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Perfectionistic Concerns, Other-Oriented Perfectionism and Marital Satisfaction among Working Women in Jakarta

Kecenderungan Sempurna, Menuntut Kesempurnaan, dan Kepuasan Pernikahan pada Wanita Bekerja di Jakarta

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, divorce is increasing in the community every year. In recent years, the wife often litigates for divorce due to marital dissatisfaction. Several aspects influence marital satisfaction one of them is the perfectionism trait beget in every individual, albeit at different levels. Perfectionism trait causes individuals to set high demands on others (other-oriented perfectionism) and themselves (perfectionistic concerns). Diverse cultural and working backgrounds uphold the demand in marriage. Thus, this research examines the correlations of perfectionistic concerns and other-oriented perfectionism with marital satisfaction in early adult working women in Jakarta. This research applied a quantitative approach and obtained the data by distributing questionnaires, adopted from ENRICH Marital Satisfaction (EMS) and Dyadic Perfectionism Scale (DPS) to 73 respondents working in the media and banking. Data were analyzed by using Spearman’s correlation. Both perfectionistic concerns and other-oriented perfectionism are associated with lower marital satisfaction. It implies that perfectionistic concerns drive the wife to be perfect in marriage, thus, burdening her psychologically. Furthermore, the wife also puts high demands on her husband to be perfect and thinks that she deserves that. The marriage is at a stalemate due to a lack of healthy communication in achieving greater marital satisfaction.

Keywords: perfectionistic concerns, other-oriented perfectionism, marital satisfaction
INTRODUCTION

In the past four years (2015-2018), divorce rates in Indonesia have increased. In 2018, 408,202 divorces occurred, an increase of 9% over the previous year. There are several factors causing divorce; two of them are disputes and quarrels with 183,085 cases and economy with 110,909 cases by means the husbands cannot provide financial support for the family and the dismissal of the husbands. The rest are run away (17.55%), domestic violence (2.15%), and drunk (0.85%) (Jayani, 2020).

In addition, the report shows that divorce cases have increased by 81%. According to the Religious Courts of the Supreme Court (Ditjen Badilag MA), there are several factors causing divorce, including jealousy, economic problems, disharmonic problems in the household, and political problems. Dr. Sudibyo Almoeso MA, the Deputy of Family Welfare and Family Empowerment of BKKBN, added to those factors that there were underage marriages, pregnancies outside marriage (Andarsari, 2014), unfulfilled economic factors, and immature socioeconomic mentality in Indonesia (Sasongko, 2015).

Since the 1990s, the husband predominantly sued his wife for divorce in court. However, in recent years, the wife did so due to the wife’s increased career. As a result, the wife gets as much or higher income and promotion than the got to support herself. In this case, equality ignites the superior complex within the wife to not necessitate husband’s assistance and nurturance —also, the lack of religious understanding leads to low marital satisfaction (Takariawan, 2015).

In career women who become wives, their level of marital satisfaction (56%) tends to be lower compared to husbands (60%) (Pujiastuti & Retnowati, 2004). Thus, there are gender issues related to working wives coupled with exorbitant demands from the family to care for children and do household chores, which affect marital satisfaction (Xie et al., 2017; Xie et al., 2018).

There are differences in demands and expectations between women who work and homemakers. Women who work in the formal sector, such as banking and media sectors, endure pressure from the companies to be productive and proactive to surpass the day-to-day targets, but they earn many salaries. Therefore, the triumphant feeling emanates from their successful career, causing the demand for the husband to accomplish more—so to be their rivals. It turns out that the husband also expects the wife’s involvement in their family. The husband thinks that his wife is too employed at work. It generates the wife to perceive herself as an incapable woman and mother.

In regard, the workplace culture in the media and banking is quite competitive. The wife compares the conflict-free home lives of her female coworkers. The wife feels jealous and demands her husband to understand her condition. It contrasts with women who work in the informal sector and homemakers that are less querulous and competitive.

The existence of environmental demands makes both traits active. Perfectionistic concerns make individuals blame themselves, and other-oriented perfectionism makes individuals demand other individuals on unrealistic expectations. Perfectionistic concerns and other-oriented perfectionism make couples demand each other and go their way so that it refers to unhealthy marital relationship communication, which then results in non-adaptive problem solving, which ultimately leads to marital dissatisfaction.

