

Divorce Practices of Muslim Families in Southern Philippines: A Multiple Case Study

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ABSTRACT: Repeated family transitions raise the likelihood of adverse child outcomes, and parental separation and divorce can transform the family structure from a two-parent biological family to a lone parent or stepfamily status. Although divorce is permissible in Islam, it lays great emphasis on its being a concession and measure that must be resorted to only when there is no alternative. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study is to describe the experiences of Muslim Families in Southern Philippines in Islamic Divorce. In this study, divorce practices were explained in detail to acquire a comprehensive understanding of how the Islamic law of divorce functions. This also describes how the couple arrived at their decision of having divorce. Results revealed that introspection and contemplation, consultation with family members, decision to divorce, Iddah, and processing the divorce were the divorce practices. Determination, avoidance and redirection, settling issues with children, and counting on support mechanisms were the coping mechanisms. Divorce should be avoided, divorce requires careful and thorough deliberation, collateral damage is on the child and there is life after divorce were the insights learned.

KEYWORDS: *social work, advance social work practice, divorce practices, Muslim families, multiple case study, Philippines*

I. INTRODUCTION

Divorce is the dissolution of an unhappy marriage. This is also a preventive measure against the breach of peace. Divorce may have been permissible in Islam but it is one of the most detestable things in the sight of Allah. Further, it lays great emphasis on its being a concession, and measure to be resorted to only when there is no alternative (Abdul'Ati, 1982). Divorce continues to be a major topic of scholarly interest. Majority of marital separations may end quickly in reconciliation or dissolution of marriage (Amato, 2010). Family breakdown is not a single event, but a process that involves a number of risks and protective factors that interact in complex ways both before and after parental separation. These inter-related factors include parental conflict; the quality of parenting and of parent-child relationships; maternal mental health; financial hardship; and repeated changes in living arrangements, including family structure (Mooney et al., 2009).

Further, parental divorce and separation can cause a family to become disorganized repeatedly, which could harm children and the family transition (Mooney et al., 2009). It has been observed that higher ages at marriage are typically thought of as an indicator of female autonomy. In Africa, women's divorce rates are positively correlated with education, and educated women are more prone to adopt novel marriage ideologies that also lead to divorce. As the passion for sexual attraction may emerge, it is stressed that spouses may wish to end an unexciting marriage in favor of relationship that will provide renewed excitement. Educated women, however, may lessen their reliance on men who are in labor force (Adedokun, 1998).

In the Philippines, divorce was practiced already. During the pre-colonial period, by some ancestral tribes in the Philippines – particularly among the Tagbanwans of Palawan, the Gadangs of Nueva Viscaya, the Sagadans and Igorots of the Cordilleras, and the Manobos, B'laans, and Muslims of the Visayas and Mindanao islands (House of Representatives, 2010). Although in the Family Code of the Philippines (1987), except for Filipinos married to foreigners who seek a divorce abroad and Filipino Muslims who are subject to the Muslim Code of the Philippines, divorce is not permitted. (Lopez, 2006). Thus, the scarcity of information on divorce practices of Muslim families led me to investigate the issue and present evidence. This is to discover, describe, and explore the experiences and practices of Muslim Families in divorce.

Research Questions

1. What were the divorce practices of Muslim Families in the Southern Philippines?
2. How did divorced Muslim families cope with the situation?

3. What were the insights learned by the participants after the divorce?

Theoretical Lens

This study was viewed from the lens of Socio-Cultural Theory. Sociocultural theory is based on the social constructivist paradigm which considers that knowledge is constructed socially through interaction and shared by individuals (Bryman, 2001). This is based on the concept that human activities take place in a cultural context, are mediated by language and other symbol systems, and can be best understood when investigated in their historical development (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996).

Sociocultural theories were first systematized and applied by Vygotsky and his associates in Russia in the 1920s and 1930s. Sociocultural theory describe human cognition as developed through engagement in social activities, as an individual interacts with other people, objects, and events. Therefore, human cognitive development cannot be separated from social, cultural and historical contexts from which such development emerges (Johnson, 2009). This social and cultural engagement is mediated by culturally constructed tools such as language, materials, signs, and symbols that create uniquely human forms of higher-level thinking.

