

Article

Navigating communication privacy in pseudo-administration: Indonesian female civil servant experiences of applying written divorce permission

Prahastiwi Utari^{1,*}, Pamela Nilan²¹ Communication Science, Faculty of Social and Political Science, Surakarta 57126, Indonesia² School of Humanities, Creative Industries and Social Science, University of Newcastle, Callaghan 2308, Australia* **Corresponding author:** Prahastiwi Utari, prahastiwi@staff.uns.ac.id

CITATION

Utari P, Nilan P. (2024). Navigating communication privacy in pseudo-administration: Indonesian female civil servant experiences of applying written divorce permission. *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development*. 8(8): 7814. <https://doi.org/10.24294/jipd.v8i8.7814>

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 5 July 2024

Accepted: 1 August 2024

Available online: 8 August 2024

COPYRIGHT



Copyright © 2024 by author(s).

Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development is published by EnPress Publisher, LLC. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons

Attribution (CC BY) license.

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Abstract: Divorce for female civil servants in Indonesia is more complex than for non-civil servants due to a pseudo-administrative process. This condition requires submitting a written application for divorce permission to their agency and proceeding through multiple lengthy stages. During this process, women must verbally disclose sensitive personal details to state authorities. Failure to obtain written permission or to report the divorce within a specific period can result in disciplinary action. This paper examines how female civil servants protect their privacy while seeking divorce permission, focusing on managing personal information, controlling divorce-related details at work, and handling the information turbulence that arises. The researcher collected data from 12 female civil servants at Indonesia's Directorate General of Taxes (DGT) who had applied for divorce permission. The findings reveal the subjective experiences and strategies women civil servants use to manage sensitive personal issues. The quasi-administrative nature of the divorce permit process introduces complexities that extend beyond formal procedures. Regulations governing the submission of divorce permits, overseen by government agencies, often add to the burden these women face, neglecting their privacy and psychological well-being. Impartial individuals and gender preferences in the verification team can exacerbate distress. Therefore, revising the divorce permit regulations to enhance privacy and sensitivity is crucial. The study recommends early information about the process and communication training for maintaining privacy.

Keywords: divorce permit; female civil servants; privacy management; pseudo-administration

1. Introduction

Divorce is extensively researched in Southeast Asia, especially in Indonesia (Ghani et al., 2017; Jones, 2023). In Indonesia, the state regulates divorce, and numerous studies have demonstrated the state's substantial role in regulating citizens' marriage and divorce through state and religious legislation (Kholidah et al., 2024; Rinaldo et al., 2024; Saraswati, 2020). The Republic of Indonesia's Law No. 1 of 1974 governs divorce. Divorce is declared valid if recorded according to applicable laws and regulations and according to each individual's laws of religion and belief. Legally, the objective of marriage is to create a happy, long-lasting, and prosperous family; Hence, the state does not promote divorce.

Furthermore, marriage is a religious icon in Indonesia (Pranawati, 2017). The primary objective of marriage is to establish a harmonious family unit, commonly called "keluarga sakinah". Consequently, divorce is also subject to religious regulation. The majority of the Indonesian population adheres to Islam, which recognizes two divorce categories: the case of the husband who sues for divorce is "cerai talak", or if the wife sues, it is called "gugat cerai" (Compilation of Islamic

Law in Indonesia). This divorce form is a sensitive issue (**Figure 1**). Accordingly, there have been many studies of women filing for divorce in religious courts (Purwanto et al., 2020; Saadah, 2018).

INDONESIA'S DIVORCE RATE 2018-2022

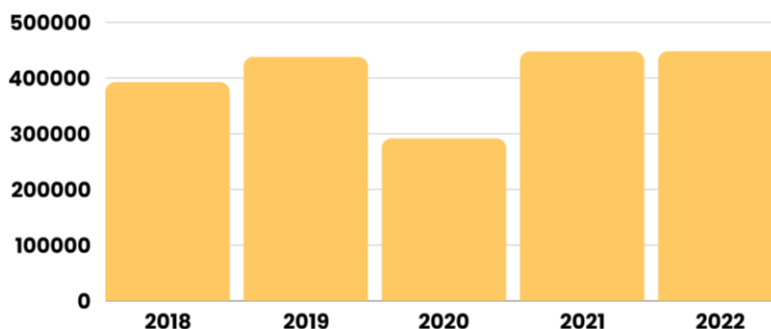


Figure 1. Indonesia’s divorce rate 2018–2022.

Source: Statistics Center, 2024.

The divorce rate in Indonesia has increased every year. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows that the divorce rate in 2017, 2018 and 2019 experienced a significant increase from 374,516 to 408,202 and increased again to 439,002 in 2019. This divorce rate experienced a drastic decline in 2020 by 33.56% to 291,677 cases. Data from the Coordinating Minister for Human Affairs and Culture, this is a positive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (Detik.com). Meanwhile, data from **Figure 2** shows that the divorce rate rose again to 53.51% to 447,743 cases.

CIVIL SERVANT DIVORCE DECISIONS IN 2012 - 2021

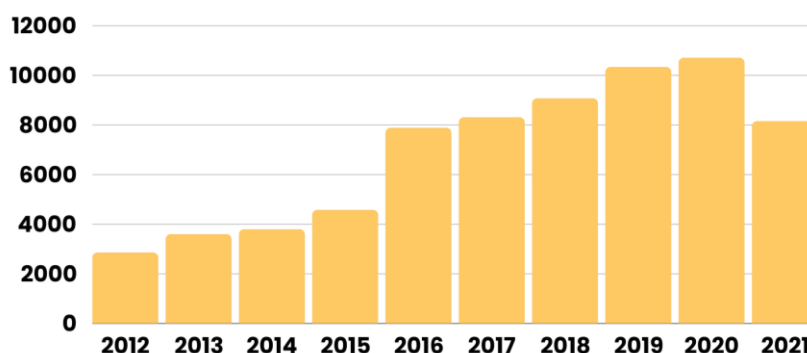


Figure 2. Civil servant divorce decisions in 2012–2021.

Source: Supreme Court of Justice, 2024.

The divorce rate among civil servants also shows an increasing trend from year to year, starting in 2012 with 2862 cases, in the next eight years in 2020 it has reached almost 5 times 10,712 cases, except for the COVID-19 period which decreased by 23.89% from the previous year.

