

The Rate of Divorce among Muslim Couples in Malaysia: A Legal Analysis of the Causes and Consequences

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Abstract: Cases of *ṭalāq*, or divorce, among Muslim couples in Malaysia have increased significantly in recent years. At least 200,000 Muslim spouses have gotten divorced between 2017 and 2021, raising concerns about the Islamic family institution in the country. This paper aims to identify the causes of *ṭalāq* among Muslim couples in Malaysia as well as the consequences of marriage dissolution for the family. The paper adopted the qualitative method to study the issue. The methodology included the content analysis of published materials and primary textual references from the Qur’ān and Sunnah that are related to this topic. The study found that psychological issues, social growth, schooling and future relationships could all be impacted by *ṭalāq* on children. The parents will experience identity issues, changes in their way of life and changes in their financial situation. Based on the interpretation of Qur’ānic text related to *ṭalāq*, many Islamic scholars and jurists agree that the parents or relatives should be responsible for a divorced woman’s identity in the same way as her former husband. Thus, alimony for divorced women given from her relatives is indeed compulsory. In conclusion, the findings demonstrate that the marriages of Muslim couples in Malaysia are significantly impacted by the typical causes of divorce.

Keywords: *Ṭalāq* (divorce), Muslim couples, Malaysia, Causes, Consequences

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Introduction

Malaysia is a racially harmonious country in which all citizens can practice their religion freely. Muslims in Malaysia also have the freedom and right to practice their religion. Muslim couples in Malaysia are permitted to wed because the family institution is highly valued in Malaysian Islamic law. A husband and wife's relationship should be built on a firm foundation of love, affection, intimacy, tranquillity and stability. As Allah (SWT) states in the Holy Qur'ān:

And among His Āyat (signs) is that He created for you mates from among yourself, that ye may dwell in tranquillity with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are Āyāt (Signs) for those who reflect. (30:21)

However, this raises the question of whether people live up to the ultimate purpose of marriage by building their marriage on mutual love, care and harmony. This study has brought up the fact that the answers might not be positive, given the recent steady increase in divorce rates, particularly in Malaysia.

Divorce has been prescribed by Allah (SWT) as the last choice for preserving human wellbeing. As Allah states in the Qur'ān: "And if they decide upon divorce – then indeed, Allah heareth and knoweth all things" (2:227). Even though it is still a strongly discouraged method in Islam, especially when it is used without critical reasoning, the main objective is to resolve the problem of marital divorce, which poses a threat to the family. In this context, Islamic family law and personal faith in Allah should serve as a guide to reducing divorce cases in Malaysia and other Muslim countries.

The Concept of *Talāq* (Divorce)

Divorce is stated in the Malaysian Islamic Family Law (Federal Territories) Act (1984) as *perceraian*, which is the formal dissolution of a marriage, according to the English-Malay Dictionary of Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (Luqmān & Siti, 2019). Divorce, also referred to as the dissolution of marriage, is when a civil or religious court legally separates a married couple. Once the divorce lawsuit is concluded, it permits the spouse to get remarried.

Divorce is referred to in Arabic as *ṭalāq*, which also means to “liberate or undo the knot” (al-Asbahanī, 1412AH). *Ṭalāq*, as used by Islamic scholars, refers to the annulment or dissolution of a marriage’s legal standing. In accordance with the Sharia, *ṭalāq* refers to the act of pronouncing a word that signifies divorce in order to dissolve a marriage. Some *fuqahā’* (Islamic jurists) believe that the divorce law is *makrūh* (reprehensible) (Ibn Qudāmah, X/1986). This quotation is a reference to the ḥadīth of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), in which he said that “divorce is the most despised of all authorised actions in the eyes of Allah” (Ibn Mājah, ḥadīth No. 2018). It is crucial to note that the *‘ulamā’* (scholars of Islam) have varying opinions about the authenticity of the aforementioned ḥadīth, with some of them opining that it is *ḍa‘īf* (a weak ḥadīth), owing to a weakness in both its chain of narrators and textual content because something cannot be despised and allowed at the same time.

