

# Marital Satisfaction on the Young Wife of Muslim Families

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**Abstract**—This study aims to describe the marriage satisfaction on the wives of Muslim families. The informants are six wives that have the marital period up 10 years. The method of selecting informants was done through the screening stage using the Enrich Marriage Satisfaction scale to get informants with low, moderate, and high marital satisfaction levels. Data collection uses in- depth interviews. Then the data is analyzed using inductive analysis. The findings show that wives in Muslim families consider marriage satisfaction as a benchmark to achieve the hope of having a family of *sakinah, mawaddah, rahmah, happy, and intact*. Wives who are able to achieve marital satisfaction can be shown through (1) two-way communication; (2) intimacy; (3) partner's together activities; (4) stable financial conditions; (5) the existence of children; (6) the practice of religious values; and (7) the effective way to deal with marriage conflicts. In conclusion, wife's marriage satisfaction varies and is influenced by their expectations.

**Keywords**—*satisfaction, marriage, wife, family, Muslim*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Marriage is also called the emotional and legitimate commitment of two people to share emotional and physical relationships, tasks, and economic resources (Olson & DeFrain, 2011). Every husband and wife must go through a transition period in the early period of marriage which covers approximately the first ten years of marriage. The early years of marriage were vulnerable and even critical because married couples did not have sufficient experience (Walgito, 2000). Married couples certainly expect a quality, long-lasting, and satisfying marriage for both parties.

A happy marriage in Islam is known as a *sakinah, mawaddah, and mercy* marriage. The construction of the quality of marriage is closely related to marital satisfaction because it affects the level of divorce, individual stress, physical health, and child welfare (Lawrence, 2009). Ardianto, Jamal, & Tubagus (2017) obtained the results of a study that showed that married couples in Muslim families have perceptions that they can reach a *sakinah* marriage if they have responsibility, understand the wishes of their wives, balance (education, work, income, and religion), and honesty.

Even so, the phenomenon of divorce that occurs in society today is a real picture of the failure to achieve marriage satisfaction with wives. Data from the Surakarta City Religious Court as of August 6, 2018, it is known that 559 divorce cases occurred in 2018. The case consisted of 417 cases of divorce filed by the wife and 142 divorce cases filed

by the husband ([www.sipp.pa-surakarta.go.id](http://www.sipp.pa-surakarta.go.id), 2018). According to Larasati (2012) some wives cannot achieve marital satisfaction because of the unequal division of household roles between husband and wife. Marriage satisfaction that is not achieved by the wife can also be caused by insecure attachments between married couples (Soraiya, Khairani, Rachmatan, Sari, and Sulistyani, 2016).

Hawkins (in Olson & DeFrain, 2011) defines marital satisfaction as a feeling of happiness, satisfaction, pleasant experience that is subjective to one's own with regard to the whole aspect of marriage. Marriage satisfaction can be realized when a married couple is able to meet their individual needs and freedom from the relationships they create and fulfil the expectations they bring before marriage (Soedarjoen, 2005). There are several factors that play a role in achieving marriage satisfaction.

According to Papalia, Olds & Fledman (2009) these factors include: strength of commitment, pattern of interaction at the beginning of the marriage period, age at marriage, flexibility or flexibility when facing problems, religiosity, emotional support, and differences in expectations between husband and wife. Women can achieve marital satisfaction if they can build

pleasant, supportive and mutual respect with their husbands (Tavakol, Moghadam, Nasrabadi, Iesazaden, & Esmaelli, 2016). The ability to forgive one another between partners can also affect marital satisfaction (Chung, 2014).

Family is an environment where some people still have blood relations and unity (Soerjono, 2010). Whereas Muslim families are a group of individuals bound by marriage and descent, are Muslim and carry out all activities based on Islamic shari'a. The rights and obligations of a married couple have been established in Islamic teachings. Husband's right to wife includes: (1) the right to be obeyed and obeyed; (2) the right to have intercourse / intercourse; (3) the right to prohibit wives from going out of their homes; and (4) the right to be treated individually.

Whereas the wife's rights to her husband include: (1) the right to be given dowry; (2) the right to be given a living; (3) the right to protection; and (4) the right to be treated well. Based on the description it is known that married couples have different rights and obligations. Husbands are required to be trustworthy family leaders to provide for, protect their wives, and glorify their wives. The wife is required to obey and obey

all the commands of the husband in accordance with Islamic shari'a provisions.

**II. EASE OF USE**

This study uses a qualitative method of phenomenology to gain an understanding based on the tradition of certain investigative methodologies to explore humanitarian problems or social problems in settings experienced (Creswell, 2013). Informants in this study were taken using a purposive sampling technique, which focused on selecting subject variations based on the level of marital satisfaction (low- medium-high). The reason is that the informants selected based on these characteristics have certain information that can answer the research questions.