This study can also be viewed in the Image Theory. According to image theory, all decisions are ultimately made by individuals (Beach, 1997). The theory derives its name from the notion that every decision maker uses 'images' in memory to arrive at efficient choices for action. In Image theory, images are

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used a qualitative – multiple case study method. The participants of this study were four individuals who have undergone a divorce, specifically among the Muslim families in Southern Philippines. In-depth interviews were used to make this study meaningful. Data that was gathered was analyzed using thematic analysis. Ethical considerations were also applied such as confidentiality, proper coordination with the participants, informed consent and plagiarism check.

RESULTS

Each of the four participants was given time to answer the questions to complete their demographic profiles. The whole duration of the in-depth interview had been recorded. The participants have been assured of the complete confidentiality of the data gathered.

Case 1- Zairah got divorced last 2012. She got married in 2009 and was blessed with one child today. She finished her BS in Social Work at one of the universities in Davao City. She was a Christian but converted to Muslim because she loved her ex-husband. However, they got divorced. The child is in her custody. She is currently working in a government office. Case 2- Abukhair became a father at the age of 23. He is a Maguindanaon living in Cotabato City. He was a typical college student in one of the state colleges in Cotabato City. Despite being a father, he still managed to finish a degree in Social Work. He is currently preparing for his board exam and is happily married to his 2nd wife. They were blessed with 2 cute little kids. Also, he is now a tricycle driver to sustain the everyday needs of his family. Case 3- Mohammad is an Iranun living in Sultan Mastura, Maguindanao. He is a very serious and religious man. He only committed his life for Allah (God), for his family, and for the people of the Bangsamoro and the Bangsamoro Homeland. He loved his wife before and was blessed with two boys. However, he cannot stand his wife's attitude anymore, so he decided to have a divorce. Currently, he is happily married to his second wife and very fortunate for having six children. Case 4- Khadiguia is a Tausug from Sulu who got married in the year 1979 to a M'ranao man. For 25 years, they were blessed with six kids, two boys, and four girls. After 25 years, she decided to get a divorce since her ex-husband have also got married to his second wife which she never approved. Despite this situation, she is a strong woman in raising her children very well. She is currently working in one of the national government offices in Cotabato City.

III. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Divorce Practices of Muslim Families

The data about the divorce practices of Muslim families were summarized into five essential themes as shown in Table 2. These presentations in table forms were patterned after the study of (Creswell, 2002, 2003, 2007, 2008, 2013; Smith et al., 2009). The process of numeration was adopted in the determination of thematic themes. Among the essential themes were Introspection and contemplation, Consultation with family and community leaders, Iddah (Period of Waiting), Decision to Divorce, and processing the divorce.

Major Themes and Core Ideas on Divorce Practices of Muslim Families in Southern Philippines

Major Themes	Thematic Statements
Introspection and contemplation	I weighed which is more important to me.
	Had difficulty in deciding; children in consideration
	She prevented me from going to Jihad.
	During our low moments, she said very negative things.
	He got his paramour pregnant.
	Husband had relationship with the house helper.
Consultation with family and community leaders	I talked to her father about my decision and he understood.
	Our parents met and discussed our problems.
	Imams were consulted regarding our marital woes.
	My family was against my decision to divorce.
	Mother and relatives supported my decision.
Iddah (Period of Waiting)	We were advised to have the 3-month "Iddah".
	Idda is a way to revive the relationship between couples.
	During Iddah, couples are prohibited from communicating with the extra-marital relationship.
	After only 1 month of Iddah, he violated it by communicating with the other woman.
	I exhausted all possibilities; did my obligations.
Decision to Divorce	Can't stand it; I had difficulty trusting him again.
	Idda didn't work so I decided on divorce.
	I thought it was better to let him go.
	It would be more agonizing to continue with the relationship.
	Our situation worsened.
	I lost hope; trust had been broken beyond repair.
	She refused the Iddah so we proceeded to divorce.
	After 25 years of marriage, we decided to divorce.
Processing the Divorce	There was a series of talks between my family and hers.
	Community Muslim Leaders attended and witnessed the meeting.
	My wife's mother facilitated our divorce.
	It took us one week to complete our divorce papers.
	I only joined during the last and final meet-up with them.
	We signed divorce papers; signed by witnesses

Introspection and Contemplation

All the informants were not in favor of the divorce because they knew that their children will be the very first people to be hurt but they had to do it because it was the only way to free their selves. Zairah weighed which is more important after knowing that her husband had an affair with the house helper. However, Abukhair and Mohammad married a new wife. For those who contemplated divorce, it often occurred over a long-time of contemplation; for those who were left by the spouse, it resulted in a huge shift in their lives and their lifestyle (Hutchison, 2011).

