Spending on gambling	2	4.55
Spending on alcohol/forbidden drugs	3	6.82
Low income	13	29.55
High expenditure	2	4.55
Total	44	100%

Inadequate income will surely hinder the family from fulfilling its basic needs. Financial instability in the family oftentimes makes wives file for divorce. This is in line with the findings from Wongkaren (2000), who states that

divorce can be caused by financial factors. [Lestari \(2012\)](#), also states that household economy is a common cause of divorce. When the husband is unemployed, unconcern about, or irresponsible of the financial matter in the family, the wife gets dissatisfied with their marriage life and likely opts for divorce. Aside from unfulfilled family needs, household debt is also a socio-economic problem that can lead to divorce. Low income and poor financial management are conditions that might entangle families in debt. When the existing income is insufficient to cover the needs, the family sometimes has to seek additional funds by borrowing money from friends, relatives, or even loan sharks. If the loan is not used for productive purposes while the income is still inadequate, it would be certain that the family is entangled in such a debt. The increasing amount of debt commonly gives rise to disputes between husband and wife, which eventually lead to divorce.

As stated by [Maslauskaitė et al. \(2015\)](#), the absence of work and income is closely linked to the greater chance of divorce in rural communities. Poverty experienced by women due to lack of income also contributes to a high divorce rate ([Amri et al., 2022](#)). Similarly, [Zafar & Kausar \(2014\)](#), also finds that 55 percent of women in Pakistan get divorced every year. The number of divorce cases rises due to economic pressure and societal demand. Increasing problems in daily life get people frustrated and result in a low level of patience in married couples. The other socio-economic factors which contribute to the occurrence of divorce are distrust in the financial management, higher concern on the family of origin, spending on gambling, alcohol, and forbidden drugs, and the husband's inferiority for lower income compared to wife's. Distrust in the financial management of the family indicates poor communication quality, which further leads to disharmony. Disharmony takes place when spouses cannot convey their thoughts and align the goals of marriage, leading to frequent disagreements ([Luthfi, 2017](#)).

Occupational instability and an unemployed husband increase the risk of divorce. This shows that the husband is still expected to be the main income producer, even in the setting of a family with two breadwinners. The conditions where the wife has a higher income than the husband's or spends more time working to meet the job demand can trigger conflicts which increase the risk of divorce ([Raz-Yurovich, 2012](#)).

Ways to prevent divorce

The following is a list of things needed by the community to prevent divorce. Most of the respondents in this research consider that they need pre-marital seminars to equip them with what it takes to live a married life.

Table 3
Measures needed to prevent divorce

Ways to Prevent Divorce	number	Percentage
Pre-marital seminar	52	34.67
Household financial management training	25	16.67
Household business management assistance	5	3.33
Provision of saving and loan service	1	0.67
Provision of marriage counseling service	34	22.67
Marriage age maturation	33	22.00
Total	150	100%

Most of the respondents express that they were not well-equipped for entering a married life. As a result, when facing various problems, they easily fall into an argument with their spouse. This is also motivated by a number of situations, e.g. lacking skills in managing the family economy, lacking creativity in developing household businesses, absence of assistance in dealing with family problems, and so on. In addition to the pre-marital seminar, the respondents also express the need for household financial management training, household business assistance, saving and loan service, marriage counseling service, and marriage age maturation. The needs conveyed by the respondents are in line with the findings of [Nurhalisa \(2021\)](#).

These needs conveyed by the respondents are also in line with the goal of marriage, which is to bring about a harmonious and happy family. In Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 52 of 2009 concerning Population Development and the Development of Happy and Prosperous Families, Article I paragraph 11, it is stated that "Family resilience and well-being is a (condition where) family has tenacity and toughness as well as contains the physical and material capabilities to live independently and develop themselves and its members in order to live in harmony in order to increase the welfare as well as physical and spiritual happiness." Family resilience consists of the following aspects:

- 1) Physical resilience, i.e. the fulfillment of basic needs, which include proper clothing, food, and shelter.
- 2) Non-physical resilience, i.e. the fulfillment of the mental-psychological needs of the spouse and the children born in the family.
- 3) Social resilience i.e. the maintenance of functional relationships with parents, relatives, and the community in their environment.
- 4) Resilience in religion and law, i.e. the adherence to religious and legal provisions governing the rights and obligations of husbands and wives, parents and children.

The fulfillment of physical and non-physical entails physical, mental, spiritual, economic and socio-cultural preparedness of the couple to carry out their responsibilities and duty and to fulfill their rights. This is only possible when adequate preparation is made prior to matrimony. Nowadays, the religious affairs office in Indonesia provides a marriage preparation program, which is also a prerequisite for marriage. This program aims to provide an overview on marriage life, which will be experienced by the couple. This constitutes an effort to address the high occurrence of divorce in Indonesia. However, providing guidance on overcoming potential marriage problems is not the sole purpose of this program. More importantly, it is also an effort to increase the quality of husband-wife relationships and enable them to provide welfare, a sense of security, and happiness for the family they are about to build (Cavapozzi et al., 2020; Sandström, 2011; Wallerstein, 1991).

Conclusions

The high occurrence of divorce in Gunungkidul is mainly caused by financial problems and extramarital affairs. Meanwhile, the major socio-economic factors which trigger the divorce are inadequate income, household debt, distrust in financial management, higher income from the wife, greater concern on the family of origin, and spendings on useless stuff like gambling, alcohol, or forbidden drugs. The preventive measures considered necessary to prevent divorce are pre-marital seminars, marriage counseling services, marriage age maturation, household financial management training, and household business management assistance. It is also necessary to increase the effectiveness of some preventive measures, like a marriage preparation program, since there is a possibility that the content of the program is not fully internalized by the participants and a tendency that them to see it merely as a formality to step into a marriage.

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