

# Television Viewing and Divorce in Indonesia: Evidence from Macro Data

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## Abstract

The rise in divorce incidence seems to be the most apparent social phenomenon in Indonesia during the last decade. As the Ministry of Religious Affairs noted, the number of divorces has increased by 9% to 408,202 in 2018 compared to the previous year. One rationale that may explain this phenomenon comes from the role of television, which has the potential to influence the opinions of society through its programs. In developing countries, including Indonesia, television is still relevant as a medium to reach a large portion of society at a low cost. Hence, this study aims to determine the role of television viewing on divorce in Indonesia. Unlike previous studies, which use qualitative data collected with in-depth interviews at the individual level, we utilize quantitative analysis based on macro data at the provincial level from Statistics Indonesia in 2018. We perform a multiple regression model using the ordinary least squares method and find statistical evidence that divorce rates are positively associated with television viewing, particularly in rural areas. From this finding, the government should regulate media by limiting the frequency and duration of soap operas and celebrity news and by promoting television stations to provide diversified content on their channel.

## Keywords

Divorce; early marriage; education; income; television

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## Introduction

In the recent decade, there has been a noticeable trend in the divorce rate globally, particularly in Asian countries, with television viewing habits playing a significant role. According to statistics from the United Nations and various national sources (Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2020), the divorce rate has steadily increased worldwide, reflecting changing societal norms and attitudes toward marriage. In Asian countries, which are traditionally known for their strong family values and emphasis on maintaining long-lasting marriages (Dommaraju & Jones, 2011), divorce rates have shown a significant surge (OECD, 2021). This phenomenon can be linked to the increasing prevalence of television viewing in these regions. With the proliferation of television programs that portray different lifestyles, relationships, and individualistic values, there has been a noticeable impact on cultural values and social norms (Hidayati, 2019). Television often exposes viewers to alternative perspectives on relationships, leading to greater acceptance of divorce as a viable option for resolving marital issues (Chong & Ferrara, 2009). Consequently, this shift in mindset has contributed to the rising divorce rates globally and within Asian societies.

As the third largest country in Asia in terms of population, it is reported that divorce incidences in Indonesia have risen continuously from 333,368 cases in 2011 to 588,226 cases in 2018 (Lokadata, 2018). According to the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia (2019), the number of divorces in religious courts has increased by 9% in 2018 compared to the previous year. This number is far higher than ten years ago when divorce incidences were still around half the current numbers. This increasing number of divorces is striking, knowing that the process needs some complicated requirements with a thorough examination by the judges in a court for couples seeking a divorce, followed by a lack of public awareness of the legal process for resolving marital conflicts (Umar, 2020). Nonetheless, the principal impediments in Indonesia are the cost and time required to process the divorce through the courts.

According to Government Regulations No. 9/1975 about the implementation of Law No. 1/1974 on marriage and the 1991 Compilation of Islamic Law, divorce can be permitted for one of these reasons: one spouse leaves the other for two consecutive years without any permission or legal reason; one of the spouses is a gambler, a drunkard, a junkie, a fornicator; one of the spouses oppressing and threatening the other's safety; one of the spouses is imprisoned for five years or longer by a court during the marriage; the spouses are in a continuous quarrel with no hope to live together harmoniously, and one of the spouses suffering physical defects or diseases which prevent them from fulfilling the duties (van Huis, 2019). Divorce in Indonesia is primarily attributed to factors such as domestic violence, unregistered marriages (Siri marriage), early matrimony, and infidelity (Umar, 2020). Furthermore, social class and education are crucial in shaping divorce experiences and paths in Indonesia (Rinaldo et al., 2022). Less educated, lower-income couples are more receptive to marriage dissolution, particularly women who become less tolerant of domestic violence, infidelity, and financial neglect by their spouses. On the other hand, educated, middle-class urban couples also divorce for similar reasons but encounter a more protracted and intricate process characterized by multifaceted conflicts.

Divorce becomes vital to analyze since it could damage children of any age, and the effects could be long-lasting, even for children under five. Teenagers are the most vulnerable since they pursue logic and thought (Gustavsen et al., 2016). The children of divorce will have lower educational performance and physical health conditions than those who did not experience

them (Amato & James, 2010). Divorce also leads to significant economic losses, particularly for women, through declining household income. Even most men experience a decline in their standard of living by 10–40% after a divorce (Waite & Gallagher, 2000). Women suffer considerable economic effects after divorce, which are heavily influenced by the social security system, labor market, family models, and the family law system of each country (de Vaus et al., 2017). Those children are even severely impacted by divorce. Their daily activities were interrupted, and their education performance was lower (Ghaboush et al., 2020).