The Valid Purpose for Divorce in Islam

Marriage is a holy connection that unites a man and a woman; Islam teaches that this act allows human beings to achieve the noble objective of procreation on this earth. However, in this sacred union, the husband and wife must behave honourably and decently towards one another. It is forbidden for a husband to divorce his wife in an effort to hurt her because doing so would destroy this honourable institution, emotionally damage the wife and possibly sever her relationship with her children. According to several ḥadīth, the indefinite separation of a man from his wife is seen as one of the major and grievous sins and is one of Satan’s favourite deeds. For example, in one such ḥadīth, the Prophet (SAW) said that “divorce is the most despised of all authorized actions in the eyes of Allah” (Ibn Mājah, ḥadīth No. 2018).

Having said this, divorce, however, must not be considered a closed door. There are genuine cases where divorce is the only option available. As Allah (SWT) indicates in the Qur’ān: “But if they separate by *ṭalāq* (divorce) Allah will provide abundance for every one of the spouses from His all reaching bounty, and Allah is Ever All sufficient for His creatures’ need, All-Wise” (4:130). This verse implies that if a married couple is unable to coexist, they would resort to divorce as a last resort.

In fact, if each party finds a new partner as a result of the divorce, both parties may be happy.

If such is their goal, Allah (SWT) will most certainly favour them. However, Islam has totally forbidden women from seeking a divorce without any valid reason. This is based on Abū Dāwūd's report on Thawban's authority that the Prophet (SAW) said: "If a woman asks her husband for a divorce without some strong reason, the odour of paradise will be forbidden for her" (Abū Dāwūd, hadith No. 2226).

Here are a few valid reasons for divorce, supported by evidence:

1. When one spouse becomes abusive and inflicts physical, mental or emotional torture upon the other spouse, and is not willing to change by taking practical measures through therapy or counselling. The Islamic principle states, "There shall be no inflicting or receiving of harm." In Islam, *zulm* (injustice) is not tolerated, regardless of who the perpetrator is.
2. If either the husband or wife fails to fulfil the objectives and purposes for which marriage was initiated, this can result in incompatibility between them, which may be expressed in their irreconcilable differences in temperaments, likes and dislikes. Allah (SWT) says: "The two parties (husband and wife) should either hold together on equitable terms, or get separate with kindness" (2:229).
3. The occurrence of adultery and fornication involving one or both spouses. Trust and confidence are the foundation of marriage, as the main goal of marriage is to uphold the chastity and modesty of both spouses. Thus, infidelity could be a significant factor in its breakdown. Divorce is the best course of action after this foundation has been corroded and destroyed and there is no opportunity to repair it, unless there is sincere repentance from the offending spouse. Allah (SWT) proclaims:

If both (husband and wife) fear that they would not be able to keep the limits ordained by Allah SWT, then there is no sin on either of them if she gives back (the dowry or a part of it) for her Khulu' (divorce). (2:229)

According to this Qur'ānic verse, if one spouse engages in adultery or fornication – both of which are considered as infidelity – then he/she has transgressed Allah (SWT)'s bounds and the offended spouse can then ask for a divorce.

4. The failure of a spouse to meet their marital obligations is a ground for divorce. For example, if the husband, who is seen as the family's provider, shirks his obligations and the wife decides she cannot tolerate his shirking any longer, the latter can seek for a divorce.

In Islam, any one of the aforementioned reasons can be considered a valid ground for *ṭalāq*. If, in a legitimate case warranting a divorce, a husband refuses to divorce his wife, then she is certainly justified by Sharia law to approach the proper legal authority to get a divorce (*khulu'*) or *fasakh*. The judgement of divorce thus rendered by such authority can be deemed as valid in Islam. Imām Fakhr al-Dīn al-Zayla'ī al-Ḥanafī (may Allah have mercy on him) mentioned a priceless act for the purpose of divorce:

Then, because marriage governs the interests of both their worldly and religious pursuit, Allah Almighty legislated marriage for the benefit of His slaves. Then, once the allotted number of people had passed, he forbade her to see him before she married another spouse, to be polite even in his rage. This was done in order to test himself in separation as he had tested her in marriage. (Zayla'i et al., II/1313H, p. 188)

The question thus becomes, why is the decision to divorce made by the husband rather than the wife, despite the fact that the latter is a contract partner?

