

THE ROLE OF MARITAL COMMITMENT AND FAMILY SUPPORT FOR MARITAL SATISFACTION IN CHILDLESS COUPLES

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ABSTRACT

The course of married life, often colored by a variety of happy events or vice versa, contributes to marital satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The presence of children in married life will be one of the signs of achieving the goal of marriage. But in reality not all couples are blessed with children easily. Not having children in marriage can be one of life's disappointments that can affect marital satisfaction. In fact, what is more important than a marriage is not only the presence of children, but the success and satisfaction of marriage felt by the husband and wife. The satisfaction of married is largely determined by the internal and external factors of both partners. This study aims to determine the role of marital commitment and family support for marital satisfaction in childless couples. The study participants were 290 husbands and wives who had no children after more than five years of marriage. The data collection technique used snowball sampling, and was analyzed using multiple linear regression tests. The results of the study found that marital commitment and family support both play a role in marital satisfaction in couples who have been married for more than five years. Simultaneously, the length of marriage also predicts marital satisfaction.

KEYWORDS *marital satisfaction, marital commitment, family support, childless spouse*



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INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a legal bond between a man and a woman where both are sexually involved, have, and raise children (Cohen & Strong, 2020). In marriage in Indonesia, the presence of children is often the hope of married couples and extended families of both parties because it is considered a gift that God gives to continue the lineage (Iskandar et al., 2019). However, in reality not all marriages

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are endowed with offspring and not all couples can have children easily. Not having children in marriage can be one of life's disappointments that can affect marital satisfaction (Iskandar et al., 2019). In fact, what is more important than a marriage is not only about the presence of a child, but the success and satisfaction of a married couple. And marital satisfaction is one of the indicators of life satisfaction (Tavakol et al., 2017).

Marital satisfaction is one of the general concepts used to assess happiness and stability in a marriage. Marital satisfaction is a subjective feeling felt by participants related to aspects of a marriage, such as happiness, satisfaction, and pleasant experiences with their partners (Fowers & Olson, 1993). One of the causes of divorce is low marital satisfaction, but because it is caused by cultural, religious or other beliefs, it can cause couples to survive in marriage even though they are unhappy and do not achieve satisfaction in marriage. Whereas an unhappy marriage can shorten a person's life by an average of four years (Gove et al., 1990). (Yoder & Du Bois, 2020) revealed that marital satisfaction plays an important role in physical and mental health. (Tavakol et al., 2017) state that marital satisfaction affects physical, mental health, life satisfaction, success in work and social communication. Thus it can be concluded that marital satisfaction has an influence on life. According to (Fowers & Olson, 1993) child satisfaction is one aspect of marital satisfaction, but there are still nine other aspects that can influence the creation of marital satisfaction, namely personality, role equality, communication, conflict resolution, financial management, leisure activities, sexual orientation, family and friends, and religious orientation.

Marriage Commitment

According to (Iskandar et al., 2019) childless conditions in married couples tend to influence the decision to divorce or polygamy or stick to the marital commitment to live together. According to (Freeman, 2010) a marriage commitment is defined as an agreement made by a married couple and wanting to remain married. Marriage commitments are not enough to only be obtained from one party, but arise from both parties. Marriage commitment is a unity of three types of commitment, namely personal commitment, moral commitment, and structural commitment. Personal commitment refers to a sense of wanting to stay in a relationship, moral commitment refers to a sense of obligation to stay and structural commitment refers to a sense of being constrained or struggling to leave a relationship. These three commitments are needed in married life, such as when difficult problems of having children occur in marriage, not all couples are able to deal with them. In Indonesia, not a few couples who do not have children decide to end their marriage and change partners in order to get children, including doing this because of the support of the extended family as an effort to continue the lineage.

Family Support

The family is where the individual grows and develops. The close relationship between each family member makes family support important when one of the family members experiences unpleasant circumstances, such as facing the difficult problem of having children. (Navid et al., 2018) stated, having fertility problems can also lead to various psychological consequences including a decline

in mental health. Support from families is needed to make couples who do not have children not feel alone in dealing with problems that arise. According to (Sarason et al., 1983) social support is the existence or availability of people we can rely on, people who tell us that they care, value and love us. Family support is the support provided by spouses, parents, in-laws, and siblings in the form of the availability of sources of support and the level of satisfaction received by the individual. The support of a large family will make the individual feel comfortable, safe, loved, cared for. This can fulfill one aspect of marital satisfaction, namely family and friends who identify feelings in connecting with family members of the couple. Based on the description above, it can be seen that high marital commitment and high family support have a role in creating marital satisfaction in couples who have been married for more than five years but have no children.