Consultation with family and community leaders

In addition, all of the respondents, except Khadiguia, had consulted with the family and community leaders to resolve the problems of marital woes. The parents of Mohammad and his wife and Zairah and her

husband met and discussed their problems. Abukhair's family was against his decision of getting a divorce. The Imam talks with one or sometimes both the spouses in either his office or their home and sometimes, their family members. Thus, there is no formal hearing or evidence presented, no legal representation of the parties, only rarely a written agreement to arbitrate and no record of the proceedings. Ultimately, the imam either approves or refuses to grant a divorce (Korteweg & Selby, 2012).

Iddah (Period of Waiting)

Further, Mohammad and Zairah experienced Iddah for three months to save the relationship but that did not work for both of their cases. The community leaders instructed Zairah and husband about Iddah but Zairah's husband violated the Iddah by communicating with other woman while Mohammad exhausted all of his obligations. Iddah, a three-month waiting time for women, was also enacted by Islam. Women cannot remarry for three months during this time. The main goal of this regulation is to find out if the woman was expecting a child prior to her second marriage so that the right father can be identified. Additionally, this procedure guarantees that the child's identification and family history can be verified. During the waiting time, a husband and wife are also entitled to try to reconcile. However, it is particularly forbidden for men to take their wives back in order to harm or unfairly benefit them (Ati, 1977).

Decision to Divorce

The informants revealed also that they lost their trust in their respective partners because of different reasons. As Zairah said that during Iddah, she had difficulty trusting her husband again when their situation became worse and thought that it was better to let him go. Mohammad also experienced Iddah but did not work for them so he decided on divorce. Khadiguia, after 25 years of marriage, has decided to divorce. A decision is such an essential thing to do to resolve conflict. Research showed that families are influential on an individual's relationship behavior (Grange, Brubaker & Corneille, 2011), the decision to divorce (Glenn & Kramer, 1987), and ability to cope with divorce (Brown, Perry, & Harburg, 1977). The relationship experiences of family members influenced the women's opinions about the kind of relationships they wanted to have for themselves as well as the relationship behaviors they wanted to avoid (Rawlins, 2012).

Processing the Divorce

Moreover, everybody has processed their divorce. The religious man's family and his wife had a series of talks between them and the community Muslim Leaders. However, he only joined the last and final talk about the divorce where they have decided to. This is also true in Zairah where her parents and her husband's parents also met to decide. Abukhair stated that it took them to process their divorce one week to complete the papers. All of them have documents signed as proof that they have divorced. It may have been a long journey for the couple in deciding on a divorce and processing it may have also been a long way to go. Korteweg & Selby (2012) stated that the second means of giving legal effect to the consequences of Islamic Divorce would be if a written contract were made following a voluntary agreement between the parties, signed by both. This agreement could be enforced as a private contract in the same ways as other mediation agreements.

Coping Mechanisms

Major Themes and Core Ideas on How Divorced Muslim Families Cope with their Situation

Major Themes	Thematic Statements
Determination	I accepted the situation; that I will be both father and mother to my kids
	I decided to move on with my life
	I stood by my decision to divorce even as I still love him
	I stopped all forms of communication
	I did not oblige him to support
Avoidance and redirection	I go out and have some fun
	I try to drown away my longing for my child
	I tried not to entertain regrets as I know he will do it again
	I laughed my problems away or I will go crazy
Settling issues with children	I allowed my child to see his father
	I had to explain everything to my child so he will understand
	I told him your children will always be your children
	I allowed him to support and see the kids anytime
	I provide financial support for my child's schooling