It was noted from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) in 1984 that family income declined by 23% on average for children whose fathers left. Upon divorce, fathers are most unlikely to share their equal earnings, which substantially reduces the resources to mothers and children, even for working mothers. Meanwhile, more significant fixed costs are incurred when one household is split into two households, making living costs more expensive. Data from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS) in 1991 indicated that all divorced women have a 39% likelihood of living in poverty and 55% of those with children under six (Teachman & Paasch, 1994). Furthermore, three out of four divorced mothers do not get a complete transfer of child support from their former husbands (Waite & Gallagher, 2000).

There are some considerations of why the husband and wife decide to divorce. According to (Weiss, 2001), it requires time to find a suitable spouse so that people may break the relationship whenever a better match is found. He also argues that changes in financial and emotional problems may slacken the gains from marriage. If the husband is unexpectedly rich, he will search for a better wife; if he becomes unexpectedly poor, the wife will look for a better husband. Moreover, young couples tend to have higher divorce rates because of their lower maturity, unreasonable expectations, and better outside options (Härkönen, 2014).

In Indonesia, it is common for a young man to marry a girl even though he has no permanent job to earn money and still relies on his parents (Nobles & Bittenheim, 2008). As a result, 13% of Indonesian girls get married before the age of 20, and this is particularly common in rural areas (Emery, 2013). Hence, immaturity and poor economic conditions may trigger the couples to have an affair with an alternative partner and end up in a divorce. In addition, socioeconomic resources, such as education and income, also matter in stabilizing marriages. A higher level of education is associated with lower rates of divorce (Martin, 2006). In contrast, a high risk of divorce is found in low-income households since it incurs problems in fulfilling household needs, while most households expect a better life (Sari et al., 2016). In this case, economic hardship may stress marriage, increasing marital dissolution risk.

Divorce is common among rural women; they assume they will return to their respective families if the marital relationship is not working (Heaton & Cammack, 2011). Thus, divorce becomes more common in societies, and more people would be inclined to do so. As people become more aware of the law, they consider filing a divorce in court whenever they realize their marriage no longer works. Greater awareness of divorce comes from the free flow of information through its spread by the media, particularly television. Television is expected to form opinions and preferences of societies through its content and programs (Quintelier & Hooghe, 2011). This statement is relevant for developing countries due to the popularity of television as a low-cost medium for accessing information.

As a developing country in Asia, television is still the leading media for Indonesian society. Television penetration reaches 96%, followed by outdoor media (53%), internet (44%), and radio (37%) (Nielsen, 2017). As of 2018, the average time spent watching TV was around four

hours and 20 minutes for Indonesian adults watching television at least once a week (Global Web Index, 2019). They mostly watch television with their family at home, on the streets at informal restaurants while gathering, or even in the community where each village has a shared television in remote rural areas. Entertainment television is considered necessary (Hobart, 2006), knowing that approximately 32.9% are viewers of soap operas, 22.7% prefer celebrity news, and merely 10% show interest in educational content (Indonesian Broadcasting Commission, 2017). Therefore, during the daytime, television programs are dominated by soap operas and celebrity news that cover homemakers, juveniles, and domestic workers. Soap operas convey the daily life of the families in the capital city as filled with romance.

In contrast, celebrity news blows up and sensationalizes the activities of notable public figures, ranging from celebrity matchups and break-ups, infidelities, marriages and divorces, criminal behavior, and drug abuse to abnormal conduct (Sofjan & Hidayati, 2013). It is not surprising that these programs are appealing and very addictive to some audiences. However, they are still far below the standard quality of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission [Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia].

The glamorization of divorce through celebrity news conveys that marriage is disposable. Hence, the more people watch these programs, the higher they will consider divorce as morally acceptable (Eype, 2016), and the more the people believe in television as the accurate image of romance, the higher their chance to regard divorce as moral marital occurrence (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). In this case, television mitigates the severity of divorce, making it more acceptable and less stigmatized for society. As referred to in the theory of cultivation (Gerbner et al., 1977), the mass media could nurture the values that may influence the behavior and attitudes of the spectators. Hence, celebrity news that frequently aired infidelities and divorce may increase the tendency of families to do so. For example, previous findings suggest that soap operas that depict modern lifestyles, emancipated women, and a critique of traditional values were related to the increases in the portion of divorced women in Brazil (Chong & Ferrara, 2009).

