

Religious beliefs, addiction tendency, sexual dysfunction and intention to divorce among Muslim couples



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Described as a gem in Islam, intellect can lead all individual and social behaviours towards balance, appeal and godliness. Given the utmost importance of protecting intellect in this divine religion, everything from eating and drinking to reading, listening and entertainment is thus considered haram [*viz.* remains prohibited] if it makes threats to the health of mind and soul. In general, narcotics and substance abuse in all forms can have crushing and all-encompassing effects, that is, inflict heavy blows on the body, soul, mind, willpower and religion in a person and consequently destroy life in the family and society. The continuation of life as well as the stability and survival of this holy institution accordingly depends on many factors, including addiction tendency (AT) and sexual dysfunction (SD). It is also obvious that the balance and optimal use of sexual instinct on the accepted path of religion will be the key to the family health and strength. Altogether, the role of AT and SD on intention to divorce (ITD) in Indonesian Muslim couples ($n = 450$) was investigated in 2022 in this study, wherein one partner had previously attended addiction treatment centres over the last 6 months. The study results ultimately demonstrated that AT could induce SD and consequently raise ITD among Muslim couples.

Contribution: The study results confirmed the harmful impacts of AT on SD among Muslim couples, which could increase their ITD. In view of this, it was suggested to promote religious teachings in the family to benefit from their positive effects.

Keywords: Islam; religious teachings; religious beliefs; addiction tendency; sexual dysfunction; intention to divorce.

Introduction

With the humans' big steps forward in a wide variety of scientific fields, identity and its associated issues have currently raised much interest among thinkers in social science. In this respect, identity crisis, identity conflict, dual personality and the like are the main problems that have been addressed in the realm of identity debates. In general, the term *identity* represents who an individual is, as well as the sense of self-identification that feeds a number of cultural and historical elements in a person or group (Kalantari, Azizi & Zahid Zahedani 2008).

In this line, religion, as one of the basic components of human civilisation, plays a key role in forming identity and steering behaviours towards specific goals. Being one of the pillars of life, religion also significantly contributes to the development of one's character and the promotion of their quality of life. On the other hand, scientific and technological advances have resulted in the creation of new lifestyles and behaviours in the family and society. Currently, Islamic lifestyles and customs have turned into one of the most important topics in the field of personal and social life. All societies can accordingly display the products of their worldviews and ideologies to others when their social life models are formed according to their beliefs and values. If someone intends to establish new models in the new world order, they must live as they think. In spite of this, people have failed to build a meaningful connection between fundamental beliefs and authentic Islamic values that help to strengthen their religious identity in the society, on the one hand, and their lifestyles in different social areas, on the other hand (Safiri & Ghafouri 2009).

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Today, Muslim lifestyles are being extensively influenced by non-Islamic or anti-Islamic customs. Closing of the eyes to such lifestyles can thus do irreparable damage to the society. When people cannot make a connection between their lifestyles and their beliefs and values, it is possible that they will surrender and consider them ineffective over time. In other words, research on the concept of lifestyle provides evidence that the majority of the existing definitions presented for this purpose are based on Western theoretical indicators as well as lifestyle models in Western societies (Faraji & Kazemi 2009). God emphasises the importance of family in the Holy Quran. For example, it is one of God's signs that He created wives of your own kind so that you may rest with them, together with friendship and kindness. Indeed, in this work are signs and lessons for people who think (Surah Ar-Rum, Verse 21).

Nowadays, the sense of security, harmony and intimate relationships among couples are dying out, and the family is progressively encountering more destructive forces as big threats to the health of the society. The ever-increasing number of referrals to family therapy centres and the rise in divorce rates are also the signs of a serious crisis in the health of family relationships, of which family conflicts and divorce are the main manifestations. With regard to the transition of the society from the traditional to the industrial one and even modernism, family problems along with damage to communications and roles within it are among the big concerns in the field of the mental health of family. Of note, intention to divorce (ITD) has been introduced as the most serious problem in the family and couples apply for divorce caused by psychological, emotional, socioeconomic and physical reasons (Choi et al. 2020).