Figure 3 shows the number of divorce applications that occurred in DGT from

2018–2021 in quantity, the total number of female employees filed more divorce applications than the total number of male employees, namely 112 to 107 people.

CIVIL SERVANT DIVORCE DECISIONS IN 2012 - 2021

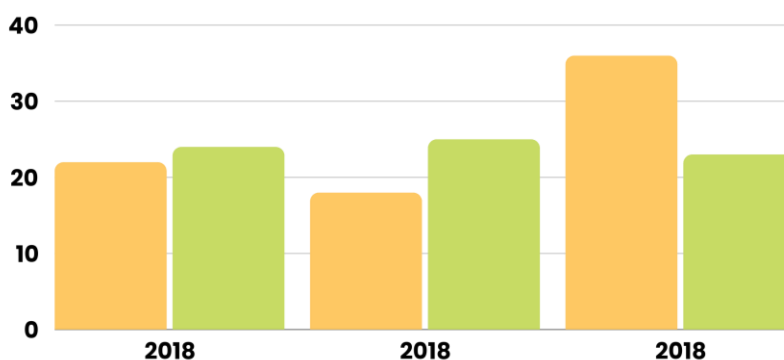


Figure 3. Application for divorce of DGT civil servants in 2018–2021.

Source: Directorate General of Taxes, 2024.

Incompatibility, carelessness, and a spouse’s unfavorable attitude are the leading causes of divorce among women (Norizan et al., 2017). In detail, the husband could be determined to have engaged in adulterous behavior, become a difficult-to-cure drinker, addict, or gambler, abandoned his wife for two years in a row without permission or a justifiable reason, or obtained a five-year or longer jail sentence. Another contributing element is when the spouse commits acts of cruelty or severe abuse that endangers the other person. In terms of incompatibility, there is frequently ongoing conflict and disagreement between the husband and wife, with no possibility of restoring peace in the home.

In 2021, this was Indonesia’s leading cause of divorce, with 279,205 cases (BPS, 2022). According to Jones (2021), this characteristic defines modern divorce. Divorce eventuates from the pressures of urban life, tensions in balancing work responsibilities and household arrangements when both spouses work, decreased tolerance for remaining in an unsatisfactory marriage, and increased societal acceptance of divorce. The number of women applying for divorce has increased in direct proportion to women’s awareness of their rights as wives (Saadah, 2018). Women’s education increases access to information, economic independence, and guidance from many institutions, allowing them to campaign for their right to divorce. Divorce is no longer considered a failure; instead, women view divorce as a legal option to dissolve a marriage that is no longer working.

The phenomenon of a growing number of women seeking divorce also affects civil officials in Indonesia. A 2020 assessment of data from the Ministry of Administrative Reform and Bureaucratic Reform showed that of the total number of divorce cases in Indonesia (8996), slightly over 17% were begun by civil personnel, with women filing 70% of such divorce proceedings. The rising number of female public personnel applying for divorce is supported by their earning potential (Rinaldo et al., 2023), which allows them to live independently. Financial independence makes it easier for women civil servants to receive legal aid, employ lawyers, and go to court to restore their rights, all in the public domain. Class and education contribute to

significant differences in divorce experiences and trajectories in Indonesia (Saraswati, 2020).

Divorce for female civil servants in Indonesia is more complex than for non-civil servants due to a pseudo-administrative process. This requires submitting a written application for divorce permission to their agency and proceeding through multiple lengthy stages. During this process, women must verbally disclose sensitive personal details to state authorities. Failure to obtain written permission or to report the divorce within a specific period can result in disciplinary action. The submission of applications for divorce among female civil servants is quasi-administrative. While obtaining written permission to file for divorce might appear to be a formality, the application must go through a complex interior mechanism (Suisno, 2016). The written divorce permit application must attach supporting legal evidence, which will be evaluated level by level within the organizational structure. Some sanctions can be applied if the submitted evidence is violated. The applicant must also participate in a mediation process, which can result in a long waiting time.

In the context of divorce proceedings in Indonesia, there are notable differences in the procedures and legal implications pertaining to Muslims and non-Muslims, as well as to men and women. Muslim civil servants are required to obtain permission from their superiors before applying for divorce at the Religious Court, with supporting reasons in accordance with Islamic law. The divorce process continues in the Religious Court, which refers to the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI), with a mediation mechanism to reconcile the two parties. In contrast, non-Muslim civil servants are also required to obtain permission from their superiors before filing for divorce at the District Court, following procedures based on the Civil Code, which also includes mediation, although not to the same extent as at the Religious Court.

It is important to note that personal divorce is a stressful experience for most individuals, especially women, because they face a potentially stigmatized reputation. Women who file for divorce experience a range of emotions, including fear and shame if others find out. The situation is even worse for them when they must disclose the most private aspects of their marital relationship to colleagues and superiors at work. They might feel they have failed as wives and mothers. They might see themselves as disobedient women regarding their religious beliefs or family (Saraswati, 2020).

As a result, women must manage their privacy throughout the divorce process to avoid stigmatization (Steuber and Solomon, 2011). Most academics conduct quantitative research on divorce utilizing statistical, demographic, and health data (Jones, 2021, 2023). There has been no qualitative study on women public officials seeking permission to file for divorce, let alone their experiences as actors or subjects. An examination of women's experiences in obtaining permission to divorce may hopefully provide a path forward for a woman dealing with divorce.

This paper addresses two questions. First, how do women civil servants safeguard their privacy while applying for written permission for divorce? Second, how does the pseudo-administrative mechanism in applying for written authorization for divorce influence their management of personal information and navigation of their privacy in a professional context?

The research on privacy management in applying written divorce licenses for female government officials seeks to provide more information on how social norms

and bureaucratic structures interact in people's lives. Furthermore, it offers a novel viewpoint on privacy management in a highly personal and sensitive setting within a formal and regulated work environment. Finally, it emphasizes the need for communication and negotiation skills to navigate the bureaucratic process.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Communication privacy management in the application for divorce permission of female civil servants in Indonesia

Divorce is a highly personal and emotionally charged matter, particularly for women (Parker, 2016). Consequently, disclosing this deeply personal information to others as a prerequisite for obtaining written permission to divorce is challenging. For women civil servants, the application requires significant time and energy. The woman has to consider the management of information, the control of it, and how to maintain information turbulence during the disclosure process. It is, therefore, a question of how individuals make vital decisions about disclosing personal information so as not to attract stigma (Steuber and Solomon, 2011). Sharing personal information with an outsider can result in feelings of anxiety, fear, risk, and vulnerability (Petronio and Child, 2020).