One reason for the high rate of divorce is the idealistic expectations of many people, which are formed through the media (Segrin & Nabi, 2002). They concluded that viewing soap operas was positively related to romantic notions about marriage. For example, people perceive that media seems obsessed with love and marriage through media reports, talk shows, and reality television, just as people seek ways to be happy (Johnson et al., 2006). Idealistic portrayals of romance on television jeopardize the status of a romantic relationship (Segrin & Nabi, 2002). Therefore, there is no doubt that television is the single most common source of action associated with marriage for a large proportion of the population (Signorielli, 2005). Furthermore, the media was blamed as the one responsible for shaping the views of romance (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010).

Media presence can induce social changes in people's lives, resulting in positive and negative behaviors depending on its usage. For instance, empirical evidence was found in Indonesia that spending additional time on television is linked with decreased involvement in social organizations and lower self-reported levels of trust (Olken, 2009). Moreover, one significant consequence of technology misuse is the rising incidence of divorce within households. In today's society, people are constantly bombarded with media, which acts as a binding force connecting social similarities and events. Consequently, the media's role in disseminating specific divorce ideologies cannot be overlooked. Mass media, in particular, tends to glamorize divorce, thereby normalizing and legitimizing its acceptance. Various literature

highlights that increasing divorce rates is associated with reducing the stigma surrounding divorce (Kamaruddin, 2005). This trend is more pronounced among younger generations, who generally exhibit a less conservative approach to marriage (Cunningham & Thornton, 2006).

As per the functional structure theory, when family members fail to fulfill their roles adequately, it affects other family members. The problem of divorce attributed to media misuse highlights a shift in family functioning, leaving the family in a vulnerable state of dysfunction during divorce. Social institutions can exert positive and negative influences on a social system, and this negative impact results in social dysfunction (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2021). Media-induced divorces underscore the breakdown of the family's role in society. A married couple excessively watches television and may neglect their responsibilities as spouses and parents (Osborn, 2012). Additionally, if media exposure fosters unrealistic expectations and idealized notions of marriage, it can lead to complex family problems and ongoing conflicts, ultimately culminating in divorce within the household.

Against this backdrop, this study has two objectives. The first one addresses the link between television viewing and divorce in Indonesia at a macro level. This study advances the hypothesis that the values and lifestyles demonstrated on television may contribute to increasing divorce incidences. A previous study conducted at the individual level, which examined 390 married couples using a random online survey in the United States, showed that the relationship status of a partner will be dangerous if the couple often watches television (Osborn, 2012). The findings indicated that increased consumption of romantically themed programs and a stronger belief in television's depiction of romantic relationships were linked to a reduced commitment to marriage, higher expectations and perceived drawbacks of marriage, and more favorable views of potential alternatives to one's current relationship. However, there is no empirical evidence so far at the macro level, to the best of the authors' knowledge, which contributes to the existing literature on this issue. The most recent research so far at the macro level only links television with fertility decisions and female reproductive behavior (Ahmed, 2022; Dewi et al., 2018), but not with divorce.

The second objective is to explore whether socioeconomic factors (such as income and education attainment) and early marriage matter in divorce. Different from previous studies, which rely on qualitative analysis through semi-structured in-depth interviews (Hidayati, 2019; Rinaldo et al., 2022; Umar, 2020; Widiantari & Utari, 2018), this study can capture determinants of divorce rates other than television viewing. Through a quantitative approach, we expect that the outcomes of this study will be a sound basis for further studies that seek to understand whether and to what extent media matters in forming divorce perceptions, particularly in developing countries.

Using the ordinary least squares method, we conducted a multiple regression model, which provided statistical evidence indicating a positive association between television viewing and the divorce rate, especially in rural areas. However, it is essential to note that this result does not imply causation, only a correlation. A region with more television viewing is correlated with a higher divorce rate. Furthermore, the impact of television viewing on the divorce rate in urban areas was found to be insignificant, suggesting that the urban population might have more diverse entertainment options beyond television, thus reducing the influence of celebrity news and soap operas on their marital decisions. We found no significant associations with the divorce rate while examining socioeconomic factors such as income per capita and education level in various regions. This lack of significance in education level could be attributed to the increasing acceptance of marriage dissolution by both less-educated and

more-educated women in modern society. As a control variable, our study revealed a positive correlation between early marriage and the number of divorces.