In order to preserve the marriage and to weigh the risks of doing so quickly and carefully, the husband who pays the *mahr* (dowry) and spends money on his wife and the house is typically more aware of the effects of divorce and is far from reckless in an unwise manner. With this in mind, the following are some of the reasons for considering why divorce is in the husband's hands:

1. A woman is often more affected by emotions than a man. Therefore, if she is able to divorce, she may seek a divorce for trivial reasons that do not warrant the disintegration of her married life. The man

is more rational, though this does not negate that there are men who are less rational.

2. Divorce will incur certain financial setbacks, such as the deferred payment of the dowry, the maintenance of the waiting period, *mut'ah* granting after divorce etc. These financial matters and others will cause the man to slow down the process of the divorce, so it would be in the best interest to leave it in the hands of the person who is more concerned about the marriage. If the woman is not financially harmed by the divorce, the process would not be further hindered by its impact and emotions incurred.
3. On the relationship between a man and a woman, Allah (SWT) states in the Holy Qur'an: "Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the others, and because they support them from their means" (4:34). Islamically, it is the husband who provides for his wife throughout their marriage, paying her the immediate dowry prior to consummation and the deferred dowry following or upon her divorce.

Even if the wife works and earns a monthly income, she is not accountable for household bills or the children's food and housing because it is not *wajib* (mandate) in Islam that the wife shares in her husband's financial responsibilities. One exception to this is if she wants to work on her own in order to support her spouse. Allah (SWT) clearly mentions about the husband's responsibility in the Qur'an:

Let the man of means spend according to his means: and the husbands whose resources are restricted, let him spend according to what Allah has given him. Allah puts no burden on any person beyond what He has given him. After a difficulty, Allah will soon grant relief. (65:7)

And the dad of the born baby shall bear the cost of their food and clothing on equitable basis. (2:233)

The Phenomenon of *Ṭalāq* in Malaysia

Malaysia is a Muslim-majority nation, but regrettably, it is also one in which, like other Islamic nations, the divorce rate is still high. The number of *ṭalāq* court cases in Malaysia from 2017 to 2021 are presented in the figure below:

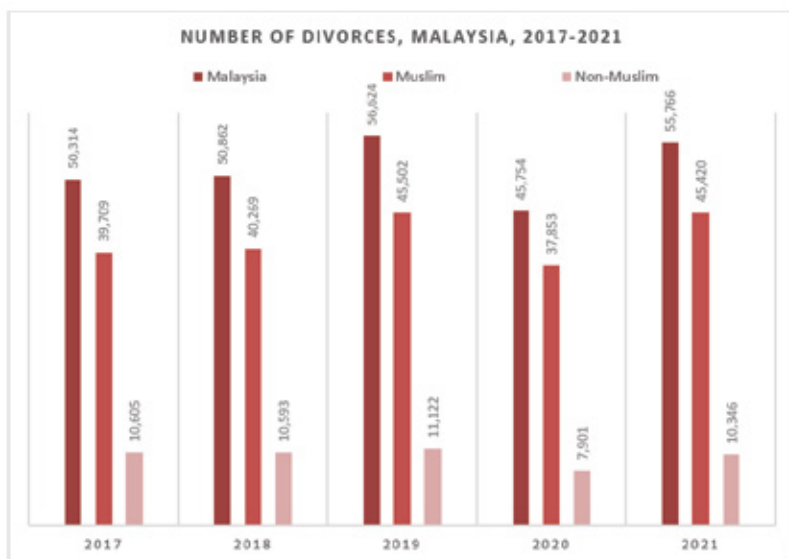


Figure 1: Divorce rates among Malaysian Muslim and Non-Muslim Couples

Figure 1 above depicts the number of divorces in Malaysian couples from 2017 to 2021 according to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2021). The statistics demonstrates a significant number of divorces among Muslim spouses, with a steady rise from 2017 to 2019. However, the Sharia Court only processes divorce cases using Section 47, which is divorce through *ṭalāq* pronouncement with the approval of the husband and wife only. There was a minor drop in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic, which has been ravaging Malaysia since early 2020. With 55,766 divorce cases in 2021 and a cumulative total of 45,420 in Muslim divorces, the number of Muslim couples filing for divorce is significantly higher than the 37,853 divorce cases among Muslim couples in the previous year.