Perfectionism

Perfectionism is a desire to achieve high-performance standards, combined with a very critical and in-depth self-evaluation (Forst, 1990, as cited in Corrie & Palmer, 2014). There are three dimensions of perfectionism; perfectionistic strivings, other-oriented perfectionism, and perfectionistic concerns (Habke & Flynn, 2002, Dunkley et al., 2003, as cited in Mackinnon et al., 2012). First, perfectionistic striving means setting
unrealistically high personal standards and rigidly demanding perfectionism of oneself. It causes the individual/himself to be unable to accept mistakes or failures. Also, it contains the desire to constantly strive not to be wrong or fail and be perfect in the eyes of others.

Second, other-oriented perfectionism means rigidly demanding perfection from others in a demanding and entitled way. In addition, other-oriented perfectionism makes individuals feel they have the right to get that perfection. Third, perfectionistic concerns mean the tendency of individuals to feel worried, anxious and afraid that the people around them demand and expect them to always succeed in achieving achievements with unrealistic standards. The demands that come from other people are related to the perfectionist individual’s perception that it must be met to get acceptance and appreciation from his environment.

Only perfectionistic concerns and other-oriented perfectionism are associated with relationship problems, and depressive symptoms, especially perfectionistic concerns, significantly predict this (Habke & Flynn, 2002). Experiencing love and respect from others is contingent on being perfect and, to a lesser extent, demanding perfection from others in an entitled way (i.e., other-oriented perfectionism), which leads to relationship problems and depressive symptoms (Shahar et al., 2004).

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It concludes that perfectionism trait within a couple can cause relationship problem for both parties. A higher level of perfectionism renders the essence of love, which is embracing weaknesses and reaching personal development. Whereas, in this condition, a couple perceive love as demanding and dyadic conflict, a series of hostile, critical, rejecting, and inconsiderate interactions between a romantic partner (Mackinnon et al., 2012).

Marital Satisfaction

Marital satisfaction is defined as the feeling of happiness that arises from a person towards his/her partner and their relationship (Miller & Tedder, 2011). However, marital satisfaction is not always experienced by the couple. In fact, it can last for the first 5 years of marriage and then decreases until the children reach adolescence and go to adulthood (Ardhianita & Andayani, 2005). Marital satisfaction can be achieved and assessed as a successful marriage if there are no hindrances in meeting the needs of family members (Ardhianita & Andayani, 2005)

In this study, several aspects of marital satisfaction were reviewed and measured by using the ENRICH Marital Scale (Fowers & Olson, 1993).

First, communication means the level of comfort felt by the partner in sharing and receiving emotional and cognitive information. Second, conflict resolution means the strategies used to end arguments. Third, financial management means attitudes and concerns about managing the economic issues within the relationship. Fourth, leisure activities mean social versus personal activities as a couple. Fifth, a sexual relationship means the partner’s feelings about the affectional and sexual relationship, such as sexual issues, sexual behavior, birth control, and sexual fidelity. Sixth, children and parenting mean attitudes and feelings about having and raising children. Seventh, family and friends mean comfort in spending time with relatives, in-laws, and friends. Eighth, equalitarian roles mean individuals’ feelings and attitudes about various marital and family roles. Ninth, religious orientation means religious beliefs and practice within the marriage.
Marital Satisfaction and Perfectionism Trait

In accordance with VAS theory, it shows that one’s personality will influence the attitude/behavior in the relationships with his/her partner (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). The differences in personality and trait affect their marital satisfaction. Studies show that perfectionism significantly correlates with marital satisfaction (Mackinnon et al., 2012). The couples who have higher level of perfectionism indicates less marital satisfaction and the couples who have normal perfectionism shows higher marital satisfaction (Totonchi & Hassan, 2018).

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There are 3 dimensions of perfectionism, including perfectionistic strivings, other-oriented perfectionism, and perfectionistic concerns. Regarding relationships with others, only other-oriented perfectionism and perfectionistic concerns are oriented towards problems in romantic relationships with a partner (Habke & Flynn, 2002, as cited in Mackinnon et al., 2012).

According to Shahar, et al (2004, in Mackinnon et al., 2012), perfectionistic concerns make one continues to try and display his/her perfect side to others with the aim that he/she can be loved and valued by others. Meanwhile, other-oriented perfectionism requires perfection from others that affect someone to always try to achieve perfection. Perfectionistic concerns can be seen by the tendency to feel worried, anxious, and afraid of failure in career and failure as wife to her husband and mother to her children. In addition, there are several conditions where the wife feels unloved, unnoticed, and often fusses over trivial things, which can be classified into other-oriented perfectionism.