## Methodology

In this study, we use quantitative analysis based on cross-sectional aggregated data from all 34 provinces over the year 2018; hence, the unit of analysis in this study is the province. Using data from Statistics Indonesia [Badan Pusat Statistik] (2019), we retrieved the provincial data on the divorce rate as the dependent variable and television viewing as the primary independent variable from Statistics Indonesia as a secondary data source. Statistics Indonesia is an Indonesian non-departmental government institute tasked with carrying out statistical surveys. While its primary clientele is the government, the statistical information is also accessible to the general public. Through the same source, we also obtained the data of control variables in this study, including Gross Domestic Regional Product (GDRP) per capita to represent the average income in a region (province in this case), the School Enrolment Ratio as a measure of educational attainment, and the incidence of early-age marriage.

For our analysis, we employ a linear regression model estimated by the ordinary least squares (OLS) method to describe the effect of the primary independent variable (television viewing) and the control variables (income, education, and early marriage) on the dependent variable (divorce). The least squares method states that the sum of squares of the vertical distances from any point to the line must be as small as possible to fit a line to the data values. Hence, the regression equation in our study is as follows:

$$divorce_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 TV + \beta_2 \log(income) + \beta_3 early\ marriage + \beta_4 education + \varepsilon (1)$$

The dependent variable is *divorce* or the divorce rate in each province, denoted by the population percentage. Statistics Indonesia (2019) has compiled divorce data from the Supreme Court (Directorate General of Religious Justice Affairs), which applies to Muslims only. This becomes a limitation of our study as the data do not cover informal divorces and those of other religious groups in Indonesia. As the primary independent variable, *TV* or television viewing is defined by Statistics Indonesia as an activity of a population over ten years who watch and enjoy the events presented on television. This is for all shows, including the soap opera and celebrity news. It is denoted in percentage since such a number is divided by the total population aged more than ten years.

As a control variable, *income* is based on current prices as the sum of gross value added from all the sectors in provincial coverage divided by population in each province. Value added, in this case, consists of any components of income factors (such as rent, wage, interest, and profit), depreciation, and net indirect taxes. Hence, by summing the gross value added from each sector and the gross value added from all sectors, we obtain the value of GDRP based on current prices. We employ logarithmic transformations for the income variable in our model, given that this variable has positively or negatively skewed characteristics. The log transformation makes the larger values less extreme so that the variable will be closer to a normal distribution. The other control variable, *education*, is the ratio of students living in a region to those who qualify for a particular grade level at 16–18 or equivalent to senior secondary level. Finally, *early marriage* is the prevalence of women aged 20–24 who assert they have been married before age 20.

## Results and discussion

Table 1 shows the summary statistics in the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values of each variable used in this study. The average divorce rate in Indonesia from 34 provinces is 1.92%. Although it is not captured in the table, West Nusa Tenggara is a province with the highest divorce rate (3.37%), while Papua is the one with the lowest divorce rate (1.12%). The divorce rate of females is higher than that of males. Television viewing is relatively high in Indonesia, especially in urban areas, given that around 90% of its population over ten years old watch television. As the capital city of Indonesia, DKI Jakarta is a province with the highest rate of television viewing (97.32%), while Papua is on the other hand (47.34%). Early marriage is quite prevalent in Indonesia, with almost 12% of women married before the age of 20. West Sulawesi has the highest rate of early marriage (19.43%), while DKI Jakarta is the lowest (4.06%). Finally, the school enrolment rate at the senior secondary level is relatively low, which is only up to 27%.

**Table 1:** Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Divorce rate (%)	1.92	0.43	1.12	3.37
Divorce rate of males (%)	1.4	0.39	0.53	2.28
Divorce rate of females (%)	2.44	0.59	1.43	4.64
Television viewing (%)	90.3	10.36	47.34	97.32
Television viewing in urban (%)	94.39	3.35	81.14	97.75
Television viewing in rural (%)	87.46	13.31	30.52	96
Early marriage (%)	11.82	4.38	4.06	19.43
School enrolment rate (%)	26.52	6.72	15.99	51.69
Income per capita (log)	10.47	0.54	9.41	12.01