The news media *Berita Harian* (Rodzi, 2022) has reported that the highest number of divorce cases in Muslim couples recorded nationwide in 2021 occurred in developed states such as Selangor and Johor. Of the total 45,420 divorce cases registered nationwide in 2021, Selangor recorded 8,811 cases, followed by Johor with 5,058 cases, Perak with 4,215 cases, Kelantan with 4,093 cases, Kedah with 3,873 cases, Pahang with 3,409 cases, Terengganu with 3,358 cases, Sabah with 3,027 cases, Federal Territory with 2,785 cases, Negeri Sembilan with 2,477 cases, Penang with 1,932 cases, Melaka with 1,597 cases and Perlis with 785 cases.

Primary Causes of *Talāq* in Muslim Couples in Malaysia

Based on the statistics on the divorce rate in Malaysia, there must be some factors and causes that lead to a higher rate of divorce among Muslim couples in the country.

The Director General of the Syariah Judiciary Department of Malaysia (JKSM), Datuk Dr. Mohd Naim Mokhtar, reports that the various causes that lead to the separation of a husband and wife include physical and emotional factors. Among the main causes identified are a lack of understanding between spouses, financial factors, failure to fulfil responsibilities, infidelity and family interference. There are also various forms of violence, including physical and emotional abuse, that cause divorce (Rodzi, 2022).

Additionally, in a comprehensive study in Malaysia, according to Shafiyah Iqlima in her writing entitled “Polemik Penceraian di Malaysia” (“Divorce Polemics in Malaysia”), the main causes of divorce are irresponsible attitudes and personalities of spouses, lack of understanding, anger issues and infidelity (Mohamad et al., 2021).

Negligence of Responsibility

According to Datuk Dr. Mohd Naim Mokhtar, the main cause leading to divorce among Muslim couples in Malaysia is a husband’s failure to fulfil responsibilities. As the head of a household, the husband needs to fulfil the rights of his wife. If this right is fulfilled properly, the household will surely be happy and peaceful and there will be feelings of love and

compassion for each other. Among the wife's rights are dowry, good treatment and external and internal alimony, including food, drink, clothing, education, health, shelter and other basic needs that need to be provided based on the husband's ability (Mohamad et.al, 2021).

Allah (SWT) expresses in the Qur'ān on the husband's duty: "Upon the father is the mothers' provision and their clothing according to what is acceptable" (2: 233). The obligation is not caused by the wife's need for the life of the household, but arises by itself without looking at the circumstances of the wife. Based on the description of the wife's rights that should be fulfilled by the husband, it can be concluded that the task of a husband is immense. To make a loving home, the wife's rights must be learned and put into practice.

Infidelity

According to Motivation and Family Counseling Consultant, Dr. Robiah Hamzah, husbands commit the majority of cases of infidelity. This fact is represented by an average of 10 household counselling cases that have been referred to her, eight of which were cheating husbands. The newspaper *Sinar Harian* also reported a case of a cheating husband who was willing to have sex with another woman after safely performing the Hajj (Mohamad et.al, 2021).

Several reasons can cause a husband to cheat on his wife, among which include immaturity, addiction, self-doubt, lack of support and selfishness. Nevertheless, there is no justifiable reason why a husband must cheat on his wife. Therefore, cheating is unacceptable in Islam, and it is forbidden for Muslim men to cheat on their wives. According to Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him): "The Prophet (SAW) said, "He is not one of us who cheats us" (Muslim, *hadīth* No. 101).

Domestic Violence

Another factor that contributes to divorce is domestic violence, which is brought on by the husband's physical and emotional abuse. Women are more likely to experience domestic abuse, according to both international and domestic statistics.

