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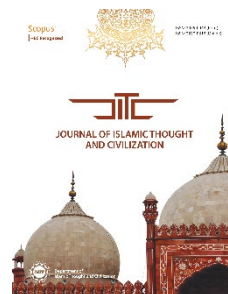
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***Merasi*: Revitalisation in Early Divorce Prevention**

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Abstract

A couple's commitment to forming a household begins with harmony through several pre-marital stages. These stages are related to local wisdom that must be considered important to prevent early divorce. The current study aimed to revive a pearl of local wisdom, namely *merasi*, to revitalize it in order to find the harmony of a mate and make efforts to prevent early divorce. Additionally, the study employed a qualitative method for data analysis through observation, literature review, and content analysis of local wisdom and Islamic law. The study was conducted using deductive and inductive methods in placing the practice of *merasi* as an acculturation of Islamic teachings. The impact of globalization, on the culture of individualism and hedonistic lifestyles, has caused an increase in the cases of early divorce. The incompatibility of married couples is one of the most common causes of early divorce, which should have been identified by the practice of *merasi*. This practice needs to be revitalized in order to reduce the divorce rate among young couples. Acculturation is related to the practice of *merasi* as a local wisdom aimed to organize the household.

Keywords: couple harmony, household, local wisdom, *merasi*, revitalization

Introduction

Marriages in Indonesia have acculturated Islamic teachings and local wisdom, from pre-marriage times to the reception. Among the local wisdom that has been widely abandoned is *merasi*¹ and replaced with pre-marriage education² and pre-marriage agreements³. These are crucial issues and are related to the increasing cases of divorce among young couples. One of the stages before the marriage contract, that is, *merasi* needs to be revitalized as a consideration for the

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¹The term *Merasi* comes from the Malay language. It is synonymous with examining couples who are getting married to find compatibility so that they can later form a harmonious household. This *Merasi* practice is a stage before the marriage contract is carried out. It has been a tradition for a long time and is now widely abandoned, so it needs to be revitalized to prevent early divorce, which is a problem today.

²Ramdani Wahyu Sururie, Mohammad Athoillah, and Muhammad Iqbal Zia Ulhaq, "Strategies to Prevent Increasing Divorce Rates for Muslim Families in Indonesia," *Samarah*, 7. no. 2 (2023): 734-759, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjkh.v7i2.14819>.

³Marie Parker, "Pre-Nuptial Agreements and Principles: Further Clarification Required," *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law* 6, no. 9 (2019): 363-364, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09649069.2019.1628432>.

continuity of the marriage contract in order to prevent early divorce cases.⁴ At the same time, studies examining the practice of *merasi* as an effort to find couple compatibility are very limited. There were 463,654 divorce cases in 2023, a decrease from the 516,334 cases in 2022. Incompatibility causes the most divorces among couples and then disputes and quarrels, totalling 284,169 cases or at the level of 63.41% in accumulation. The issue of compatibility between couples became an early consideration with the practice of *merasi* being ignored, so there were cases of divorce among young couples. This picture shows that the revitalization of *merasi* practice as local wisdom requires careful research for early prevention of divorce at the pre-marital process stage which is expected to form a harmonious household.

Studies on the practice of *merasi* as local wisdom in the community are limited to tradition and acculturation. Discussions related to early prevention of divorce are considered outdated and replaced with pre-marital education.⁵ Even the practice of *merasi* was judged to have no examples from the Prophet (SAW) and the companions, so it was considered contrary to Islamic teachings.⁶ Some studies on *merasi* have an important structure which starts from the pre-marriage stage to the marriage contract. The practice of *merasi* determines the compatibility of couples in the continuity of the marriage contract.⁷ Many researchers see the issue of early prevention of divorce not with the practice of *merasi*, however, simply with pre-marital guidance. The existing literature shows that not much discussion has taken place revealing the analysis of the revitalization of *merasi* as local wisdom in line with the Islamic teachings.

The current study aimed to compliment the shortcomings of previous studies which are only limited to cultural studies related to one of the pre-marital stages and do not need to be disputed for those who do not carry it out. *Merasi* as local wisdom is closely related to the paradigm of couple compatibility that is patterned on efforts to form a harmonious household.⁸

⁴H Heydari, and A Mashhadi, "The Effectiveness of Divorce Prevention Counseling Model on Marital Satisfaction in Early Marriages," *Medical Journal of Mashhad* 2, no. 2 (2020): 176; Sastro Mustapa Wantu et al., "Early Child Marriage: Customary Law, Support System, and Unwed Pregnancy in Gorontalo," *Samarah* 5, no. 2 (2021): 780-803, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v5i2.9573>.

⁵Kamarusdiana Kamarusdiana et al., "Pre-Marital Education: Concepts and Regulations in Indonesia and Malaysia," *Al-Ahkam* 2, no. 1 (2022): 41-64, <https://doi.org/10.21580/ahkam.2022.32.1.10709>,

⁶Pane Harneny, "Tradisi Pernikahan Adat Melayu Kabupaten Batubara," (Malay Wedding Tradition of Batubara District), *Jurnal Pionir LPPM Universitas Asahan*, 4, no. 2 (2020): 89-105.