Table 2 shows the OLS estimation in different specifications for robustness check. We estimate equation (1) in specification (i), dividing television viewing into the urban and rural areas in specification (ii), using the divorce rate of males in specification (iii), and the divorce rate of females in specification (iv) as the dependent variable. As seen in Table 2, except for the urban case, we have statistical evidence that television viewing positively correlates with divorce incidences at a 1% significance level. This association seems to be the strongest compared with other determinants in our model, at which when the rate of television viewing rises by one percentage point, the divorce rate is expected to increase by 0.016 percentage points on average. However, it is essential to note that this result only indicates correlation, not causation. Our finding suggests that a region with more television viewing has a higher divorce rate. Thus, such interpretation becomes a limitation of this study.

**Table 2:** OLS Estimation: Effect of Television Viewing on Divorce Rate

Dependent variable: divorce rate	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)
TV	0.016*** (0.002)		0.0158*** (0.002)	0.015*** (0.005)
TV (urban)		-0.035 (0.034)		
TV (rural)		0.018*** (0.006)		
Log(income)	0.0212 (0.137)	0.040 (0.132)	0.212** (0.082)	-0.146 (0.232)
Early marriage	0.032** (0.014)	0.038** (0.016)	0.054*** (0.011)	0.011 (0.020)
Education	0.007 (0.005)	0.005 (0.006)	0.001 (0.005)	0.013 (0.009)
Constant	-0.338 (1.456)	2.623 (2.883)	-2.924*** (0.903)	2.059 (2.442)
Observations	34	33	34	34
R-squared	0.254	0.321	0.604	0.111

Note: Standard errors in parentheses \*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*  $p < .1$

The media wields considerable influence in shaping various aspects of society, culture, and even the political system, including the ideologies embedded within its content. Television programs, such as soap operas and dramas, cater predominantly to a female audience, spanning teenage girls to adults. Besides non-reality shows, celebrity news and reality programs are popular among adolescent to adult women, featuring content focused on celebrity household conflicts that often lead to divorce. The divorce cases of celebrities have become intriguing topics, making it one of the most widely marketed programs across almost all television channels in Indonesia (Hidayati, 2019).

On the other hand, the insignificant result of television viewing in urban areas may indicate that there is more variety of entertainment in the city than television, so the glamorization of celebrity news and soap operas less influences urban people. Although people have more access to television in urban areas, they only have little time to watch television (Widiantari & Utari, 2018). They are more engaged in social media, reinforcing their confidence to make crucial decisions in their marital life. Rather than the glorification of ideal yet unrealistic marriages portrayed by media, they are more influenced by the women's success as a single parent living an everyday life with financial independence. Numerous educated women highlight their capability to sustain themselves through work and a strong determination to escape a troubled marriage, regardless of the consequences (Rinaldo et al., 2022). Hence, the divorce rate remains statistically unchanged when more television viewers are in the urban area. This situation is different from those living in rural areas who have fewer options in entertainment other than television, especially for homemakers. It can be seen from lower internet penetration in rural areas, which is only 48%, compared to urban areas with 72% (Asia Video Industry Association, 2022). Besides, those with lower socioeconomic status are more receptive to accepting marriage dissolution (Rinaldo et al., 2022).

Our result supports the argument of a previous study, which stated that television was closely related to divorce (Chong & Ferrara, 2009). Their research revealed that after there was a signal for television, the divorce rate increased in Brazil. Our finding also seems to align with the cultivation theory, which implies that the media's dramatization of divorce through celebrity news and soap operas affects people's perceptions of divorce, making divorce more socially acceptable to society (Gerbner et al., 1977). People may learn and adopt the values and beliefs that are demonstrated on the television monitor. Hence, the higher the number of television viewers, the higher the probability of them seeing the world as portrayed by television. Television may also undermine the family's foundation by successfully delivering a message that marriage is disposable and by forming perceptions about idealized yet



unrealistic images of marriage. Concerning this result, short courses about marriage are insufficient to mitigate the number of divorces.

We advise the government, especially the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission as the authorized agent, to regulate media by limiting the frequency and duration of soap operas and celebrity news and promoting television stations to provide diversified content on their channel. This is in line with the survey of television quality programs in 2017 by the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission that celebrity news should display the artist's professional activities, not their personal life, even though news of reconciliation, marriage, and divorce sells the best. It is not surprising that in their survey, the quality of both soap opera and celebrity news is still below the standard. The low quality of these broadcasts is due to the low creativity of the producers and the sensibility of television management (Rochim, 2007). Broadcasting media is a communication, information, education, and entertainment medium. For this reason, public control is needed. The public can exercise control by channeling their objections through a designated institution, in this case, the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission. The public has the right to refuse the presence of a broadcasting institution or broadcast content.