In addition, the high rate of divorce in today's societies has prompted sociologists and psychologists to explore the factors affecting this phenomenon. Current research has further shown that the initial attitudes towards divorce and the family institution can be effective in the incidence of divorce during marital life. Indeed, individuals having positive attitudes towards this phenomenon are more likely to get divorced. Therefore, attitudes towards divorce can be addressed as an independent issue, and the factors making them permissive or strict can be analysed. It is noteworthy that divorce is an important social harm in different societies, followed by many psychological pressures imposed on couples after their separation. There are also various challenges arising from the divorce process, depending on the sociocultural, family and even gender conditions. Unquestionably, couples asking for divorce are drawn against a range of sociocultural restrictions and sufferings and even live through much psychological pressure (Amato 2010).

In this domain, ITD refers to a phenomenon that disturbs the psychological and social cohesion of the family, provokes severe interpersonal conflicts between couples and ultimately accelerates the divorce process. Those seeking divorce accordingly have many concerns in terms of facing psychological and social problems and being challenged by

stress. Intention to divorce can thus have three dimensions: cognitive, emotional and behavioural. In this respect, the cognitive dimension includes the person's ideas just about divorce, and the emotional one contains the positive and negative feelings and emotions in a person towards this phenomenon. As well, the behavioural dimension represents the level of behavioural readiness in a person for divorce. Intention to divorce is the upshot of ultimate internal pressure on one partner during marital life, probably because of unmet sexual, cognitive and family needs or failure to express one's feelings and emotions in a marital relationship (Amato & Hohmann-Marriott 2007).

Considered by psychologists and experts as a syndrome and even deviation from the social norm, addiction tendency (AT) and drug abuse have been among the social problems that have almost always threatened the foundation of the family for a long time. People may thus turn to narcotics because of their personality traits, needs and failures, inability to deal with life problems, as well as no emotional stability and other adversities. Substance abuse can consecutively cause the loss of psychological and emotional cohesion in the family (Luk et al. 2018). The problems arising in this line can also have a wide spectrum, from the socioeconomic ones (e.g. inadequate family credit, inability to afford the cost of living, marital dissatisfaction and divorce) to family problems, corruption and some related crimes (Trujillo, Obando & Trujillo 2016).

Substance abuse is a problem with irreparable effects on the family foundation in the long run. It leads to sexual dysfunction (SD) among individuals over time and consequently gives rise to discontinuity and abnormality in marital life. Long-term addiction also unsettles the process of sexual satisfaction. As reported, the high rates of divorce are mostly associated with failure to establish high-quality marital relationships (Yamamura 2014). In view of this, SD can have detrimental effects on the collapse of the family, including aggressive marital conflicts and large gaps between couples (Binik & Hall 2014).

Accordingly, sexual desire has a constructive role in the health and psychological balance of the family. In addition, the high levels of sexual satisfaction lead to an increase in the quality of marital life and marital stability. Sexual satisfaction is also vital for most couples as a personal issue. In this regard, sexual activity is an integral part of marital life, and SD can bring about many problems among couples, including hatred, jealousy, a sense of rivalry, revenge, humiliation, a lack of self-confidence and the like (Cabanilla & Bamond 2017). It should be noticed that SD reduces the quality of life as it causes physical exhaustion, fatigue, hopelessness and sometimes a meaningless life and an emotional turmoil. Sexual dysfunction in marital relationships can further raise a negative view of one's partner and then a sense of frustration (Baldwin 2001). From this perspective, the research question addressed was as follows: Is there a significant relationship between AT, SD and ITD in the light of religious beliefs (RBs) among Indonesian Muslim couples in 2022?

Religious behaviours and dysfunctional behaviours

Obviously, the spread of narcotics and substance abuse among Muslim nations along with their promotion is a destructive weapon to demolish greatness and power, debase morals and ignite the flame of jihad (namely, meritorious struggle or effort with a praiseworthy aim) and Islamic resistance in the souls of Muslim youth in the Ummah (*viz.* the Islamic community). Addicts have disagreeable traits and stick to ugly habits, such as lying and fear accompanied by indignity and embarrassment, do not respect moral values and spiritual concepts and above all commit crimes, such as theft, prostitution, et cetera, to meet their needs. They are also abandoned and their ability to perceive their surroundings dwindles.

Considering its comprehensive legislation, Islam has advocated some special plans and strategies for the ideological, moral, physical, psychological and spiritual development of individuals to help them achieve the highest levels and then perfection (Jahangiri & Gholamzadeh Natanzi 2018).