RESEARCH METHOD

The purpose of this study was to describe how much marriage commitment and family support play a role in marital satisfaction in couples who have no children after more than five years of marriage. This study was conducted in the hope that couples who do not have children can still feel the satisfaction of their marriage. According to the Statistics Indonesia report, the number of divorce cases in Indonesia is always increasing every year. (Jamil & Fakhrudin, 2015) found that one of the causes of divorce is the absence of children resulting from a marriage. In fact, there is no legal article that allows divorce on the grounds of not having children, this refers to Article 39 paragraph (2) of the Marriage Law and article 19 of government regulation no.9 of 1975 concerning the implementation of law number 1 of 1974 concerning marriage. So it is suspected that there are other factors besides not having children that can affect the satisfaction and inadequacy of the marriage so that it affects the decision to divorce.

Participants

Participants in this study were women and men who had no children. There were 290 participants with the following criteria: (1) husband or wife, (2) have been married for more than five years (3) have no children. 266 participants in this study were women. As many as 67% of participants were in the age range of 31-40 years. And 87% of the participants had a marriage age of 5-10 years.

Design

This research uses a quantitative approach with *snowball sampling* techniques. According to (Sugiyono, 2013) snowball sampling is a technique for determining samples that are first small in number, then enlarged.

Instruments

The measuring instrument used to measure marriage commitment in this study ada 28 *items* using a marriage commitment scale adapted based on aspects of marriage commitment according to (Kim & Johnson, 2016). Then the measuring instrument used to measure family support in this study is a social support scale adapted from the measuring instrument (Sarason et al., 1983). There were six questions about family members who had a willingness to provide support and how satisfied respondents were with the support provided by the individual. The

marriage satisfaction measuring instrument is a scale adapted from (Fowers & Olson, 1993) namely the *Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale Item* which consists of fifteen items, ten items are used to measure ten aspects of marital satisfaction and five *items* to measure *idealistic distortion*.

Analysis Techniques

To test the research hypothesis in the form of the role of variables of marriage commitment, family social support for marriage satisfaction variables, a *Multiple Linear Regression* Test using SPSS was used. Before conducting a hypothesis test, a classical assumption test is carried out first.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Data processing using multiple linear regression tests showed a calculated F value of 44.699 with a *p-value* (sig) of 0.000, using $\alpha = 0.05$. Since the *p-value* (sig) is $< \alpha$ or $0.000 < 0.05$ then H_0 is rejected. In other words, marital commitment and family support together have a role in marital satisfaction.

TABLE 1
CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS BY GENDER

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Man	24	8%
Woman	266	92%
Sum	290	100%

TABLE 2
CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS BY AGE

Age	Frequency	Percentage
21 - 30 Years	72	25%
31 - 40 Years	194	67%
41 - 50 Years	23	8%
> 50 Years	1	0%
Sum	290	100%

Table 3
Characteristics of participants based on the length of marriage

Length of Marriage	Frequency	Percentage
5 - 10 Years	252	87%
11 - 20 Years	35	12%
> 20 Years	3	1%
Sum	290	100%

TABLE 4
RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS ABOUT SUPPORT FROM FAMILY

Answers about people providing family support	Frequency	Percentage
Spouse	170	59%
Parents	43	15%
Family	60	21%
Friend	2	1%
Tidak Ada	5	2%
Other	10	3%
Sum	290	100%

Table 5
Coefficient of Determination Analysis
Model Summary

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of The Estimate
1	,612 ^a	,375	,370	7,3553

a. Predictors: (Constant), Dukungan Keluarga, Komitmen Pernikahan

Table 6
Coefficient Calculation Results of Multiple Linear Regression Equation Values
Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Itself.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	7.711	3.650		2.112	.036
	Marriage Commitment	.311	.036	.457	8.662	.000
	Family Support	.550	.120	.243	4.603	.000
	Age	-.742	.836	-.045	-.888	.375
	Length of Marriage	2.809	1.245	.114	2.257	.025

a. Dependent Variable: Marital Satisfaction

Table 7
Simultaneous Hypothesis Testing (F-Test)

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Itself.
1	Regression	9570.454	4	2392.613	44.699	.000 ^b
	Residual	15255.146	285	53.527		
	Total	24825.600	289			

a. Dependent Variable: Marital Satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Length of Marriage, Family Support, Age, Marriage Commitment

Based on Tabel 1 It is known that the largest of the participants in this study were women who did not have children with the highest age range of 31-40 years. Table 3 shows that 87% of participants had a marriage age of 5-10 years. Participants in this study were husbands or wives who had difficulty getting offspring and were struggling to get offspring.

