

Middle Years of Marriage: Love and Marital Satisfaction Among Wives

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In the middle years of marriage, marital satisfaction tends to decline, particularly among wives because of their caregiving roles for children and parents (*transgenerational squeeze*), and because their husbands focus more on their work. This may weaken love despite that love can provide happiness and lead to marital satisfaction. This study examined the relationships between love and marital satisfaction and determined which components of love that had the highest correlation with marital satisfaction. Data collected using questionnaires. Results showed that love had a positive relationship with wives' marital satisfaction in the middle years of marriage ($p < .001$). The components of love having significant relationships with marital satisfaction from the highest to the lowest correlation were intimacy, commitment, and passion.

Keywords: marital satisfaction, love, components of love, the middle years of marriage, wife.

Pada usia pertengahan perkawinan, kepuasan perkawinan biasanya akan menurun, terutama pada istri karena peran pengasuhan untuk anak dan orang tua (*transgenerational squeeze*), serta suami berfokus pada pekerjaan. Hal tersebut membuat turunnya cinta pada perkawinan, padahal cinta dapat memberikan kebahagiaan dan mengarah pada kepuasan perkawinan. Penelitian ini bertujuan melihat hubungan antara cinta dengan kepuasan perkawinan dan komponen cinta yang paling tinggi korelasinya dengan kepuasan perkawinan di periode tersebut. Pengambilan data menggunakan angket. Hasil menunjukkan cinta memiliki hubungan positif dengan kepuasan perkawinan pada istri di periode pertengahan perkawinan ($p < .001$). Komponen cinta dari yang paling tinggi ke paling rendah nilai korelasinya dengan kepuasan perkawinan adalah *intimacy*, *commitment*, dan *passion*.

Kata kunci: kepuasan perkawinan, cinta, komponen cinta, periode pertengahan perkawinan, istri.

Marital satisfaction reflects an evaluation towards parenting and communication issues and happiness experienced by husbands and wives in a marital relationship (Fowers & Olson, 1993). Marital satisfaction includes 10 aspects; that is, personality issues, communication, conflict resolution, financial management, leisure activities, sexual relationship, children and parenting, family and friends, equalitarian roles, and religious orientation (Fowers & Olson, 1989). Khan dan Aftab (2013) explains that marital satisfaction is a key factor to the successful of marriage. Marital satisfaction arises from happiness to love each other (Oprisan & Cristea, 2012). Love is considered impor-

tant in a marital relationship because three components of love interact and therefore, minimize conflict and lead to happiness and marital satisfaction (Sternberg in Muchtar, 2004; Sadiq, 2014). Previous survey indicates that 18 out of 20 (90%) wives in Surabaya agreed that love was a key factor in a marital relationship.

Love, according to Sternberg (1986), can be categorized into three components; that is, passion, intimacy, and commitment that interact to generate different types of love and express in acts of loving another person. Passion includes sexual drives and physical attraction, whereas intimacy is a feeling of closeness, attachment, and connectedness (Sternberg, 1986). Commitment can be divided into short-term and long-term commitment where short term commitment relates to a decision to love a person and long-term

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