The Domestic Violence Act 1994 (Act 521) defines domestic violence as one or more of the following acts: a) wilfully or knowingly placing, or attempting to place, the victim in a state of fear of physical injury; b) causing physical injury to the victim; c) compelling the victim by coercion or threat to commit any conduct or act; d) confining or detaining the victim without the victim's consent; e) committing treason or destruction or damage to the victim's property; f) causing psychological abuse and; g) causing delusions by using any substance without the victim's consent (Mohamad et al., 2021).

In 2019, there were 2,459 personal protection orders (PPOs) granted by the courts, of which 76.4% were awarded to women as a result of threats and violence from their husbands, according to the Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development. During the expansion of COVID-19, when the government began issuing MCOs (movement control orders), this situation worsened, resulting in a 22% rise in domestic violence, based on police data. The government pledged in its Budget 2021 to address this issue by providing MYR21 million to neighbourhood social assistance organisations to help end domestic violence.

Communication Issues

Lack of comprehension and communication issues are among the causes of divorce. Communication issues include using foul language against a spouse, failing to comprehend the spouse, communicating in a different language and other issues. For a relationship to be successful and joyful, communication is essential.

A married couple can demonstrate trust, respect and deference for what the other spouse thinks and believes by having open and honest communication. Additionally, effective communication can help a marriage survive challenges, but poor communication can turn a minor disagreement or argument into grounds for divorce.

Additionally, a lack of communication will make the couple's conflicts and related behaviours worse. Each side may start acting in ways that are meant to irritate and lay blame on the other. Ultimately, this leads to ongoing arguments that cannot be solved without good

communication skills and, in turn, unfortunately leads to many problems, particularly divorce.

Financial Problems

Financial hardship could also impact the stability of a marriage causing discords between the spouses.

Both the husband and wife have their respective responsibility to fulfil at home. As the head of the household, in Islam, a husband is required to totally support the family, while it is the wife's role to care for the home. A husband who failed to support his family will inevitably generate strife. Then, assuming that the couples could not cohabitate anymore due to incessant quarrels, they will eventually decide to end their marriage.

Therefore, married couples should prioritise their demands and jointly put each other's needs first and their egos aside. Every issue that arises in the home should be addressed by the family members first since there is always a solution.

Additionally, the economy must be able to meet family needs, just as compassion must be possessed by every member of the family. The wife's responsibility is to take care of all domestic necessities, while the husband must work to support the family. Regardless of how much money the husband makes, the woman must accept it and express gratitude in order to avoid arguments over money that could end in divorce. As Allah (SWT) says, "No soul shall be burdened with a weight that it cannot bear" (2: 233).

Third-party Interventions

Based on the law, a third party means anyone, whether a male or a female, consisting of a family member of a husband or wife, a loving couple or the surrounding community, who is the cause of disharmony in a person's marriage (Syari'ah Criminal Enactment State of Selangor, 1995). Family interference, mainly from the husband, contributes to divorce cases. According to Mohamad et al. (2021), the intervention of a third party includes the in-laws who attempt to split the couple's

household. Most husbands who are faced with this issue do not show any effort to improve the situation, eventually leading to divorce.

Third parties involving loving couples also contribute to divorce cases among Muslim couples. The husbands usually apply for divorce because they wish to marry another, but do not want to go through the legal polygamy process. There are cases of divorce applications being filed because wives cannot accept the practice of polygamy. This is also the case among wives who usually seek divorce because they want to marry a more affluent man.

The involvement of third parties that endanger the harmony of a marriage is recognised as a criminal violation and is taken seriously by both Sharia and Civil law. Act 559 of the Syariah Criminal Offences (Federal Territories) Act 1997, Part V - Miscellaneous Offences contains at least three provisions relating to a third person in a marriage. These provisions are intended to maintain the peace of the *ummah* (community) and prevent the dissolution of a household institution. However, the general public is still ignorant that such provisions exist.

The Consequences of *Talāq* for the Family

Consequences for the Parents

Men and women may experience divorce with varied effects on their wellbeing, such as changes in one's way of life, changes in the economy and identity issues, among others.

Life changes. Custodial parents who get divorced endure major life changes as a result, such as change in living situations, economic disadvantage, loneliness due to loss of social connections, and parental role strain caused by increased workload having to look after children while working outside the home.