The existence of rules for applying for divorce permission is typically only realized when a female civil servant forms the intention to divorce. These rules can cause anxiety about the sources of information and to whom they should turn for information about the procedures. Uncertainty regarding whether the application for permission will be accepted, the requirements and procedures, and how long the application process will take forms a constant dialectic between the desire to hide and the desire to reveal (Petronio and Child, 2020).

Petronio (2013) proposes three essential elements for preserving privacy so that individuals do not experience psychological pain when disclosing information. First, individuals are the only owners of personal information about themselves. When someone discloses personal information to another person, that person becomes, in specific ways, a co-owner of that information. Co-ownership implies unique, agreed rights and duties. In this case, when female civil servants apply for written divorce permission, they must understand the rules governing such an application, the supporting evidence required, and the process of reaching an agreement on responsibility as a co-owner of information with the senior civil servants who will review their application.

Second, Petronio (2013) contends that individuals often govern their data by adopting privacy rules that specify how much information will be available to others. Privacy standards help people decide where and when to reveal or conceal personal information. Essential considerations include gendered expectations, risk-benefit calculations, motivations, and contextual conditions. When the border categorization rules are "thick" (non-porous), they have fewer pores. When boundaries are "thin," they become more porous and permeable. The bounds of what information civil servant women should provide to their superiors to gain divorce permission are an essential tactic in the textual communication of their application. The "permeability"

of the material could substantially affect the final granting of permission to divorce, so they must be attentive to reveal and keep their private information.

Finally, According to Petronio, disclosing a divorce can lead to information turbulence, manifesting as rumors or gossip. The divorce applicant must manage this disclosure to avoid scandal. In Indonesia, this is particularly challenging as divorced women are often stigmatized (Parker, 2016; Supratman, 2019). Traditionally, women are seen as the maintainers of family peace, serving as caregivers (Saraswati, 2020). Consequently, society tends to blame women for marital breakdowns, labeling them as “unfaithful,” “unfilial,” “incompetent,” and “unloving” (Saraswati, 2020). As perceptions of divorce in Indonesia evolve, it becomes essential to explore the mental preparation and adaptation strategies used by female civil servants seeking divorce.

2.2. Rules for divorce of civil servants in Indonesia

The state has established several legal bases for regulating divorce among its civil servants. These include: 1). Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 10 of 1983 concerning Marriage and Divorce Permits for Civil Servants. 2). Circular Letter No: 08/SE/1983 concerning Marriage and Divorce Permits for Civil Servants. The latter provides a detailed explanation of the former. Additionally, it references Government Regulation No. 45 of 1990, which concerns amendments to Government Regulation No. 10 of 1983. The amendments emphasize that civil servants intending to divorce must first obtain permission from the civil service itself.

The State Personnel Administration Agency’s Circular Letter No. 48/SE/1990 provides guidelines for marriage and divorce permits for government personnel. Additionally, Government Regulation No. 94 of 2021 on Civil Servants Discipline is relevant. Hadi (2021) notes that the term “mandatory” indicates no negotiation for the applicant. Suisno (2016) describes civil servants’ divorce in Indonesia as a pseudo-administrative process, requiring written authorization from direct and higher superiors. In summary, divorce authorization is obtained through a hierarchical system, starting with the immediate superior and escalating to higher authorities (Article 3, Circular Letter No: 08/SE/1983 on Marriage and Divorce Permits for Civil Servants).

In the DG Taxation, civil servants intending to divorce must follow an eight-step compliance process: 1) Submitting a written request for divorce permission to their immediate superior with supporting evidence. 2) The unit head checks the application’s completeness, returning it if incomplete. 3) If complete, the unit leader and implementation team verify the plaintiff’s case and mediate with the couple. 4) The mediation process is reported to the unit leader. 5) The unit leader forwards the application letter, examination minutes (BAP), examination report (LHP), suggestions, and supporting documents to the superior official. 6) The superior official recommends the Minister of Finance grant permission for employees at levels III/a to IV/e, and the Director General of Taxes for levels I/a to II/d. Divorce can proceed through civil or religious courts only after written approval is obtained. **Figure 4** illustrates this process.

Regulation No. 10/1983. They include demotion to a rank that is one level lower for a maximum of one year, exemption from office, dismissal with honor not at their request as a civil servant, and even dishonorable dismissal as a civil servant according to Government Regulation Number 30 of 1980 concerning Disciplinary Regulations for Civil Servants (Suisno, 2016). The sanctions outlined in the latest regulation, Number 94 of 2021, concerning disciplinary measures for civil servants who violate the provisions of government regulation Number 10 of 1983 concerning marriage and divorce permits for civil servants are pretty severe.

2.3. Methods

This research uses phenomenology (Morrow et al., 2015) through in-depth interviews, starting by selecting subjects with firsthand experience of the phenomenon. Researchers develop open-ended questions to deeply explore these experiences and conduct interviews in a comfortable environment. During interviews, researchers listen attentively and record responses without interruption. Transcriptions of the recordings are then analyzed to identify key themes and patterns. This involves a thorough understanding of the meaning behind each response. Finally, researchers compile reports that integrate findings with relevant literature, providing new insights into the phenomenon and reflecting on the research process and data implications. The study aimed to understand how civil servant women meet permit requirements, protect their privacy, and adapt to information turbulence.

Mendoza, for example, conducted phenomenology research (2019) to investigate how Egyptian women deal with divorce in their daily lives. The study examines several aspects of their difficulties in preserving marriage and living after divorce. Several other studies that use descriptive phenomenology have successfully characterized phenomena that are not immediately evident but emerge in subjective individual experience narratives. For example, Linbo et al. (2020) conducted interviews with nurses to examine communication hurdles between doctors and nurses, particularly during night duty. Supianto et al. (2020) found that the descriptive phenomenology method effectively clarified the issues faced by Indonesian social science educators.