	I tried supporting the kids but sometimes I fail
Counting on support mechanism	I turned to my friends in order to cope with the pain
	I sought refuge in the company of family and friends
	I mingled with friends to forget my problems momentarily

Determination

All the informants were really determined to do a divorce after knowing that their marriage lives were not working anymore. As Zairah mentioned that she accepted things and knew that she will be both father and mother to her son. In addition, Zairah and Mohammad had to experience Iddah but failed because their partners failed to comply with the said arrangements. Likewise, many people who experienced difficult emotions received the necessary help, and started the process of moving on after a divorce discovered a new sense of identity that made it simpler for them to cope; but she also noted that not all divorcees had enough strength or courage for renewal (Määttä, 2011).

Avoidance and Redirection

All the informants unbosom the fact that they need the support of their families, especially the support of their parents. They uncovered that they need moral and emotional support. However, in the case of Zairah, she did not get any support from her parents because her father died already, and her mother is in a comatose stage.

Settling issues with Children

All of the informants had at least one child in their first wife or husband. Even if these informants have thought of divorce, they ensured that their children will be fine and that they will accept things when the time comes. Although these informants have already divorced, they are still allowing their previous partners to see their children because they still want their children to get to know their father and mother despite what happened to them. Zairah allowed her son to see his father, but she had to explain everything to him. She made sure that at a very young age, her son will be able to understand all the things that happened to them, and fortunately, he did. Khadiguia told her husband that he can still see his children because they will always be his children no matter what. She also allowed him to sustain the needs and schooling of the children. Mohammad tried to support his kids but sometimes failed to give them financial assistance. Truly, divorce is a painful thing. These participants tried to get out of the situation to avoid the hurtful effect. In addition, the adjustment of children whose parents avoid including them in their disputes is similar to that of children from low-conflict homes. (Buchanan & Heiges, 2001).

Counting on Support Mechanisms

The participants count the emotional support of their friends, as Abukhair and Khadiguia shared that they have mingled with friends during the process of divorce. They also added that they have shared these things to them. In return, their friends have given them some advices. Abukhair and Khadiguia have also added that they really tend to forget things when they are with their friends because these friends are their support system who make them realize that life must go on. However, Abukhair did not get any support from his parents and has solely faced his problem.

Insights Learned

Major Themes and Core Ideas on Learning Insights that Participants Can Share After Divorce

Major Themes	Thematic Statements
Divorce should be avoided	Divorce is not good at all.
	I won't advice other couple to have a divorce.
	Divorce is not a way to have a good society.
	Marriage is sacred, that's why divorce is detestable.
	It's still good to be united as a family.
	I would not wish divorce on other families.
	We have to be a family-oriented society.
	Never do anything that you will regret later on in your life.
	Be sincere in your marriage so there'll be no need for divorce.
	Exhaust all possibilities first before resorting to divorce.
	Couples should have a heart to heart talk if they go into it.

Divorce requires careful and thorough deliberation	Always weigh everything when you make a major decision.
	Before entering into marriage (or divorce), think thoroughly.
	If relationship is no longer good, look for help.
	Pray and ask for God's guidance.
	Regret always comes at the end.
Children suffer collateral damage	Always think of the children when you decide to divorce.
	It is the children who will suffer the most.
	Divorce effects are not good especially on children.
	Divorce brings nothing good for young children.
	Remember your children's future lies in your hand.
There is life after divorce	It's better to break up than continue hurting each other.
	Our relationship now, after divorce, is much better.
	I feel freer and happier this time; happy with my new family.
	I have remarried and now blessed with 6 young kids.
	We just have to accept that it is our destiny.

Divorce should be avoided

The participants agreed that divorce is not good at all. As Mohammad said it well that even if divorce is permissible in Islam but in the eyes of God, it is the most detestable thing to do. Abukhair learned that a person should not do something that he or she will regret in the future. He further added to think more than twice before deciding on a divorce. For Zairah, it was better to be divorced than to hurt each other's feelings and emotions. Khadiguia also said that a person should be persistent to face the reality of being divorced. Divorce is not recommended for Muslim families. It must at least be resisted. Every Muslim man and woman must get married, unless they are physically, mentally, or financially unable to do so. According to Islam, marriage is essential to establish and maintain the Muslim family and to spread Islam across the world (Esposito, 2001).