The cultural aspect of addiction prevention is also the most effective activity in this field, which calls for more attention and research. In this regard, the key cultural elements in the Islamic society are religion and religious teachings, which are present in all aspects of Muslim life. Consequently, in-depth insight and research make it possible to meet the social, biological and psychological needs of today's humans and consequently find effective solutions for the prevention and treatment of this phenomenon (Faiz Menesh & Julai Menesh 2012).

Religion and its teachings correspondingly provide humans with peace of mind and tranquility, remove psychological pressures, stress, despair, pessimism and inferiority feelings, keep them away from corruption, prostitution and destruction and compensate for the emotional voids in their personality. Religion is also the leading deterrent in AT. In this sense, relying on religion, especially among adolescents and young adults, strengthens the power of control, as one of the main areas of addiction prevention, and protects people from the scourge of this harmful habit. Sometimes uneducated people recommend that the use of narcotics is beneficial for reducing physical and mental pains as well as anxiety and depression and other common mental conditions, while they will be definitely depressant after a while and consequently cause many psychological problems (Mohammadkhani, Yeganeh & Karimpour 2014).

The line of research conducted worldwide shows that the acts of worship, particularly prayers, help a person to avoid immorality and sins. Furthermore, if guilt is considered as the cause of anxiety and insecurity, prayers prevent humans not to commit sins or have a mild sense of guilt, which gives them peace and self-confidence. A believing person accordingly talks about God is One during prayers, acts in agreement with their valued beliefs, do not find contradictions

in themselves and finally achieve integrity. A person blessed with the help of prayers then feels much more successful, increasing their self-confidence. Besides, a person practicing prayers does not submit to humiliation and captivity, and above all abandons low and mortal goals, but chooses higher ones in life (Abdul Jabari et al. 2015).

A depressed person always feels empty and may undergo a sense of guilt, loneliness and helplessness, but someone resorting to faith and prayers in any situation and quality helps them feel connected to the strongest force the world possesses, which reduces their despair. Reflecting on the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah (*viz.* the traditions and practices of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, that constitute a model for Muslims to follow), all intelligent individuals can easily understand that narcotics and substance abuse can have negative effects on the human body and soul, and even bring about negative socioeconomic and cultural outcomes, so one big step in the fight against AT is extensive research on jurisprudence and clarification of its Shariah (i.e. the legal practices derived from the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, pbuh or Sunnah). Substance abuse is thus an example of harming the soul. In the Holy Qur'an, several verses refer to the prohibition of harming oneself; for example, '... spend in the Way of God and do not cast yourselves into destruction with your own hands ...' (Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 195). Although this verse is about giving up alms for jihad, it has a broad meaning that takes account of many things. In all cases, a person should not risk one's life without directions. As stated in another verse, '... verily, the hearing, and the sight, and the heart of each of those ones will be questioned ...' (Surah Al-Isra, Verse 36). This verse further explains the responsibility of the eyes, ears, heart and in general all the body organs for their performance. Even the brain that gives the order to wrongfully harm other members as well as the one that execute the brain's commands in this respect is held accountable. It is also mentioned in another place in the Holy Qur'an that, '... about the blessings that accrue to human in consequence of their own labor and skill, they will have to render an account ...' (Surah At-Takathur, Verse 8). In general, how humans used their physical strength and energy is one thing that God will ask about on the Day of Judgement.

Naturally, the body is one of the God-given blessings, and humans must be in authority for preserving it, so it will be kind of blasphemy if a person harms one's body unnecessarily and without any reasons. In this regard, the health of the body is revealed in traditions as one of the examples of divine blessings. Accordingly, all the verses and traditions imply that the physical existence of humans is one of the God's gifts, so humans must be always diligent in protecting it from harm and danger, with no rights to cause the slightest harm to it, except for God and jihad (Waram bin Abi Faras & Masoud bin Isa 1989). Therefore, substance abuse and anything that reduces the power of intellect, or the actions that often pave the grounds for destruction and disability are prohibited and subjected to sanctions.

Research hypotheses

The research hypotheses put forth in this study were as follows:

H₁: There is a positive relationship between addiction tendency, sexual dysfunction and intention to divorce in Muslim couples.