Mackinnon et al. (2012) also stated that one who has a high perfectionism concerns score will experience a negative social experience because he/she will always be faced with problems or conflicts. Because he/she always causes conflict, he/she will have difficulty establishing and maintaining intimacy with their partners, which is an important aspect of marital satisfaction (Mackinnon et al., 2012).

Based on those reasons, the researcher wanted to see the correlations between two dimensions of perfectionism, namely other-oriented perfectionism and perfectionistic concerns, with marital satisfaction in working women in formal sectors.

METHOD

Study Design

The research used a quantitative approach. Quantitative research used data in the form of numbers or numbers that can be processed and analyzed by statistical methods. The research design was correlational. Correlational research can be interpreted as a systematic investigation process to determine the relationship between two or more variables (Sarwono, 2006).

Participants

The sampling technique used was non-probability sampling, a sampling technique where each individual in the population does not have the same opportunity to be selected as the research sample. This study uses convenience sampling. This sampling technique was a technique with the selection of respondents/research subjects based on convenience. The sample was selected based on their availability and desire to become respondents in this study (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2013).

There were 73 respondents that matched requirements criteria. It was as follows: (1) women age within the range of 20-40 years, (2) had been married for 1-5 years, (3) at least have two children maximum (4) working in the media and banking work sectors. The sampling technique used was convenience sampling.

The average age of respondents was 28.04 years old. The most common age ranged from 24 to 27 which amounted to 38 respondents (52%), 21 respondents (29%) had
ages ranging from 28-31 years and there were 14 respondents (19%) had ages ranging from 32 - 35 years. Their occupations were in the media and banking sectors. The respondents who worked in the media sector were 10 people (13.7%) and who worked in the banking sector were 63 people (86.3%).

Measurements

**Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale.** In this study, a measuring instrument adapted from the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction (EMS) Scale developed by Fowers and Olson (1993) to measure marital satisfaction based on ten aspects/areas. The ENRICH Marital Satisfaction (EMS) Scale has 15 statement consists of 10 items to see marital satisfaction and five items to measure Idealistic Distortion. The ENRICH Marital Satisfaction (EMS) Scale has a reliability coefficient of 0.86. Based on the pilot results on 34 respondents, the reliability coefficient decreased to 0.794, but each item in this measuring instrument considered reliable. The validity coefficient is as follows <0.27 considered very low, 0.27-0.54 considered low, 0.54-0.81 considered moderate, 0.81-0.108 high, and >0.108 is very high.

In the second part, measuring the other-oriented perfectionism scale, there are 6 items that aim to measure other-oriented perfectionism. Each statement is presented with a 7-point Likert scale as an answer that can be chosen, ranging from strongly disagrees to strongly agree, where number 1 indicates strongly disagree and number 7 indicates strongly agree. This adapted measuring instrument had $\alpha = 0.687$.

**Dyadic Perfectionism Scale.** The Dyadic Perfectionism Scale (DPS) developed by Mackinnon et al. (2012) was used in this research to measure two dimensions of perfectionism; perfectionistic concerns and other-oriented perfectionism. In adapting this instrument, the researcher adjusted to the research respondents, women, so the word partner/spouse was replaced by the word husband. This scale consists of two parts. The first part aims to measure the perfectionistic concerns which consists of 15 items. Each item is measured by a 9-point Likert scale with a response of strongly disagree to strongly agree, where number 1 indicates strongly disagree and number 9 indicates strongly agree. This adapted measuring instrument had $\alpha = 0.931$. The validity coefficient is as follows <0.27 considered very low, 0.27-0.54 considered low, 0.54-0.81 considered moderate, 0.81-0.108 high, and >0.108 is very high.

Data Analysis

The data obtained through the questionnaire were statistically processed using the Spearman technique, non-parametric. This technique aims to find a relationship or test the significance of the hypothesis where every existing data is an ordinal scale. The processing of the collected data was carried out with the help of IBM Statistics SPSS for Mac Version 25.

RESULT

In this research, the Spearman correlation was used to determine the correlations between perfectionistic concerns, other-oriented perfectionism, and marital satisfaction. A Spearman correlation test is a statistical test used to examine the correlations between two or more variables, and it does not require normally distributed data (Elliott & Woodward, 2007). The interpretation of correlation values is categorized into several levels or classes. Correlation value with low level ranges from 0 - 0.2, moderate level ranges between 0.3 - 0.6, high level ranges between 0.7 - 1.0 (Brace et al., 2012).
On the table 1, the research results show that there were 27 respondents (37%, ≤ M=49.91), who had a low level of marital satisfaction and there were 46 respondents (63%, ≥ M=49.91) who had a high level of marital satisfaction.