In table 6 shows that these results answer the research hypothesis of how much marital commitment and family support together play a role in the family to marital satisfaction in childless couples.

The course of married life, often colored by a variety of happy events or vice versa, contributes to marital satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The presence of children or offspring in married life will be one of the signs of achieving the purpose of marriage for the couple concerned, especially if cultural background or marital agreement is a strong reason behind that goal.

According to (Iskandar et al., 2019) in marriage in Indonesia, the presence of children is often the hope of married couples to continue the lineage. Married couples who find it difficult to have children and have no children, must abolish their hopes of having children. Or looking for another partner to get offspring. The couple's fidelity to maintain marital commitment and maintain the integrity of the marriage is a happiness in itself that can affect marital satisfaction. A strong marital commitment can also fulfill one aspect of marital satisfaction, namely sexual orientation. These results are consistent with (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993) that marital commitment is one of the most important factors contributing to marital success.

The findings in this study are in accordance with the research of (Richter et al., 2014) which states that there is a positive relationship between social support sourced from couples and marital satisfaction. The provision of positive support from family and spouses plays a role in marital satisfaction. The difficult situation of having children is likely to become a phenomenon that is not easily accepted by couples or families from both parties, especially if both partners come from cultural backgrounds that view descendants as successors to the family tree.

According to (Rooney & Domar, 2022) couples who find it difficult to have children can generate feelings of shame, guilt and inferiority. The struggle in getting a pregnancy is certainly not easy, there are difficult times that are present in couples who have difficulty having children. Family support can be the existence or availability of people to rely on, people who tell them they care, value, and love (Sarason et al., 1983). Based on table 4 shows that the most sources of family support are from spouses. This means that family support does not have to be from parents, in-laws and siblings, but rather support from spouses plays a significant role in marital satisfaction. Support from couples and extended family will create a sense of comfort, security, love, and care so as to complete the perceived marital satisfaction. Family support is also one aspect of marital satisfaction, namely family and friends who identify feelings in connecting with family members of the couple.

This research has obtained the idea that not having children in marriage does not mean that couples do not get marital satisfaction as long as there is a role from other variables. The study found that marital commitment and family support played a role in marital satisfaction in couples who had no children after more than five years of marriage. Marital satisfaction is a subjective feeling felt by participants related to aspects of a marriage, such as happiness, satisfaction, and pleasant experiences with their partner.

In addition to the role of marriage commitment and family support, in this study, another factor that plays a role in marital satisfaction is the duration of marriage. (Tavakol et al., 2017) argue that the longer the marriage age, the more commitments will be formed between the two considering the age of marriage along with the intensity of interaction and communication between the two people who have agreed to explore life together. This makes the couple get to know each other better and have gone through a process of adaptation.

The results of this study are in line with (Kristanti & Soetjningsih, 2017), namely that marital satisfaction still occurs even though pasangan has not been blessed with offspring. In line with that, (Iskandar et al., 2019) found that support from family and close people becomes one of the external efforts that strengthens the existence of couples so that they can achieve marital satisfaction in married couples who do not have children.

Having children in marriage is not a planned thing. A childless couple is stuck in circumstances that are not easy to accept. This study illustrates that the presence of children alone in marriage is not a determinant of achieving marital satisfaction. There are other factors besides the presence of children that can be pursued in achieving marital satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

Satisfaction of Married is largely determined by internal and external factors of both partners, not least in couples who have not been blessed with offspring. Marital commitment, which is the source of internal strength of married couples, is a handle for the solidity of marriage and is a factor that predicts marital satisfaction. Strengthened by support from spouses, families of both parties, and relatives or friends will increasingly predict the growth of marital satisfaction in couples who have been married for more than five years. Simultaneously, the length of marriage also predicts marital satisfaction.

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