This study employed a phenomenological approach to examine the experiences of individuals who sought divorce permission as civil servants in accordance with Government Regulation No. 45 of 1990. Phenomenology was selected as the research approach because it enables researchers to gain insight into and examine the subjective experiences of informants within the context of their direct experience. As part of the research methodology, 12 informants were selected who had previously experienced the process of applying for divorce permission in writing. The informants' ages ranged from 27 to 41 years old, with a mean age of 33. The age at which marriage occurs varies considerably, from one year to 14 years. The length of service of the informants is reported to range from five to fifteen years. The number of children among the informants ranges from zero to two. The informants' former spouses are civil servants and non-civil servants. The majority of ex-husbands who are civil servants are situated in different locations from their wives or in long-distance relationships. There are two primary patterns observed in the informants' marital experiences: long-distance

relationships and cohabitation in the same residence. Of the 12 informants, six report living their married lives with a long-distance relationship pattern, while the other six reside together in the same house.

3. Results

3.1. Privacy management in the divorce permit application process

This study employs management privacy theory (Petronio, 2013) to elucidate the processes undertaken by female civil servants to pursue divorce permits. It considers the dynamics of information ownership, control, and turbulence, as revealed through interviews with informants. The findings are as follows:

a Understanding of the Rules for Applying for Divorce Permission

The data results related to respondents' knowledge of the rules for applying for a divorce permit demonstrate variations in their understanding and attitude toward the process. Some informants, such as I-1 and I-4, were unaware of the rules for applying for a divorce license until they were confronted with the necessity. In contrast, other informants, such as I-2, I-7, I-9 demonstrated superior knowledge of the subject matter. I-2 and I-10 possessed detailed expertise due to his experience working in the secretariat, while I-7 sought information from various sources. Nevertheless, despite their familiarity with the subject matter, some respondents, such as I-3, I-5 and I-12, possessed only a general understanding of the process, lacking a comprehensive grasp of its intricacies.

Furthermore, respondents indicated that they experienced difficulties and discomfort when disclosing information about divorce in a professional setting. Some respondents expressed embarrassment and concern about potential negative social consequences, such as I-2 and I-6's feelings of shame associated with the perceived stigma of divorce and I-6's ambivalence about disclosing a highly personal matter to others, particularly superiors. The respondents preferred revealing the information to female friends rather than family members, citing feelings of comfort and safety in the former context. For instance, respondents I-1 and I-2, I-5, I-9 shared the info with female friends before disclosing it to family members. This condition suggests a need for greater privacy and emotional support in dealing with divorce issues in the official environment.

b Disclosure Dilemmas to Inform Divorce in the Workplace

The decision to disclose a divorce in the workplace is a complex one, influenced by a range of factors that can contribute to feelings of discomfort among women. Initially, there was a sense of embarrassment and concern about the social stigma attached to divorce. For instance, informant I-2, I-9 and I-10 experienced shame in disclosing personal matters related to family disgrace in the workplace. Similarly, I-6 and I-12 reported ambivalence regarding explaining susceptible personal issues, particularly to superiors. The fear of negative judgment and potential gossip in the work environment is also a significant reason, as evidenced by I-3's experience of divorce being the topic of conversation in the office. This shame and stigma can result in social isolation and high emotional distress, thereby making it difficult for individuals to open up about their situation.

Secondly, the administrative complexities and necessity to disclose personal

details further compound the dilemma. Some respondents, such as I-4, I-9 expressed confusion about disclosing personal matters at work. Others, like I-7 and I-11, cited administrative challenges, particularly in gathering supporting evidence. Furthermore, some respondents indicated that disclosing the divorce would negatively impact their professional image and exacerbate the psychological burden. As illustrated by I-5 and I-12 there was a preference to limit the number of individuals aware of the situation. This condition was compounded by the necessity to identify the most appropriate individuals to inform initially, frequently female friends who were perceived as more reliable and provided emotional support, as opposed to family members who might offer a negative response or further stress.

c Co-Ownership Divorce Information

The informants indicated a greater inclination to confide in female friends about their divorce outside of work than family members. These conditions were attributed to several key factors. Primarily, female friends were perceived to possess a superior understanding of the situation and the capacity to provide more effective emotional support. For instance, I-1 and I-2 observed that they felt more at ease and secure disclosing personal matters to a female friend, given the perception that such a confidant could maintain confidentiality and offer assistance without judgment. They regarded female friends as more empathetic listeners and as individuals capable of providing the moral support needed in this challenging context.

Secondly, there was a concern that the family would react adversely or exert further pressure. Some respondents, such as I-4 and I-6, expressed concern that involving the family could exacerbate the situation. They felt that the family might not offer constructive solutions but instead might blame or add to the emotional burden. For example, I-4 posited that extended family members might exacerbate the problem without offering constructive solutions. Additionally, concealing information from family members can help to circumvent feelings of shame or sadness that they may experience, as I-6 observed. This avoidance was motivated by a desire to shield family members from the potential distress that might result from their involvement. In contrast, they regarded female friends as a more practical and non-judgmental source of support.

3.2. Privacy control

a Implicit Rules for Divorce Information

The informant had developed implicit rules for raising the issue of divorce in an official manner that reflected caution and emotional consideration. Some of them, such as I-1 and I-6, and I-9 chose to open up gradually and selectively. They tend to start by sharing general information only and provide progressively more details only when necessary. For example, I-1 mentioned that she was open to superiors and friends but was cautious in disclosing details and taking what was required.

Other respondents, such as I-2 and I-4, I-11 are more inclined to adhere to existing standard operating procedures (SOPs) to guarantee that tasks are completed correctly and following established regulations. I-2 examined the significance of adhering to standard operating procedures (SOPs) to guarantee the accuracy and appropriateness of actions. They may perceive that by following SOPs, they can

circumvent miscommunications and ensure the professional and appropriate dissemination of information. This approach also reflects a desire to uphold professionalism and mitigate the adverse impact of disclosing personal information in the workplace. These implicit rules illustrate that respondents strive to balance the need to share crucial information, maintain privacy, and avoid negative stigma.

b Agreement of Individuals Involved in the Process

In the context of a civil servant seeking a divorce permit, the involvement of other individuals is subject to strict regulation following the prevailing standard operating procedures (SOPs). I-1, and I-10 guarantees that only the individuals explicitly outlined in the rules may be involved. Meanwhile, I-2 and I-7 advised the team leader only to allow specific individuals who could attend to ensure that the process remained in accordance with the relevant provisions. I-3 also highlighted the importance of comfort, noting that a sense of unease may arise if a large number of individuals who were not interested were present. Consequently, female civil servants tried to ascertain who was required to attend and ensure the presence of relevant individuals. They asked the team leader to verify the identity of anyone who attended.