Divorce requires careful and thorough deliberation

In getting a divorce, Zairah, Abukhair, and Mohammad had mentioned to carefully deliberate and exhausting possible things before resorting to divorce as you might regret it at the end of the day. However, while reflecting on divorce, it was better for them to end the marriage and be divorced as they saw that their relationship with their partners was not working anymore. Divorce is not a usual situation that every couple can get through. It certainly requires a series of discussions where both parties attend to get and dig into the details of the divorce. Mohammad also added that before getting married, especially in Islam, it should be well thought. He meant that a couple must check all the things with regard to Islamic Marriage and plan for the future. Further, he mentioned praying to God and asking for guidance.

Collateral damage is on the children

At the end of the day, the participants have a common understanding that the collateral damage of divorce is on the children. They have advised to always think of the children before deciding and arriving to divorce because the children will suffer the most. Mohammad stated that the future of the children lies in the hands of the parents. This was seconded by Khadiguia as she stated that divorce has no good effects on the children. This is supported by a study of Miles (2011), divorce is associated with several possible adjustment difficulties for the divorcing partners' children, even when the children are adolescents or young adults (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002; Laumann-Billings & Emery, 2000; Mahl, 2001; Swartzman-Schatman & Schinke, 1993; van Schaick & Stolberg, 2001; Wolfinger, 2000).

There is Life after Divorce

After all, there is life after divorce. Zairah decided to break up and get a divorce than continue hurting herself and her husband. She and her husband have a better relationship now after the divorce. Abukhair feels free and happier with his new family. Mohammad is now married to another woman blessed with six children and Khadiguia has accepted her destiny of being a single parent.

Implication for Practice

In the Muslim cultural practice, divorce has been long practiced. However, it is not known to many as the majority of the Non-Muslims know about Polygamous or those men who can marry several women. This is

being governed by the Code of Muslim Personal Laws of the Philippines. For social workers handling cases like this, she must always be culturally sensitive as this is one of the big disputes for the marital woes of Muslim Families. If an individual seeks for help, she must have knowledge on this practice especially the Muslim Code of the Philippines as this cited almost all the do's and don't's of Muslim Cultures. Further, she must also need to know Shari'ah Law as this governs the whole laws of Muslims. In working with the families of divorce also, social workers must always seek advice from Muslim Leaders or Imam or Ustads because they are the one's who know best of the practice.

Culture

While Islam may have allowed divorce, it is one of the most detestable thing in the eyes of God. All the participants really did not favor in divorce as they knew that it will just ruin not only their family relationships but also their parent's relationship because parents are one of the most influential persons when it comes to Islamic marriage. All the participants were also carefully thought of the consequences before getting a divorce as they may hurt their children.

Religious differences

Religion was not a hindrance when two person fall in love. There will always be a connection between these lovers. For Zairah, culture was not a difficulty in loving truly a person. Her husband was her first and last boyfriend and became her husband. But everything had its end, Zairah decided to get a divorce after knowing that her husband had an affair with their housemaid and knew that she was pregnant. She couldn't stand her husband having another woman as his second wife. This was also true to Khadiguia where her husband married another woman because his family wanted their blood to run within their tribe. Khadiguia never liked her husband to have another woman as his second wife so she thought that divorce was the only way to end their relationship although it caused her so much pain.

Tribal affiliations

For some other tribes of Muslim in the Philippines, it is true that most of the families wanted to continue the close family ties through marrying another person from the same tribe. This is where mos of the fixed marriage comes in.

At the end of the day, the participants knew that divorce was the only way to ease the pain they wer going through. They felt good and better after getting a divorce as they thought that they were in a cage locked up. They were like birds who spreaded their wings and flew to another place.

Gender

While it is true that in Islam, women has been known to be staying at home, raising children, and doing household chores, it is also undeniably true that nowadays, women are already empowered and can stand on their own.