The general characteristics of the informants in this study are: (1) Wives who are married legally in the Religion and State law, (2) Have a marriage age in the initial period which is between 1-10 years. The level of marriage satisfaction will be obtained at the initial screening using a measuring instrument, namely the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction scale compiled by Fower and Olson in 1993. The data collection method used in this study was in- depth interviews using established guidelines. Validity or validation of qualitative research can be done using the triangulation method.

TABLE I. INFORMANT PROFILE

Informant	Age	Marriage Period	Child	Educa tion	Status	Satisfac tion
S1	23	2,5 years	1	High School	Student	Medium
S2	24	1 year	-	Bachelor	Student	High
S3	26	4 years	1	Bachelor	Entrepreneur	High
S4	24	3 years	-	Senior High School	Student	Low
S5	25	1 year	-	Bachelor	Doctor	Medium
S6	29	7 years 2 Senior High School Housewife Low				

**III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Data analysis used in this qualitative research is inductive analysis, which is the process of collecting data using story descriptions by doing abstractions after recording specific phenomena grouped into one. The following is a more detailed description of the results of the study.

**A. Marriage History**

Based on the results of the interview, it is known that the process undertaken by the wife towards marriage includes courtship, ta'aruf, matchmaking, and friendship in the organization. The process that the wife goes towards marriage cannot be a determinant of marriage satisfaction. However, the results found that the length of time a wife knows her husband before marriage can affect the achievement of marital satisfaction. The longer the wife knows her husband before marriage, the higher the level of marriage satisfaction achieved.

Wives with high marital satisfaction state that married life is a means of learning to be new as a wife and mother. Wives and husbands must live a married life with commitment

and maturity so as to be able to maintain a lasting marriage relationship and minimal problems. Wives with marital satisfaction are stating that their married life is intertwined quite harmoniously, have not experienced complex conflicts, have been able to fill each other's shortcomings, and support couples to self-act. However, the wife considers herself sometimes still not sensitive to the needs of her partner. Wives with low marital satisfaction state that married life always has a side of joy and sorrow. They have been able to understand each other and meet the needs of the couple, but sometimes feel less confident and stiff when carrying out their roles as wives.

Marriage satisfaction felt by the wife is a dynamic concept. The wife in this study perceived marriage satisfaction as a benchmark for achieving the hopes that would be realized in married life. These expectations include having a family that is sakinah, mawaddah, rahmah, happy, healthy, and intact. According to Soedarjoen (2005) marriage satisfaction can be realized when a married couple is able to fulfill their individual needs and freedom from the relationship they create and fulfill the expectations that they bring before marriage.

**1) Communication Pattern**

Communication that is two-way, open, and flexible can help wives achieve marital satisfaction. This is found in wives with high and moderate marriages satisfaction. Wives with low marital satisfaction have a one-way communication pattern. They tend to be reluctant to start and only communicate with partners when there is a need. Every wife.

The topic of discussion that is communicated with his wife and husband also has similarities, namely about life and household needs, duties and roles as husband and wife, finance, parenting, work, lectures, social relations with others, and plans to be realized together . Fowers & Olson (2006) states that individuals who has two ways of communicating with her husband, namely speaking directly when he is with her husband and through chat or telephone while parting with her husband have positive attitudes and judgments about communication will feel understood by their partners and judge themselves as able to express their feelings openly.

**2) Intimacy**

The type of intimacy that the wife gets with the level of satisfaction of high, medium and low marriages is in the form of positive appreciation. Another type of intimacy that wives get with high marital satisfaction is understanding, support in completing studies, and career. Wives with marital satisfaction are getting intimacy in the form of understanding, trust, and attention. Wives with low marital satisfaction get intimacy in the form of support to complete studies, attention, and help with household chores.

Marriage satisfaction with the wife can be seen through the intensity of intimacy obtained. The more often the wife gets intimacy from the husband, the easier the wife will achieve marital satisfaction. The intimacy intensity needed by the wife to achieve high marital satisfaction is at least 3 times a day. Wives who often get intimacy from their husbands tend to feel happy, valuable, and love their husbands and children more. Whereas wives who rarely get intimacy from their husbands sometimes feel upset when they are in need of a husband's role but are separated from each other, feel awkward, and feel jealous of other married couples who can meet every day. This

is consistent with the findings of Wibisono (2011) that intimacy possessed by wives is significantly related to marital satisfaction.

### 3) *Problem Solving Strategic*

The wife has almost the same opinion related to conflict in her married life. Conflict is considered as something that is always present in married life. The way to prove effective in dealing with problems in marriage is to discuss the problem and the solution with the husband. In addition, the wife also has other ways that are proven effective in solving marital problems such as using religious knowledge and understanding and accepting the conditions of the couple. According to McDaniel & Lorne (2000) how well couples handle stressors and solve problems can affect the length of the relationship and the satisfaction of marriage. This is consistent with the statement of Strong & Cohen (2011) which explains that the way couples solve conflict in marriage is a determinant of their relationship satisfaction and well-being.