For the level of perfectionistic concerns, there were 38 respondents (52%, ≤ M=73.27), included in the low category and 55 respondents (38%, ≤ M=73.27), included in the high category. In addition, there were 36 respondents (49%, ≤ M=27.30) with a low level of other-oriented perfectionism and 37 respondents (51%, ≤ M=27.30) with high a level of other-oriented perfectionism.

Furthermore, 7 (10%) respondents with different religions and 66 (90%) have a relationship of the same faith. Based on the chi-square results $\chi^2 = 0.279$, $p > 0.05$, it indicates that marital satisfaction is not related to faith status or in terms of religion. The implication is that, even though they are of the same faith or not, the couple who are the respondents still achieve satisfaction in marriage. Results indicate that one’s relationship with God is essential to marital quality indirectly as it appears to manifest itself in religious communication between partners, directly associates with marital quality. Also, one’s forgiveness and forgiveness of the spouse are both positively linked to marital quality, whereas one’s tendency not to forgive and one’s spouse’s tendency not to forgive are both detrimental to marital quality. Also, joint religious communication is more strongly associated with marital satisfaction among mixed-faith couples than same-faith couples (David & Stafford, 2015).

Similar to ethnicity, there were 49 (67%) participants who married husbands from the same ethnic group and 24 (33%) participants who married husbands from different ethnic backgrounds. The results of the chi-square calculation are $\chi^2 = 0.249$, $p > 0.005$, which indicates that ethnic differences or similarities in marriage do not affect marital satisfaction. The difference in salary between husband and wife also do not affect marital satisfaction ($\chi^2 = 0.296$, $p > 0.05$), although there were 6 (8%) participants whose salary exceeded their husband’s, while 26 participants (36%) received the same amount. It also applies to the educational background of both parties, which does not affect marital satisfaction ($\chi^2 = 0.250$, $p > 0.05$).

There is a negative correlation ($r = -0.553$, $p < 0.01$) between perfectionistic concern and marital satisfaction based on data collection results. That indicates that the greater the perfectionistic concern, the more the couple does not feel satisfied with marriage. The implication is that perfectionistic concerns make the wife increasingly burdened to meet her partner’s expectations which may be excessive or unrealistic. This burden makes the wife feel sad, hopeless, and depressed.

The data findings reinforce the previous statement that there is a negative correlation
between other-oriented perfectionism and marital satisfaction, which shows a correlation of -0.179 ($p > 0.05$). That indicates that the higher the partner’s expectations, the lower the level of happiness in marriage. The implication is that demanding husbands will always feel dissatisfied and find fault with their wives. That makes the wife feel even more guilty or even sue her husband.

According to the calculation results, age has a negative correlation with marital satisfaction, which is -0.062 ($p > 0.05$). It betokens that the increasing age, the lower the level of marital satisfaction. The more mature the individual, the higher the level of perfectionistic concerns ($r=0.079, p > 0.05$) and other-oriented perfectionism ($r=0.148, p > 0.05$). The implication is that individuals feel that the higher their age, the higher the demands for themselves and their families.

In addition, the age of marriage has a negative correlation with marital satisfaction, which is -0.81. It indicates that the longer the age of marriage, the lower the satisfaction with marriage. Two things that cause increased marital satisfaction are the increase in salary ($r=0.222, p > 0.05$) and length of work ($r=0.159, p > 0.05$). It means that the longer the wife works, the more satisfied the wife will be in her marriage because there is still a source of income, let alone income or salary, that may continue to increase.

Men, who are married to younger wives, tend to experience satisfaction in their marriage compared to older wives. Likewise, it applies to women with younger husbands who are more satisfied than older husbands. However, marital satisfaction declines with marital duration for men and women indifferently aged couples relative to similarly aged couples. Thus, a possible mechanism is that differently aged couples are less resilient to adverse shocks than similarly aged couples (Lopez et al., 2006).

Demands for the family can also come from children in the family. The number of children correlates negatively with marital satisfaction, which is -0.119 ($p> 0.05$). In other words, the more the number of children, the lower the level of satisfaction. However, in this case, the correlation and significance of the variable number of children are still relatively low because the average participant has two children. The number of children does not affect marital satisfaction if there is cooperation and equality between husband and wife to spend time with each other for children (Karayağiz et al., 2019).