Furthermore, there is a gender preference, with I-6 and I-9 reporting feelings of discomfort when the verification team consists of men. However, there are also I-7 and I-12s who are aware of the identity of the verification team members, demonstrating transparency in the process. Nevertheless, some individuals such as I-4 and I-8 do not object to including others on the verification team, indicating flexibility and openness to the established process. Overall, the involvement of other individuals in the process of applying for a civil servant's divorce permit is strictly regulated, with attention paid to the comfort and privacy of the parties involved.

3.3. Information turbulence

a A Breach of Trust

A lack of trust is frequently identified as a primary contributor to workplace information dissemination. As I-1 and I-6 notes, instances of trust violations often originate from individuals with whom one has close professional relationships. I-2 further highlights the rapid transmission of information through gossip, which can spread like a disease within a workplace. I-3 underscores the role of close friends as a conduit for the propagation of such turbulence. Additionally, I-4 draws attention to the heterogeneous nature of modern workplaces, which can facilitate the rapid spread of information.

It is noteworthy that, according to I-5 and I-9 the individual initially made aware of the matter, such as the immediate supervisor, is frequently perceived as untrustworthy. This condition introduces an additional layer of complexity to the maintenance of confidentiality. Meanwhile, I-6 and I-10 underscores the intriguing nature of the topic of women's divorces, which frequently serves as a focal point for discussions that encompass a multitude of ancillary narratives. In the I-7 view, the community considers divorce a taboo topic, yet it has become the number one topic of conversation. Finally, I-8 and I-12 notes that breaches of trust can originate from various sources, making it challenging to trace the source of the gossip. These views illustrate how breaches of trust create information turbulence in the work environment,

particularly in the context of divorce applications by female civil servants.

This research can elucidate the fact that the issue of women's divorce is a susceptible and controversial topic, often embellished with various additions that exacerbate the situation. In society, divorce is a taboo topic, yet it has become a subject of considerable interest and speculation. The sources of this interest and breach of trust can originate from various directions, making it challenging to trace the origins of the interest. This situation contributes to information turbulence in the work environment, creating an atmosphere that is not conducive to women who are applying for divorce permits.

b The Problem of Divorce Stigma

The stigma of divorced women is a source of issues in information turbulence, based on the views of each informant. I-1, I-9 and I-12 states that women who apply for divorce are often considered immoral women. I-4 added that they are also considered incapable of caring for the household. According to I-3, this stigma reflects the view that women are selfish and only selfish. I-6 and I-9 emphasizes that divorced women are often considered incapable of balancing work and household affairs.

Moreover, I-8, I-10 and I-12 indicates that this stigma is frequently linked to unsuccessful long-distance relationships. I-6 elucidates the perspectives of the community that perceives divorced women to be deficient in their capacity to uphold Islamic values and establish a *Sakinah* (happy) family. I-7 indicates that divorced women are regarded as incapable of coping with adversity. Lastly, I-8 and I-11 posits that divorced women may be subject to stigma due to their possession of educational qualifications and independent income. Collectively, these views illustrate how the negative stigma against divorced women can serve as a significant source of information turbulence in the workplace.

The negative stigma attached to divorced women can be seen as the primary source of workplace gossip, which has the potential to impact social dynamics and the overall work atmosphere. Negative perceptions, such as the assumption that divorced women are immoral, incapable of managing their households, selfish, and unable to balance work and family responsibilities, collectively contribute to the formation of opinions that are detrimental to divorced women. This stigma not only reflects rigid and patriarchal social values but also exacerbates the situation by disseminating inaccurate information and intensifying psychological distress for women in such circumstances.

This stigma demonstrates an absence of empathy and understanding in the workplace concerning employees' issues, particularly those about women. Consequently, divorced women are subjected to gossip that not only damages their reputation but also creates an unprofessional and distrustful work environment. In conclusion, the negative stigma against divorced women is not only detrimental to the individual concerned but also damages professional relationships and the overall work climate, emphasizing the necessity for more inclusive and supportive attitudes and policy changes in the workplace.

c Dealing with Gossip

The results of this study demonstrate the various methods employed by each informant to overcome gossip in the workplace. I-7, I-9 and I-8 indicated that the most effective approach is disregarding the gossip and acknowledging its prevalence. I-2

does not prioritize risk mitigation but instead focuses on avoiding excessive attention to gossip. I-3 and I-5 attempts to overcome gossip by disclosing the issue to a trusted colleague and disseminating accurate information.

The I-4 principle stipulates that the party bearing responsibility for a given risk must refrain from disclosing information to the public that is not pertinent to the matter in question. If the rumor is deemed particularly egregious, I-10 feels compelled to address it directly. Conversely, I-6 eschews any response to the rumor, believing that doing so would merely exacerbate the issue. I-12 is aware that confronting rumors carries inherent risks but is nevertheless prepared to do so courageously. Finally, I-8 elects to allow rumor to pass without undue concern and instead concentrates on obtaining the requisite clearance, giving the rumor relatively minor consideration.

From these disparate perspectives, it becomes evident that individuals employ various strategies when confronted with office gossip. These strategies encompass a spectrum of approaches, from outright disregard to delegating such matters to trusted colleagues and the confrontation of the source of the gossip. This multifaceted response reflects the unique personal strategies that individuals have developed to navigate the complexities of workplace interactions and maintain their professional reputations.

3.4. Pseudo-Administrative approval of divorce for female civil servants

The management of women's privacy in the context of divorce permits within government agencies for female civil servants is closely related to the rules governing the filing of divorce permits, described as pseudo-administrative. In this context, the term 'pseudo-administrative' refers to rules that formally govern procedures and allow for personal and institutional intervention and influence. These rules aim to maintain administrative order, but they often fail to consider the privacy aspect of particular importance for female civil servants. These rules include:

a **Written Application for Divorce**

While applying for a written divorce license for female civil servants, the informants expressed various views regarding the challenges and suggestions associated with preparing the application. I-1, I-7 and I-10 articulated their uncertainty regarding transcribing their thoughts into written form, whereas I-2 underscored the significance of selecting the most appropriate vocabulary. I-8 proposed that the submission be concise and focus on the main points, while I-3 and I-11 added that the points should be clear. I-5 stated that the writing should be brief, precise, and to the point, and I-4 and I-6 suggested seeking assistance from individuals who have previously filed for divorce.