Polygamous Marriage

In Islam, it is a previledge for a man to marry more than one woman as their legitimate wife. This is the polygamous marriage known to everyone especially non-Muslims. This is the very reason why most Muslim men marry Muslim women. Most Muslim women, however, who also experienced divorced just stay as solo parents because they focus more on the development and growth of their children than looking for another partner. In some cases, Muslim women also look for another partner to support financially and morally their children.

Decision-making

It has been known for many that women in Islam has less previledge in terms of decision making. However, this is not true. Women also have the right to decide within the family as decision making should be shared by both husband and wife.

Children's Concern

Ultimately, the participants knew that the huge effect of this divorce was on their children. They have advised to think of your children before you decide to divorce. They had to explain carefully everything to their children so that they will fully understand it. Further, the spouses also had to support their children morally and financially as part of their responsibilities as parents of these children. This implies that even if they have arrived at divorce, Muslim families still allows and acknowledge the fact they are both parents to the children.

Parents' disengagements

When parents separate or divorce, it is always their children who are affected the most. Only because they know and feel that their family will never be the same as before. Thus, affecting not only their emotional and psychological aspect but also their cognitive behavior.

Government's support

Further, while these children must be in the hands of their mothers, it is also best for the government to support these solo parents for the child to grow fully functional within their bio-psycho-social and spiritual being. These support will be beneficial to these children as they will contribute to nation-building and the hope of our nation.

Heart-breaking scenarios like divorce had made them cry not only once but more than twice. It was the only way they knew to not hurt each other. They felt free and happy after the divorce. This implies that it is not the end of your journey of being happy and contented with your life after divorce. Divorce individuals must see the beauty of what happened as this will guide them to be on the right track of moving forward. After all, there is life after divorce.

The vital realization of this study is the divorce practices of Muslim families. This study magnifies the implication of different experiences of Muslim families' undergone divorce, wherein we understood their practices. Finally the root cause of the study, the Muslim and non-Muslim community, for them to fully understand the life struggles of the before, during and after life divorce. Moreover, this study helps couples to open their mind that understand the real essence of marriage is more important to bear in mind rather than looking at the technical problems, unless necessary, of the marriage life and end up in divorce.

In viewing the experiences of the Muslim families, it is clear that they undergone different practices and struggles before arriving at divorce. Divorced families also shared their insights by giving useful advices and elaborating the factors of the reasons why they have done the divorce.

There were five essential themes generated from the divorce practices of Muslim families, these were Introspection and contemplation, Consultation with family and community leaders, Iddah (Period of Waiting), Decision to Divorce and Processing the Divorce.

On the first theme of divorce practices of Muslim Families, they felt that they were in the process of weighing things during their marriage life. For the participants, they had difficulties of weighing and deciding if they would want to proceed to divorce or not. They also find it very difficult since they have children to consider. This implies that Muslim families do have difficulty in deciding about getting a divorce. They are confused of what they must do in order not to hurt the children.

The second theme reveals that Muslim families had to consult with the family and community leaders. This is because, family and community leaders know best and that divorce has a proper way of doing it through these community leaders. This is where Imams are consulted regarding the couple's marital woes. This implies that Muslim families still trust the community leaders and their family after having the thought of getting a divorce.

The Muslim families also reveals that there were Iddah or the Period of Waiting. This where the couple lives together to revive and solve marital issue within themselves. The couples undergoing this procedure have to wait for 3 months to complete the Iddah. This implies that the Muslim families still practices what is prescribed to them and what is according to the Islamic customs.

Muslim families had to make a crucial decision. They shared that they have lost hope in saving their relationship because of their different personal reasons. They felt that it was more agonizing to continue the relationship and letting their partner go than hurting one another. Even if they have experienced Iddah, this did not work therefore they had to cut the ties between them. This implies that Muslim families several considerations in arriving at divorce. They were open to possible things to save the marriage life but it was their partner who were not able to save it.

Muslim families then had to process their divorce. There were series of talks happened between both the parties' families where it was also attended and witnessed by the community leaders, Imam, to process the divorce. They have only signed a document pertaining to the divorce between them and their partners. This implies that Muslim families follows the traditional process of divorce where they have documents signed by both parties and the witnesses.

Further, there were four essential themes generated from the coping mechanisms of Muslim families, these were Determination, Avoidance and redirection, Settling Issues with Children and Counting on support mechanism.