H₂: There is a negative relationship between religious beliefs and intention to divorce in Muslim couples.

Methodology

The statistical population in this study comprised 450 Muslim couples (namely, 900 individuals) in Jakarta Indonesia in 2022, of which one partner had previously attended addiction treatment centres over the last 6 months. Upon selecting the statistical population, the research tool was distributed. In terms of their marital life, 46%, 35% and 19% of the couples also had below 5, between 5 and 10 and more than 10 years of experience. Furthermore, the research instruments consisted of the following questionnaires:

Addiction Tendency Questionnaire (ATQ): The ATQ, as 16-items questionnaire developed by Mirhesami (2008), was used to assess AT among the Muslim couples in this study, whose reliability was also determined by the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.84.

Index of Sexual Compatibility (ISC): Designed by Apt and Hurlbert (1992), the ISC as 25-items questionnaire was implemented to measure the levels of sexual desire in the Muslim couples recruited here. In the present study, the reliability of this scale was obtained by the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.88.

Divorce Tendency Scale (DTS): This 14-items questionnaire, the DTS, established by Rusbult, Johnson and Morrow (1986), was utilised to reflect on the ITD among the Muslim couples, whose reliability in this study was 0.81, as calculated by the Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI): Introduced by Worthington et al. (2003), the 10-items RCI was employed to demonstrate the Muslim couples' RBs. In the present study, the reliability of this questionnaire was obtained by the Cronbach's alpha coefficient as 0.79.

As a whole, content validity and expert opinions ($n = 10$ professors involved in the fields of Theology, Social science and Psychology) were used to check the validity of the aforementioned questionnaires.

Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

Results

Following the completion of the data analysis, the mean value of each research variable was initially obtained.

TABLE 1: Mean and standard deviation of religious beliefs, addiction tendency, sexual dysfunction and intention to divorce.

Variables	Mean	Standard deviation	Participants
Religious beliefs	3.002	0.984562	900
Addiction tendency	4.231	0.547896	900
Sexual dysfunction	4.018	0.584632	900
Intention to divorce	3.972	0.745636	900

TABLE 2: Correlation coefficient between the research variables.

Predictor variables	ITD	Significance level
	Correlation coefficient	
Religious beliefs	-0.52	0.001
Addiction tendency	0.66	0.001
Sexual dysfunction	0.54	0.001

ITD, intention to divorce.

TABLE 3: A summary of the model for predicting intention to divorce based on addiction tendency and sexual dysfunction.

Model	R	R ²	Standard error
Intention to divorce prediction	0.60	0.36	24.05

TABLE 4: A summary of the intention to divorce prediction model in the light of religious beliefs.

Model	R	R ²	Standard error
Intention to divorce prediction	-0.52	0.27	29.74

As depicted in Table 1, the mean value of RBs among the Muslim couples was in the moderate range. As a five-point Likert-type scale was used in the questionnaires, the values higher than 3 were interpreted as high, and those below 3 were elucidated as low. As the mean value of RBs was 3.002, this variable was construed as moderate. However, the values of AT, SD and ITD were described as high.

According to Table 2, the correlation coefficient of AT and ITD in the Muslim couples applying for divorce was $r = 0.66$, which was significant at the 0.001 level. As well, the correlation coefficient of SD and ITD was $r = 0.54$, which was assumed significant at the 0.001 level. In other words, there was a positive correlation between AT and SD and ITD.

Examining the first research hypothesis (H₁)

As shown in Table 3, the linear regression analysis results revealed a significant relationship between the independent variables of AT and SD and the dependent variable of ITD, so 36% of the variance in ITD could be explained by the variables of AT and SD.

Examining the second research hypothesis (H₂)

According to Table 4, the linear regression analysis results showed a significant relationship between the independent variable of RBs and the dependent variable of ITD, so 27% of the variance in ITD could be explained by the variable of RBs.

Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between AT, SD and ITD, with an emphasis on RBs in Indonesian Muslim couples in 2022. In view of this, the study results demonstrated that the Muslim couples had a moderate range of RBs. The statistical analyses also showed a significant positive relationship between AT and SD and ITD, so it was established that AT and SD could positively predict ITD in these individuals. It is thus argued that AT and substance abuse raise ineffective and negative beliefs about family relationships in people and then lead to emotional instability in marital life because of the deterioration of mental and physical conditions and a complete lack of emotional stability. Moreover, addiction makes the sufferers lay much focus on their desires, ignore their partner's feelings and emotional responses just to meet their own needs and undergo disorders because of their involvement and psychological struggle in expressing love and continuing marital relationships, thereby ITD increases with the fall in marital satisfaction and the rise in family conflicts. Furthermore, mental and physical problems caused by addiction produce a lack of positive response, empathy and intimacy in marital life, so couples are always in negative emotional states, raising their ITD. On the other hand, SD can greatly disturb marital relationships. From a cognitive perspective, sexual desire is among the factors shaping marital intimacy. Accordingly, SD in marital life is related with the lack of love, because empathetic relationships, the sense of attachment and belonging and solidarity with one's partner are disrupted. As well, sexual desire strengthens the intimacy of the marital relationships and makes couples respond to the positive emotions of the other partner. Sexual dysfunction also challenges the continuation of the marital relationships, thereby interrupting the feeling of connectedness in marital life and bolstering ITD. As a result, addiction as a social harm, along with SD, plays a decisive role in unsettling marital relationships, discouraging marital life and increasing ITD. In fact, AT and SD are among the predictors of higher ITD in couples who are not in a high range in terms of RBs.

In addition to the development of educational programmes that describe the harmful effects of addiction and substance abuse, boosting individuals' skills to say no to narcotics and respond negatively to friendly invitations, and the like should be incorporated into the process of proper education. In addition, personal and social education can significantly contribute to creating natural and balanced sexual conditions and staying away from addiction. In this respect, RBs can be effective as a deterrent from ugliness and sin. In fact, such beliefs are the focal points of education for anti-addiction purposes.

Examining the history of human creation also shows the fact that humans have been connected to a spiritual centre in their subconscious mind and God-seeking nature. Divine prophets have been thus missioned to build a sublime life, guarantee happiness in this world and the Hereafter and save themselves from impurities, so that they are uncorrupted in life and even away from any kind of misfortune. Worshipping God in various forms throughout

history has been accordingly popular among ethnic groups and nations, including prayers by Muslims. Having faith in God is thus realised in the shadow of servitude and submission as well as the implementation of religious rituals and divine life-giving orders and laws. Being bound to religious teachings can be thus manifested in people's thoughts, lifestyles and actions.

Notably, Islam is one of the divine religions that deems the unity and integrity of personality. God is also the only Creator, whose creation is based on a unified system, wherein each element with an internal unity is of importance. The best values are human life and personality, and both assume the highest responsibilities for the members of the Islamic Ummah. Therefore, all those who step on the path of health can get rid of their past mistakes and deviations because of their positive activities and efforts in the right way of living. In this vein, God says that, '... indeed the good deeds drive away the evil deeds ...' (Surah Hud, Verse 114). Therefore, a person who recovers one's health by Islamic instructions continues to live like other members in the society and lives with respect and dignity, in a way that no Muslim dares to look down on them at the minimum, because they have returned to their origin, and all Muslims are obliged to value them as a perfect human.

Conclusion

Addiction as a social phenomenon has taken over different societies with various cultures, targeting adolescents and young adults who are the active members of the society, which has further led to family disintegration. Considering the social nature of Islam and the view it has towards humans and its growth and perfection, it also comprises many sociological components. This means that the path to perfection is inevitably through social contexts according to the teachings in this religion, so a wide range of orders have been diverted in the direction of social life. In this case, the Holy Qur'an, as the source of Islamic knowledge, has depicted the outlines of a healthy social life in relation to what is called today's social deviation. As RBs are one of the cultural factors that should receive more attention in health promotion, treatment and prevention of social harms, proper familiarity with the foundations of religion prevents people from following wrong thoughts and suffering from deviations.

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Competing interests

The authors have declared that no competing interest exists.

Authors' contributions

A.A.R-C. and F.A.H.A-K., responsible for content investigation; A.M., wrote original draft; W.J.A., responsible for conceptualisation; R.A., contributed visualisation,

A.A.A.A.-S., supplied the resources; R.M., was the project administrator; N.B., offered supervision.

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Data availability

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