The informants indicated that applying for a divorce license in writing requires clarity, precision of wording, and a focus on the core issues. The process frequently necessitates assistance from more experienced individuals to guarantee that all pertinent points are accurately conveyed. While drafting these applications is not straightforward, with the appropriate help and guidance, divorce applications more effectively and efficiently.

This research examined submitting a written divorce permit, representing a pivotal juncture for female civil servants seeking to initiate a divorce proceeding. This

process is often fraught with confusion, particularly concerning the selection of appropriate terminology and the construction of coherent and concise sentences. Female civil servants find it beneficial to seek guidance from those who have previously undergone a similar process when drafting these permission letters. The complexity of the drafting process often stems from the necessity of ensuring the inclusion of all crucial information and its appropriate conveyance. This process necessitates meticulous thought and consideration to ensure that the outcome meets the requisite standards and the authorities' expectations.

b Collected Supporting Evidence

Applying for a divorce license presented a significant challenge for the informants, particularly in collecting supporting evidence. I-1 and I-6 indicated that all supporting evidence must be legalized, which was perceived as a substantial burden. I-10 and I-12 also reported feeling a considerable burden due to the necessity of collecting supporting proof from the neighborhood. I-3 and I-9 described the challenge of imagining that everyone would be aware of their problems. I-4 added that dealing with external parties, such as the Kelurahan and Kecamatan, required a considerable time investment. I-11 expressed concern about the inhumane nature of addressing personal issues that should be public knowledge.

Despite the embarrassment, I-2 asserted that gathering corroborating evidence must still be completed following the applicable regulations. I-5 acknowledged the significance of a friend's role in gathering corroborating evidence due to the emotional burden experienced. I-8 persisted in gathering corroborating evidence to ensure that the requirements were met. This research found the challenges reflect informants' difficulties in maintaining their privacy while fulfilling the administrative requirements necessary for the divorce process.

c Administrative Check of Supporting Evidence

The administrative examination of supporting documents in applying for a divorce license for female civil servants presents several challenges for the informants. I-1 and I-9 indicated that the review process is complex due to the necessity of examining each supporting document individually. I-2 further noted that, despite their efforts, deficiencies often arise that require addressing as requested by the verification team. However, some (I-3 and I-5) found the review team cooperative. Nevertheless, I-4 and I-2 cautioned that if data is missing, the verification team will inevitably return the submission for completion, which can be highly frustrating.

I-10 articulated exasperation with the verification team's consistent identification of deficiencies in the writing system and the supporting evidence. I-6 recounted her experience completing the supporting data on two or three occasions, which she found to be a significant challenge. Nevertheless, I-7 acknowledged the necessity of patience, given that the verification team operated according to established procedures and SOPs. Ultimately, I-8 underscored that despite the arduous and time-consuming process, she still endeavored to address all the deficiencies identified by the verification team to conclude the matter. These perspectives illustrate that informants strive to fulfill all the stipulated requirements despite the administrative examination process's demanding and often challenging nature for proof of support.

The administrative checks conducted by informants on the supporting evidence indicate that this process is highly intricate and requires considerable precision. Some

respondents indicated that each supporting evidence must be individually verified, frequently resulting in fatigue and frustration. There were instances when the verification team deemed the data provided inadequate, necessitating additions or corrections, which could require additional time and effort. Respondents perceived the verification team to be meticulous in their standard operating procedures (SOPs), which, although prolonging the process, also ensured the completeness and alignment of all submitted evidence with the specified requirements.

d A Core Meeting with the Verification Team

The central meeting with the verification team represented the most challenging phase of the divorce license application process for informants. I-1 and I-3 described the experience as feeling like she was on trial in front of the team, which she found to be a highly challenging aspect of the process. I-2 reported feeling particularly distressed when asked about highly personal matters, which added to the overall mental burden. I-9 and I-11 further elaborated that the discomfort was intensified by the necessity of disclosing personal issues in the presence of a team of male individuals. I-4 additionally noted that the sheer number of parties involved in the verification team contributed to heightened insecurity and discomfort.

I-5 found it challenging to disclose very private matters to people who were her superiors. I-8 felt like an accused person in front of the review team, which made the process very stressful. I-5 admitted that she had difficulty responding to clarifications without emotion, and her emotional strength often ended in tears. Nevertheless, I-12 remained resilient, stating that whatever the stigma attached after verification, the important thing for her was to get the permit she wanted.

The meeting with the verification team profoundly impacted the informants, affecting their mental and emotional well-being. The process entailed disclosing profoundly personal information and facing judgment from multiple parties. Nevertheless, the informants persisted in navigating this process to obtain the permits they sought.

e Mediation Phase

The informants identified the mediation phase of the divorce application process as the most challenging and stressful aspect. I-1, I-3, I-10 described the mediation process as the most demanding, primarily due to the necessity of reuniting with the husband from whom she sought a divorce. This condition resulted in uncertainty regarding the appropriate course of action. Fortunately for I-2 her husband did not desire reunification, allowing for a separate mediation session, which she found considerably more beneficial. Similarly, I-7 found it advantageous that her supervisor facilitated a separate mediation session, which reduced her mental burden.

I-4 and I-6 perceived sitting together in one forum and sharing the most intimate details of their lives as a mentally taxing experience. I-5 disclosed to the supervisor that her husband's has volatile temperament. As a result, she and her husband were permitted to engage in separate mediation, which she perceived as a more beneficial approach. I-11 also concurred that separate mediation was preferable, as it allowed the team to tailor their recommendations based on the specific circumstances of each individual. I-9 additionally noted that in her case, her husband was not amenable to being present during mediation, and thus, the team opted for separate mediation, which she appreciated. I-8 stated that from the outset, she prepared to comply with the

requirements outlined in the standard operating procedure (SOPs), including participating in mediation with her husband. For her, the most crucial objective was to conclude the process despite the necessity of engaging in mediation together.

The findings of this study indicate that, despite the inherent challenges and stressors associated with mediation, some informants reported perceiving benefits from separate mediation. This approach was perceived to alleviate mental burden and provide relief. However, those required to engage in joint mediation, despite its inherent difficulties, still adhere to the prescribed procedures to complete the divorce proceedings.