**DISCUSSION**

If further examination is conducted, the correlation result between perfectionistic concerns and marital satisfaction shows a significant correlation at a moderate level and a negative correlation. This is in accordance with the definition of perfectionistic concerns, which is the tendency of an individual to feel worried, afraid, and anxious about not being judged perfectly or relevant with the expectation of others (Mackinnon et al., 2012). This can be seen in the perfectionistic concerns, namely socially-prescribed, self-criticism, and concern over mistakes. The implication is that someone with a high perfectionistic concerns score tends to compare him/her-self with the expectations/standards of others (social), do too much self-criticism, and really pay attention to the existence of mistakes. Although the correlation result is low, the impact of this trait can affect the relationship between wife and husband in their marriage.

In line with the opinion of Mackinnon et al. (2012), the high score of perfectionistic concerns in individual who is in a romantic relationship, whether dating or marriage makes it difficult for said individual to have an intimate relationship, with one of the factors that satisfy a marriage is intimacy (Robinson & Blanton, 1993). The difficulty to establish an intimate relationship is because the individual has a tendency to worry if he/she is not seen as perfect and accepted by the partner, causing internal conflict which may lead to depression (Stoeber & Otto, 2006). Likewise with other-oriented perfectionism where an individual
demands perfection in the partner and often feel distrust of being loved by the partner (Mackinnon et al., 2012).

The research results by Mackinnon et al. (2012) and Stoebert (2012) also stated that perfectionistic concerns and other-oriented perfectionism indeed negatively impact romantic relationships. That is, if an individual has a high level of perfectionistic concerns and other-oriented perfectionism, it can cause a sense of depression and trigger conflict occurring in marriage (Stoeber & Otto, 2006). The implication is that individuals involved in the relationship will view the relationship as a poor one (Mackinnon et al., 2012).

In addition, Perveen et al. (2018) also revealed that marriage could affect individuals’ mental health and well-being. Furthermore, marital satisfaction one of the strongest predictors of mental health (Kalhor & Olyaie, 2016). The implication is that when an individual experiences anxiety and depression, it will affect the partner and vice versa. Therefore, it is vital to establish good communication to keep a harmonious, happy and intimate marriage relationship. Positive feelings such as happiness, pleasure or fulfilment and experiences shared by partners become a measure of marital satisfaction (Perveen et al., 2017).

When associated with traits of perfectionistic concerns and other-oriented perfectionism, they will significantly correlate with negative direction with depression. It means, the higher the level of perfectionistic concerns and other-oriented perfectionism, the higher the individual’s tendency to experience depression. Thus, the higher the score or depression by an individual is, the lower the satisfaction of the perceived relationship will be. Depression has a significant share in shaping the view or perception of satisfaction in marriage. Therefore, if the wife is depressed, it results in not only a decrease in marital satisfaction but also the husband’s view of marital satisfaction (Perveen et al., 2017).

Meanwhile, it also revealed that perfectionistic concerns and other-oriented perfectionism negatively correlated with commitment (Stoeber, 2012). An individual with a high level of perfectionistic concerns and other-oriented perfectionism can only survive a relationship for around three months. Commitment itself is one of the characteristics of a satisfying marriage. The statement reinforces this by Robinson and Blanton (2003) that commitment is aimed at marriage and the couple. It means the low satisfaction of the relationship caused by perfectionistic concerns and other-oriented perfectionism causes individuals and couples to often experience difficulties (relationship distress), leading to separation or break up or divorce (Lopez et al., 2006).

In addition, this research had an unequal number of respondents between women who work in the banking sector and the media sector; 10 respondents worked in the media sector and 63 respondents who worked in the banking sector. The small number of respondents in each of these sectors makes it difficult to generalize the research results, so it can only be generalized to a limited extent of this research scope.

There are several suggestions for further research, namely measuring other variables, such as marital conflict, dyadic conflict, religious orientation, and self-disclosure, that may be related and can be examined by correlating these variables. There is also an intervening variable that is self-silencing which can reduce marital satisfaction, another variable to be measured by future researchers. In addition, respondent characteristics can be made more specific, such as salaries and job positions, which may indirectly affect individual expectations and demands.

**CONCLUSION**

It can be concluded that there are significant correlations between the two dimensions of perfectionism, perfectionistic concerns, and other-oriented perfectionism, with marital satisfaction in women who work in the media and banking sectors. However, this is
only seen from one factor of personality (trait perfectionism), while there are many other factors that need to be considered in measuring marital satisfaction.

The researcher did not measure the wife’s and the husband’s levels of marital satisfaction, perfectionistic concerns, and other-oriented perfectionism. It will be beneficial to get a complete picture and dyadic conflict and coping with acting out stress management interventions to mitigate these problems.

REFERENCES