As a control variable, our finding suggests that marrying at an early age has a positive link to the number of divorces at a 5% significance level in which a one percentage point increase in the prevalence of early-age marriage will boost the number of divorces by 0.032 to 0.054 percentage points. This result implies that a region with a more significant proportion of women marrying early tends to have a higher divorce rate. However, this association is not statistically significant for divorce rates of women, yet the rationale behind this finding remains unknown and beyond the scope of our study. Our result still implies that the government should regulate mass wedding practices since it may contribute to endorsing young couples with a lack of maturity and unstable financial conditions to get married. Through the Indonesian Family Planning Program, it is also advisable for the government to socialize the negative consequences of early-age marriage with the support of relevant public figures. This is because early marriage in Indonesia is still rooted in sociocultural factors rather than economic aspects (Setiadi, 2021). Besides, a conditional cash transfer program can be used as another policy tool due to its effectiveness in delaying early marriages (Hartarto & Wibowo, 2023).

By looking at socioeconomic factors, income per capita in a region does not seem to be associated with the divorce rate. However, it is statistically significant and positively associated with the divorce rate for males. More income per capita in a region indicates higher wealth, which leads to a higher incidence of divorces for men. This finding appears to support the notion that if a man is more affluent, he is more likely to seek a better spouse (Weiss, 2001). On the other hand, education is not associated with the divorce rate in all specifications. This result differs from a previous study that found a positive correlation between education attainment and divorce rates in East Java (Rofi & Salsabila, 2022). This difference may be due to different proxies to measure education attainment in which their study uses mean school years, while this research uses school enrolment rates at the senior secondary level. Besides, this insignificant result of education level is probably because marriage dissolution is now more readily accepted by both less-educated and more-educated women (Rinaldo et al., 2022). They are, in common, displaying significantly reduced tolerance towards men's actions, such as engaging in domestic violence, infidelity, and neglecting financial responsibilities.

However, our study is inseparable from several limitations. Our finding is only based on cross-sectional provincial data for one year, which makes this study unable to capture the

dynamics of divorce patterns in Indonesia over time. The interpretation of this study is limited to correlation, not causation. We also cannot generalize this result to certain phenomena of individuals or households, given that the unit of analysis in this study is at the provincial level. Unlike the qualitative approach, our study cannot provide an in-depth analysis of the divorce phenomena in Indonesia. Finally, there are many other determinants of divorce rates in a region. At the same time, we only control income, education level, and early marriage in addition to television viewing, limiting our conclusions to these variables. Future research should address these issues.

## Conclusion

Based on our empirical result, there is strong evidence that television viewing increases the number of divorces in general. Hence, the government should provide pre-marriage courses and counseling and regulate the media, particularly television. Television is counterproductive in shaping the value of the family since it often demonstrates the happily young and immature couples marrying, which may lead to vulnerable marriage. Through homogenous content offered by television, i.e., soap operas, people are most likely to set up their ideal expectations about marriage, which leads to the failure to reflect on reality and maintain their relationship. In this case, the glamorization of divorce affects the viewer's perception. Thus, the diversification of television shows needs to be encouraged to lessen the unrealistic standard of marriage.

Our finding also shows that early marriage raises the number of divorces by the highest magnitude compared with other factors in this study, except for the divorce rates of women. Putting aside the insignificant result, the local government should regulate mass wedding practices since it may trigger young couples who cannot afford the administration fees to marry. They also need to socialize the negative consequences of marrying at an early age with the support of relevant public figures since it is rooted in sociocultural rather than economic aspects. The central government can utilize a conditional cash transfer program as another policy tool due to its effectiveness in delaying early marriages. Indeed, the issue of divorce is complex and requires not only the role of governments, both local and central, but also the community. Most importantly, religious courts also matter, given that the adoption of the Islamic court system and family law has expanded the availability of divorce, and changing cultural attitudes towards marriage may also be influencing the increasing divorce rates. For those aiming to empower Indonesian women, exploring potential reforms within Indonesia's Islamic legal system is vital to ensure greater fairness for women involved in divorce proceedings.

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