Overall, the results demonstrate that the regulations governing the submission of written requests for divorce among civil servants (PNS) in Indonesia are, in essence, quasi-administrative. The process is inherently complex and laden with demanding requirements. Although the process is ostensibly administrative, it entails fulfilling many stringent and meticulous requirements in practice. The procedure commences with applying for a divorce license, which must be substantiated by substantial supporting documentation. This documentation has been subjected to rigorous examination and verification by a designated team. This process frequently entails a considerable investment of time and adds to the administrative burden on the civil servant concerned.

Once the supporting evidence has been verified, women civil servants who have filed for divorce must meet with the verification team. This meeting aims to guarantee the integrity and accuracy of the evidence presented. Furthermore, the mediation phase constitutes a pivotal aspect of this procedure. This phase explores the potential for reconciliation between the parties in dispute. This process is time-consuming and labor-intensive for the civil servants filing for divorce. Given the numerous steps and requirements, this rule appears to be more akin to a complex administrative obstacle than a straightforward procedure.

The implementation of Government Regulation No. 45 of 1990, which requires civil servants to obtain their superior's approval before initiating divorce, raises significant questions about gender equality. Although intended to prevent hasty divorces and consider family welfare, the regulation can disproportionately burden women, who often face greater obstacles and social pressures than men. This dynamic can exacerbate gender inequality, especially in patriarchal societies where women experience more significant social pressure during divorce proceedings. To protect women's rights and eliminate discrimination, the mediation process for divorce must be fair, impartial, and sensitive to these gender-specific challenges. Ensuring that divorce procedures are administered without bias is crucial to providing female civil servants equal access to support and justice. Regular evaluation of these policies is necessary to prevent unintentional gender bias and uphold the principles of gender equality throughout the divorce process.

3.5. Discussion

The management of women's privacy in the context of divorce permits within government agencies for female civil servants is closely related to the rules governing the filing of divorce permits, which may describe as pseudo-administrative. In this

context, the term 'pseudo-administrative' refers to rules that formally govern procedures and allow for personal and institutional intervention and influence. These rules aim to maintain administrative order, but they often fail to consider the privacy aspect of particular importance for female civil servants (Suisno, 2016)

Female civil servants who apply for divorce encounter circumstances in which their privacy is not adequately protected (Parker, 2016). For instance, the presence of individuals who are not directly involved in the process can cause distress and humiliation for women who are experiencing a challenging period. This condition is compounded by gender biases within the verification team, where some women may feel uneasy if the verification team is predominantly male (Saraswati, 2020)

Pseudo-administrative divorce rules frequently fail to address the privacy needs of female civil servants adequately. The primary focus of such regulations is on procedural and administrative compliance rather than on the psychological comfort and safety of the individuals involved (Suisno, 2016). It is essential to limit the involvement of other individuals following strict standard operating procedures (SOPs). Furthermore, ensuring that only relevant and emotionally supportive parties are present is vital.

The existing rules for applying for divorce permits must be reviewed and improved to better align them with civil servant women's privacy and comfort needs. This condition needed more stringent criteria for the individuals involved in the process, allowing women to select a verification team that aligns with their preferences and ensuring that the entire process is conducted with a gender-sensitive approach and individual privacy.

4. Conclusion

The regulations governing the submission of divorce permits, which are of a quasi-administrative nature and overseen by government agencies, contribute to the burden experienced by women civil servants in managing divorce permit-related issues. These rules, while designed to maintain administrative order, frequently disregard aspects of women's privacy and psychological well-being. The involvement of impartial individuals and gender preferences in the verification team can result in further distress and pressure for women who are experiencing this challenging period. Consequently, there is a pressing need to review and enhance divorce permit application regulations to ensure greater privacy and comfort sensitivity.

Our exploration of the experiences of women in the DG Taxation who are applying for written permission to divorce provides several insights that have practical implications. Firstly, the issues female civil servants face in applying for divorce permits mainly concern matters of privacy and psychological well-being. By highlighting this issue, this paper can contribute to the advancement of gender equality in the workplace, particularly in the context of administrative processes that are often insensitive to gender differences. Furthermore, this paper can serve as a valuable reference for academic research in public management, law, and gender studies, encouraging further investigation on related topics and facilitating the development of more robust theory and practice.

Secondly, this paper can prompt policymakers to reassess and enhance existing

divorce permit application procedures, ensuring excellent responsiveness to women's privacy and comfort needs. Implementing more effective policies will assist in alleviating the challenges encountered by women civil servants, enhancing the caliber of human resource management within government agencies, and guaranteeing that all administrative procedures are conducive to employees' psychological well-being and privacy. In essence, this paper presents a comprehensive analysis of the extant regulations and proffers constructive recommendations for future enhancements, which can ultimately foster a more inclusive and supportive work environment for female civil servants.

This research is limited in that it only explores how civil servant women manage their personal information to obtain permission to divorce. Consequently, the focus is on their navigation of managing their personal information, rather than on the reasons for divorce. Furthermore, the sample size is relatively small, which limits the generalizability of the findings.

Author contributions: Conceptualization, PU; methodology, PU; validation, PN; data curation, PN; writing—original draft preparation, PU; writing—review and editing, PN. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflict of interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- Astinah Adnan, A., Idris Rauf, R., Agustang, A., et al. (2020). Agile Leadership and Divorce Education: Study on Womens Perception. *Humanities and Social Sciences Letters*, 8(3), 323–330. <https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.73.2020.83.323.330>
- Crowley, J. E., & DePalma Brand, J. (2018). Should It Be Easy? Divorce Process Attitudes Among Those Who Have Split Up in Midlife. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 60(1), 47–68. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10502556.2018.1488109>
- Ghani, N. A., Norris, I. N. H., Abdullah, B., et al. (2017). Divorce Trends among the Malay Community in Perlis, Malaysia over a Ten Year Period (2006–2015). *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 7(4). <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v7-i4/2805>
- Hadi, R. (2021). Civil Servants Must Know, Procedures and Requirements for Civil Servants' Divorce (Indonesian). Rifaihadi.Com.
- Herawati, T. W., Yunanto, & Widanarti, H. (2017). Protection of Rights to Salary Distribution Due to Divorce Carried Out by Civil Servants (Indonesian). *Diponegoro Law Journal*, 6(2), 1–12.
- Indonesian Government. (1974). Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage, Pub. L. No. No. 1 of 1974 (Indonesian). Indonesian Government.
- Indonesian Government. (1983). Circular Letter No. 08/SE/1983 concerning Marriage and Divorce Permits for Civil Servants, Pub. L. No. 08/SE/1983 (Indonesian). Indonesian Government.
- Indonesian Government. (1990). Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 45 of 1990 concerning Amendments to Government Regulation Number 10 of 1983 concerning Marriage and Divorce Permits for Civil Servants, Pub. L. No. 45 of 1990 (Indonesian). Indonesian Government.
- Indonesian Government. (1990). Circular No. 48/SE/1990, Pub. L. No. 48/SE/1990 (Indonesian). Indonesian Government.
- Indonesian Government. (1991). Compilation of Islamic Law, Pub. L. No. NUMBER 1 YEAR 1991 (Indonesian). Indonesian Government.
- Indonesian Government. (2014). Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 5 of 2014 concerning State Civil Apparatus, Pub. L. No. 5 of 2014 (Indonesian). Indonesian Government.
- Indonesian Government. (2021). Government Regulation Number 94 of 2021 concerning Civil Servant Discipline, Pub. L. No. Number 94 of 2021 (Indonesian). Indonesian Government.