Muslim Families who gone through divorce accepted the situation and determined to move on with their life. They said that even it hurts, it was better for them to move forward and stop the communication with their spouses. This implies that these Muslim Families are really determined to go forward for their lives after the decision of getting a divorce.

Muslim families had to avoid and redirect their self also. They said that they had to go out to have some fun and tried not to entertain regrets. They have also mentioned that they were only laughing away things in order for them to go on and not being crazy. This implies that Muslim families were also hurt after the cutting of marriage. In their selves, they know there is still love but they have refused to accept it.

Muslim families had also to deal with the issues on children. They have mentioned that their children are really greatly affected after getting the divorce. They had to explain carefully everything to their children so that they will fully understand it. Further, the spouses also had to support their children morally and financially. This implies that even if they have arrived at divorce, Muslim families still allows and acknowledge the fact they are both parents to the children.

Muslim families also shared that the people around them supported them emotionally and spiritually. They were counting them as support mechanisms. They said that their friends and families were the people

whom they have assured their safety. They mingled more with friends to forget their problems momentarily. This implies the people around them are the one helping them to cope with their problem emotionally and psychologically. This is the assurance that they are loved and be love by the people around them both by friends and families.

The vital realization of this study is the divorce practices of Muslim families. This study magnifies the implication of different experiences of Muslim families undergone divorce, wherein we understood their practices. Finally the root cause of the study, the Muslim and non-Muslim community, for them to fully understand the life struggles of the before, during and after life divorce.

Moreover, this study helps couples to open their mind that understand the real essence of marriage is more important to bear in mind rather than looking at the technical problems, unless necessary, of the marriage life and end up in divorce.

In viewing the experiences of the Muslim families, it is clear that they undergone different practices and struggles before arriving at divorce. They also shared their insights by giving useful advices and elaborating the factors of the reasons why they have done the divorce.

Concluding Remarks

Based upon the results of this study, I enumerated several remarks. First, with the Divorce Practices of Muslim families, I often am mistaken that divorce practices in Islam is easy. I do not know how these families have gone through the divorce process and how were they able to overcome those crisis situation. It is also mistaken or misconceptions for those who wanted to convert to Islam just to get a divorce because divorce process is not easy, especially in Shari'ah court. I may not understand their reasons of getting the divorce, but those experiences taught them how to live the life they have now. Their experiences taught them how to become better fathers and mothers to their children now.

Second, their coping mechanisms were brought by the happiness not only by their family but also their friends. They also cling to the support of their parents and to the people around them. The moment they have decided to get a divorce, they have turned their sleeves to ask assistance and support, morally and spiritually, to their family and friends. It is the assurance that they are loved and will be loved by their parents and their friends that helps them stand still.

Upon probing to the stories of these divorce families, several advices coming from them came out. Their insights were important that every couple must carefully think more than twice when getting a divorce because divorce does not bring any good effect at all. The effect of the divorce also greatly affects the children psychologically because of the collateral damage brought. However, if this problem is not solved, then the Muslim families have advised to ask for a divorce properly. After all, there is life after divorce.

We should also not forget that Muslim families' experiences on divorce are subject for corrections and chances, as everybody is. Like everyone else, they are also trying to have a good life. Based on my study, it was better to let go their partners than to hurt each other as they have seen that their relationship is not working anymore. Life was tough for them as they face all the challenges brought to them but still fought for it.

The results of this study help everyone to empathize and sympathize with the struggles of the divorce families and for them to be understood.

To Muslims and Non-Muslim, who do not understand the divorce practice and process, this study will enlighten your mind that divorce really has a different process to take. This will give you an idea that Islamic divorce is not an easy thing to do.

To couples who are thinking or about to get divorce, face all the challenges and exhaust all possibilities first before resorting to divorce. Always think of your children as they will also be greatly affected after divorce. Divorce should be avoided if possible. Ask, pray and seek guidance not only with your family and friends but also to the Almighty Allah as He will enlighten your heart and not regret at the end of the day. It is still good to be united as one family. If you have weighed everything and it did not work, then, ask for a divorce properly. After all, there is life after divorce.

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