Numerous studies have compared the health of married persons and those who are going through a divorce. Studies from the United States have shown that divorced persons generally indicate less happiness, more depressive symptoms, more social isolation, more traumatic life experiences and more health difficulties than married people (Amato, 2012; Chlen & Mustaffa, 2008).

Divorce usually leads to some stressful life events. These stressors include a drop in living standards, which typically happens as a result of separating one household into two and losing economies of scale. People who were once married frequently move, which is a time-consuming and difficult event. Given that a second parent is no longer present in the home to share daily childrearing duties, parents who retain primary custody of their children (often mothers) frequently feel the pressure of solo parenting. In a similar vein, non-resident parents (often fathers) frequently experience sadness about the lack of regular contact with their children. Newly divorced individuals frequently discover that they move apart from former friends since married couples tend to associate with other married couples. Finally, disagreements about residency and access to the child can still arise between the former married parents. All of these stressful parts of getting a divorce could hurt people's physical and mental health.

The advantages of marriage are also lost after a divorce. Many people find comfort, friendship, a stable sexual partner and financial stability in marriage. Additionally, spouses frequently support one another in leading better lifestyles and reducing potentially harmful behaviours, such as excessive drinking or smoking. In other words, divorce results in both the loss of a positive component and the addition of a negative factor (greater stress).

Economic changes. One of the effects of divorce on a parent is economic change. Before their separation, spouses would typically work together to meet their daily needs. However, divorce occurs after issues arise between them and could not be resolved. Of course, this has an impact on how they describe their finances. Both spouses' capacity to work and succeed is lessened as a result of the divorce since they are unable to maintain their composure and serenity once it occurs. The result is that they have trouble concentrating at work. Reduced performance, loss of ideas and a lack of innovation are all effects of a lack of attention.

Additionally, financial difficulty and becoming an overly involved parent are two of the strongest effects of divorce. In reality, one issue that arises while facing a financial crisis is how to finance two separate families with the income and assets that previously supported just one. Additionally, many parents over-involve themselves in their children's

activities throughout the divorce filing phase. Due to this, the majority of overly involved parents are not narcissists but rather battling their issues, frequently alone (Chlen & Mustaffa, 2008).

Identity problems. It is true for women that separation is linked to an identity problem. One study's findings showed that after divorce, women frequently experience a lack of identity and a sense of rootlessness (Damota, 2019). This is particularly true for women whose identities were once intertwined with those of their husbands. Before getting divorced, many women define themselves in terms of their partners or children. In order to build their social network of contacts, wives may also rely on their husbands. After divorce, women who previously relied on their husbands for self-definition struggle with identity. In our contemporary life, they probably need to create their own social network and reinvent who they are. Women who work outside the home report fewer identity issues following a divorce. However, in Islam, a divorced woman's parents or relatives are responsible for her identity. This is because Allah SWT states: "An heir shall be chargeable in the same way" (2:233).

According to al-Imām bin Kathīr, when interpreting the verse,

The heir who is parents or relatives shall be responsible for a divorced woman's identity in the same way as her previous husband, and this is the opinion of the majority of the companions and scholars; thus, the Hanafi and Hanbali school of thought used the verse to prove the obligation of alimony for divorced woman given from her relatives. (Ibn Kathīr, I/1414AH, p. 351)

Consequences on the Children

Divorce may have an impact on a child's future relationships, education, social development and psychological health. Additionally, the effects of divorce on children continue for a long time and persist into adulthood. Adults with divorced parents have lower levels of education, higher rates of depression, poorer incomes, worse physical health and a higher likelihood of divorcing in the future.

Effects on children's psychology. Children who endure divorce are more likely to encounter and develop psychological issues. A study supports the claim that children from divorced families display a higher level of depression and anxiety. Moreover, the authors of the study also found that children who experience parental divorce tend to have more emotional, social, behavioural and learning problems than those from intact homes. Children with divorced parents also tend to display greater levels of anxiety, depression, anger and antisocial behaviour than those whose families remain intact. Children seem to lose a part of themselves when their parents' divorce and one moves out. It is common for children to experience emotions such as anger, sadness, confusion and, in some cases, even guilt. Divorce trauma includes emotions such as hate, despair, betrayal, loss and occasionally rejection and abandonment. Regardless of how long their parents have divorced, these emotions are still there for many teenagers (Aishatul et al., 2019).