- JDIH. (1983). Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 10 of 1983 concerning Marriage and Divorce Permits for Civil Servants (Indonesian). Available online: <https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/64898/pp-no-10-tahun-1983> (accessed on 12 May 2024).
- Jones, G. W. (2021). Divorce in Malaysia: Historical Trends and Contemporary Issues. *Jurnal Institutions and Economies*, 13(4), 35–60. <https://doi.org/10.22452/IJIE.vol13no4.2>
- Jones, G. W. (2023). Muslim and non-Muslim divorce trends in Southeast Asia in the 21st century. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 51(3), 137–145. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajss.2023.04.004>
- Karom, C. (2016). Divorce Lawsuit of a Female Civil Servant (Case Study in Kendal Religious Service) (Indonesian). Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo.
- Kholidah, Ridho, M., Sobhan, & Ritonga, M. (2023). Violation of Women's Rights on Divorce: Study on Religious Court Decision. *Journal of Law and Sustainable Development*, 11(6), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.55908/sdgs.v11i6.1230>
- Kusumaningrum, A., & Riyanto, Y. B. (2017). Effectiveness of Mediation in Divorce Cases at Semarang District Court (Indonesian). *Diponegoro Law Journal*, 6(1), 1–10.
- Li, L., Hou, Y., Kang, F., et al. (2020). General phenomenon and communication experience of physician and nurse in night shift communication: A qualitative study. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 28(4), 903–911. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jonm.13018>
- Medyasari, C. A. (2023). Management of Communication Privacy of Female Civil Servants (PNS) in Requests for Divorce Permits in the Directorate General of Taxes (DJP) (Indonesian). Universitas Sebelas Maret.
- Mendoza, J. E., Tolba, M., & Saleh, Y. (2019). Strengthening Marriages in Egypt: Impact of Divorce on Women. *Behavioral Sciences*, 10(1), 14. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs10010014>
- Morrow, R., Rodriguez, A., & King, N. (2015). Colaizzi's Descriptive Phenomenological Method. *The Psychologist*, 28(8), 643–644.
- Parker, L. (2016). The theory and context of the stigmatisation of widows and divorcees (Janda) in Indonesia. *Indonesia and the Malay World*, 44(128), 7–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2015.1100863>
- Petronio, S. (2007). Translational research endeavors and the practices of communication privacy management. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 35(3), 218–222. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00909880701422443>
- Petronio, S. (2013). Brief Status Report on Communication Privacy Management Theory. *Journal of Family Communication*, 13(1), 6–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15267431.2013.743426>
- Petronio, S. (2016). Communication Privacy Management. *The International Encyclopedia of Communication Theory and Philosophy*, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118766804.wbiect138>
- Petronio, S., & Child, J. T. (2020). Conceptualization and operationalization: utility of communication privacy management theory. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 31, 76–82. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2019.08.009>
- Pranawati, R. (2017). Changes in Muslim Divorce Mediation in Indonesia: A Case Study of the Yogyakarta Religious Court. *International Journal Of Indonesian Studies*, 1(4), 31–52.
- Priscyllia, F. (2019). Personal Data Privacy Protection in Comparative Law Perspective (Indonesian). *Jatiswara*, 34(3), 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.29303/jatiswara.v34i3.218>
- Purwanto, M. R. (2020). Divorce and Its Effects on The Social and Religious Life in Malang Indonesia, *Talent Development and Excellence*, 12(25).
- Rinaldo, R., Nisa, E. F., & Nurmila, N. (2023). Divorce Narratives and Class Inequalities in Indonesia. *Journal of Family Issues*, 45(5), 1195–1216. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X231155657>
- Saadah, M. (2018). Women and Divorce: A Study of Divorce Lawsuits at the Bekasi Religious Court (Indonesian). *Al-Ahwal: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam*, 11(2), 14. <https://doi.org/10.14421/ahwal.2018.11202>
- Saputera, A., Rahman A. (2018). The Concept of Justice in Divorce Cases for Civil Servants (Indonesian). *Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum*, 15(2), 247. <https://doi.org/10.32332/istinbath.v15i2.1245>
- Saraswati, R. (2020). Shame and Indonesian women victims of domestic violence in making the decision to divorce. *Identities*, 27(5), 557–573. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2019.1600313>
- Statistik, B. P. (2022). Marriage and Divorce by Province, 2021. *Bps.Go.Id*.
- Steuber, K. R., & Solomon, D. H. (2011). Relational uncertainty, partner interference, and privacy boundary turbulence. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 29(1), 3–27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407511406896>
- Suisno, S. (2016). Legal Review of Civil Servant Divorce Without Permission from Direct Superior (Indonesian). *Jurnal Independent*, 4(2), 8. <https://doi.org/10.30736/ji.v4i2.57>

- Supianto, Budiman, N. T., & Kurniasari, D. F. (2020). Public Understanding of Minimum Age Restrictions for Marriage (Indonesian). *Jurnal Rechtsens*, 9(1), 77–90. <https://doi.org/10.36835/rechtsens.v9i1.663>
- Supratman, L. P. (2019). A Qualitative Study of Teenagers Viewpoint in Dealing with Parents' Divorce in Indonesia. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 61(4), 287–299. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10502556.2019.1699374>