

Psychological Stresses among Divorced Professional Women

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The study explored the psychological stresses due to divorce among professional women. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship of factors, impacts and coping mechanisms in divorce in relation to psychological stress among professional women. This research utilized the mixed method approach with sequential exploratory strategy. The quantitative data from Revised Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)-10 were administered to support the qualitative findings. This data gave an initial feature on psychological stress among divorced professional women. In this study, eighteen respondents participated by employing purposive sampling. The data gathered from the Malaysian stratified probability sample in which the divorce was indicated among respondents. The common background of all respondents were they worked at university or college. This study discovered that occupational prestige and stubbornness are two main psychological stresses which have affected their marriage. This study has produced a framework to raise awareness of forgiveness and skill of adjustment that enabled a divorced professional woman to seek emotional stability. It was proposed that this framework was used for a more thorough research on culture and social norms on a domestic level. For future research, it is recommended that a more in-depth qualitative method focusing on stress level in divorced among professional women were utilized for further studies. To conclude, a gap has identified and existed in life experiences among the professional women in developing countries.

Keywords: Psychological Stress, Divorce, Women, Marriage, Profession

1. INTRODUCTION

Many researchers in various dimensions from legislation to social and psychological factors had studied causes of divorce. In the Institute of legislation, Berardo and Shehan¹ mentioned the practicing family no-fault law created over 40% divorce rate that had low divorce rate as under 10%. Herring²⁹ noted that a pure fault-based system allows divorce only if the party proved that the other party committed adultery or behaved in an unacceptable way, but non-fault focused on divorce by agreement or on demand. Social factors² such as family income³, educational level, psychological factors^{4,5}, occupational status and emotional turmoil⁶ are the part of the causes igniting divorce. Social values and economic advancements⁷ had rapidly replaced traditional family value and the roles of

females in a family was considered part of the reason in divorce. It demonstrated that the divorce rate for Malaysia between 2000 and 2010 has inclined from 9.78% to 19.17%.⁸ It was especially serious when dealing with marital dissolution that involved children because this move led to single parenthood. For some reasons, many perceived divorce as having negative influences towards a family. Professional female divorcees may receive greater psychological stress as they are facing a challenge in their social class and family wealth when dealing with divorce.

2. METHODOLOGY

In this study, respondents participated voluntarily with purposive sampling where the criterions of selection are that they must be at least 3 years of being a professional, divorced and at least a university graduate or belong to 22