Effects on children's social development. Compared to parents who have been happily married their entire lives and have set a positive example for their children, youngsters from divorced households typically lack social skills (Aishatul et al., 2019). Children of divorced parents who lack such a role model frequently struggle with closeness and loyalty.

Divorce has effects that last well through adolescence and into adulthood for the children involved. As a result, the next generation inherits the couple's bad behaviours, beliefs, interpersonal skills and values, continuing the pattern or cycle for the following generations and so on. Most children start using physical violence when they are young, though they will eventually learn to use alternatives in the following years before primary school age (Aishatul et al., 2019). Humans appear to develop the ability to control their use of physical aggression throughout their preschool years. Those who do not appear to be more likely to engage in significant violent behaviours as adolescents and adults.

Effects on children's education. Children going through their parents' divorce process may be distressed emotionally. This can have a range of impacts, including changes in mood, sleep patterns, hunger, focus and academic performance (Aishatul et al., 2019). Children at school are also more likely to face social and academic risks. According

to the authors of a study, such children frequently exhibit symptoms of depression, withdrawal, grief, fear, fantasies of responsibility for the split and a potential reconciliation, anger, shame, lower academic performance, a sense of loss or rejection and disagreements about which parent to show devotion to (Aishatul et al., 2019).

It is claimed that the reason why children of divorced parents have poor academic performance is because parents and teachers frequently underestimate or fail to notice any issues that they may be having in school. Furthermore, this indicates that their academic challenges may be more of a factor in their behaviour than their intelligence. Other effects on children of divorced parents include separation anxiety, regression in behaviour, somatic complaints and so on.

Effects on children's future relationships. Children of divorced parents also have concerns, anxieties and problems with commitment and love that will limit their ability to form romantic connections in the future. Less marital commitment and more pro-divorce attitudes were expressed by those whose parents had divorced, suggesting that attitudes towards marriage and divorce are ideas that are partially formed even before young adults begin dating (Aishatul et al., 2019). If a woman chooses a man to try and fill in the desires, needs and wants that were not met by her father throughout her childhood or adolescence as a result of a divorce, this could transfer into her choosing the wrong suitor to help her start and raise a family. However, for men, this could result in their ignorance of the role or need for a father figure in raising children. Ultimately, a man is likely to start and later abandon his family, as he has witnessed his parents do to his own family, not realising the ramifications of the aforementioned actions, and eventually passing on such flawed and harmful behaviours to a new generation.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Divorce can be defined as the dissolution of a marriage contract with the one who has the authority, here being the husband, the wife is not the subject of marriage until after it has taken place, and it may dissolve through the word "divorce," which shows its explicit or implicit meaning. Various factors are found to be sources contributing to marital problems between a husband and wife. This study has found

that negligence of responsibility, infidelity, domestic violence, lack of understanding between spouses, financial problems and third-party interventions are among the major factors contributing to the problem of divorce among Muslim couples in Malaysia.

The results of this study show that the tendency to divorce is at a worrying level. It is expected that divorce rates will continue to increase if comprehensive and systematic measures are not taken. Therefore, this study emphasises that both men and women should indeed play their roles in order to reduce the high rates of divorce by being aware of the main causes of divorce. Perhaps every divorce happens due to a lack of understanding of the true concept and purposes of marriage and divorce in light of the objectives of Sharia.

Thus, both parties should understand the concept and purposes of marriage so the problem of divorce can be reduced and avoided. Muslim couples must also avoid the causes of divorce and work together to achieve affection and comfort in married life. Last but not least, this study recommends enhancing the role of the government in reducing the rate of divorce. Among the measures that the government may implement is to mitigate areas of work as one of the causes of marriage dissolution as well as financial difficulty.

Without individual awareness, social awareness cannot be attained and institutional reform cannot be carried out. Since lowering the divorce rate is challenging without first starting the process, everyone should first be aware of the difficulties associated with marriage and institutional growth.

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