### 4) *Spouse Leisure Activities*

Activities carried out during leisure time with a partner include: nature tourism, culinary tours, watching movies, discussing with husband, and gathering with family. Wives with high marital satisfaction carry out leisure activities with their husbands at least once a week. Where as wives with low marital satisfaction carry out leisure activities with their husbands once a month.

This shows that the more often leisure activities are carried out with a partner, the easier it is for the wife to achieve marital satisfaction. The results of a study conducted by Nisa (2014) show that married couples feel happier and satisfied with the experiences they experience while married while doing activities together with their partners.

### 5) *Financial Conditions*

Wives with more than one family's financial income sources tend to have a better level of marital satisfaction. This can be seen from the findings that states that wives with high marriages satisfaction and are having multiple sources of income, such as husband's salary, wife's online business, and financial assistance from parents. Where as wives with low marriage satisfaction have a source of income only from the husband's salary. Financial conditions in marriage can also be seen from sources of expenditure All wives have the same source of expenditure, namely to meet household needs. These findings indicate that the source of financial expenditure in marriage is used for the interests of each partner, child, and social.

The financial management applied in marriage varies considerably. Wives with high marital satisfaction have authority in managing finances and tend to regulate financial conditions using priority scale needs. In addition, financial management is also assisted by parents and in-laws. Wives with marital satisfaction are having a way of managing together with their husbands openly. Whereas for wives with low marital satisfaction, financial management is carried out by one party, namely the wife or husband and tends to experience obstacles to set aside savings funds. According to Copur & Eker (2014) marriage is not just an emotional relationship, but also an economic relationship. Especially those related to the management, planning, and use of money regulated in accordance with agreements between married

couples with trust so as to improve the quality of marriage (Cordova, 2009).

### 6) *Existence of Children*

The existence of children can be a determinant of marriage satisfaction achieved by the wife. This is because the wives have a positive perspective on the presence of children. For informants, children are a mandate given by God and desirable by a married couple. The presence of children can be a source of happiness, pride, enthusiasm, and means of learning as a mother. Children are expected to be pious or pious individuals, serving both parents, smart, tough, and healthy. The group of couples who say they are satisfied and happy with their married life in general are couples who have children. This is consistent with the results of a study by Twenge, Campbell, & Foster (2003) which shows that the presence of children has a significant influence on marriage satisfaction in mothers compared to fathers.

### 7) *Religiosity Belief*

Religious activities carried out by wives tend to be the same namely five times of prayer both alone and in congregation with husbands, reciting, and religious studies. Religious activities are carried out regularly every day, while religious studies are followed one to four times a month. According to the wives, belief in the power of God and religious values can be involved in every aspect of married life. Such involvement includes the belief that God.

will always help maintain marital relations to be harmonious, provide sustained and blessing sustenance, and health for family members. According to Lestari (2012), religious values are the most important foundation for partner happiness. While the results of research conducted by Oluwe and Adebayo (2008) state that there is a significant relationship between religiosity and marital satisfaction.

## B. *Factors in Marriage Satisfaction*

Internal factors that affect marriage satisfaction with wives are mindset and character. Mindset and character can help and hinder the achievement of marital satisfaction. The mindset that helps achieve marital satisfaction includes positive thinking, optimism, and great curiosity. The wife's character that helps achieve marriage satisfaction include: high initiative, independent, disciplined, committed, responsible, merciful, easy to forgive, ridiculing, obedient, and sociable. The mindset that inhibits the achievement of marriage satisfaction with the wife is stubbornness and forgetfulness. The wife's character that can inhibit marital satisfaction includes not caring, lacking in confidence, childishness, difficulty controlling emotions, and being too permissive to the husband's words. Support from parents can also be an external factor that affects the satisfaction of marriage to

the wife. Support provided by parents includes: 1) advice, advice, and criticism about married life; 2) assistance with child care, financial funds and housing. Democratic parents' attitudes can also help wives achieve marital satisfaction. The results of the research conducted by Pratiwi (2016) showed that social support by parents and closest people had a positive effect on the satisfaction felt by the wife in her marriage. Another external factor is the relationship with the social environment. Wives who are able to achieve high marital satisfaction tend to have good relations with their social environment. This is because the wife with high satisfaction

gets emotional and informative support from her friends. Wives with moderate and low marriages satisfaction have experienced unpleasant criticism from their social environment so that wives tend to limit relationships.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The achievement of marriage satisfaction with wives begins with the fulfilment of hopes of having a marriage that is *sakinah, mawaddah, and mercy*. Marriage life cannot be separated from conflicts that arise related to child care, the role of wife and mother, finance, and the character of the couple. Wives who are able to achieve marital satisfaction can be shown through a two-way communication pattern;

intimacy and activity with a partner; stable financial condition; presence of children; the application of spiritual values; and effective ways to deal with marriage conflicts. The process of achieving wife satisfaction is influenced by internal factors such as the wife's mindset and character, as well as external factors such as the husband's character, parental support, and wife's relationship with her social environment.

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