⁷Afrinel Okwita, and Sri Wahyuni Adiningtiyas, "Akulturasi Budaya Dalam Pernikahan Masyarakat Melayu Pulau Terong Kota Batam," (Cultural Acculturation in The Marriage of The Malay Community in Pulau Terong, Batam City), *Historia: Jurnal Program Studi Pendidikan Sejarah* 3, no. 2 (2019): 168, <https://doi.org/10.33373/j-his.v3i2.1685>; Rahmat Pulungan, "Tradisi Merasi Dalam Adat Perkawinan Melayu Riau (Studi Analisis Terhadap Penentuan Kafaah Calon Pengantin Di Kelurahan Bagan Batu)," (Merasi Tradition In Malay Marriage Customs In Riau (An Analytical Study of The Determination of Kafaah For Bride And Groom In Bagan Batu Village), *Islam Realitas: Journal of Islamic and Social Studies* 2, no. 2 (2016): 178, https://doi.org/10.30983/islam_realitas.v2i2.188; Ahmad Sharkawi Safura and Saili Jamayah, "Analisis Isu Perkahwinan Dalam Kalangan Pasangan Melayu Di Kuching, Sarawak Sepanjang Tahun 2018-2020 (Analysis of Marital Issues Among Malay Couples in Kuching, Sarawak Throughout 2018-2020)," *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 2, no. 2 (2022): 180-195.

⁸Shaliza Dasuki et al., "Perkembangan Budaya Populer Dan Perubahan Sosio-Budaya Masyarakat Pasca Moden: Adaptasi Budaya Asing Dalam Perkahwinan Melayu," (The

1.1. Research Questions

In line with the above-mentioned description, this study aimed to answer the following three questions:

1. How divorce cases are increasing year by year with the occurrence of disputes and quarrels that have arisen in young couples?
2. How does the implementation of *merasi* practice determine the compatibility between couples as a consideration for marriage contract?
3. What is the view of Islamic teachings on the *merasi* practice carried out with fa-al science?

The answers to these three questions would explain the revitalization of *merasi* practice as an activity carried out in the early prevention of divorce using a compatible partner before the marriage contract.

The study of this local wisdom is important because it correlates with the assumption that this culture is no longer important as an early prevention of mismatched couples. There is also an assumption that marriage is a human right, and parents, relatives, or customary law should not interfere. As a result, the compatibility of the couple before the marriage contract with the *merasi* practice is not taken into consideration. The structure of the stages of marriage from *merisik*⁹, *merasi*, and proposing to the marriage contract is carried out to form a harmonious household away from divorce.¹⁰ However, the development of globalization with the sophistication of technology that makes the world borderless has an impact on the practice of local wisdom which is not considered to be in line with it. The dialectic of early prevention of divorce by conducting *merasi* practices as a consideration before marriage is an interesting discussion, due to conflicts with global developments. The problem of forming a harmonious household cannot be organized with a culture of individualism, however, with local wisdom that is in line with religious values. Thus, the understanding of local wisdom pertaining to *merasi* practice must be placed in a strategic position in a dynamic context as a response to the times.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Merasi

The *merasi* tradition is one of the stages before the marriage contract in Malay local wisdom.¹¹ The practice of *merasi* aims to examine the couples intending to marry whether they are compatible

Development of Popular Culture and Socio-Cultural Changes in Post-Modern Society: Foreign Cultural Adaptation in Malay Marriage), in *Icomhac 2015*, (2015): 37-52; Y. Malasari, and C. Darmawan, "Budaya Adat Pengantin Melayu Riau Dalam Pengembangan Budaya Kewarganegaraan," (Riau Malay Bridal Customary Culture in the Development of Citizenship Culture), *Humanika*, 2, no. 2 (2017): 11-23.

⁹The term *Merisik*, derived from the Malay language, is one of the stages carried out before the *Merasi* as a form of tradition to review the prospective bride to be proposed to; whether she is still single or someone has already proposed to her. This term is also a process of knowing whether the bride-to-be is ready for a household and has the intelligence to carry the burden after marriage. This term is also a process of knowing that the prospective bride is ready for a household and has the intelligence to carry the burden after marriage.

¹⁰Farhan Aditya, and Ismail Pane, "Adat Pengantin Nusantara Melayu Riau Dalam Pengembangan Budaya," (Bridal Customs of Riau Malay Archipelago in Cultural Development), *Journal of Education and Culture* 3, no. 1 (2023): 21-26, <https://doi.org/10.58707/jec.v3i1.367>.

¹¹Norhuda Salleh, "Ritual Dan Adat Dalam Adat Perkahwinan Masyarakat Melayu Sekinchan, Selangor," (Rituals and Customs in the Marriage Customs of the Sekinchan Malay Community, Selangor), *Akademi Pengajian Melayu* (2017): 321-329, Aditya and Pane, "Adat Pengantin

or not. The paradigm of this practice is an act of divine compatibility between couples who are about to get married so that a harmonious household is formed.¹² Not everyone can carry out the practice of *merasi*, therefore it is returned to the experts who are the masters of its knowledge known as fa-al science.¹³ The construction of *merasi* practice is based on determining one of the three typologies of supernatural terms; “Step,” “Mate,” and “Death.” The process starts with two names of prospective couples and then traces the initial letters by simulating Arabic letters. It is then analogised to one of the typologies in multiples of three which is determined to be compatible or not.

The term *merasi* has different root words; *Marasi* from “*Menilik rasi*” (Looking at Rasi) and “*Melihat Rasi*” (Seeing at Rasi). Moreover, some even state that it comes from the Hindu influence of “*Menegok Rasi*” (Staring at Rasi). The three roots serve the same purpose, that is, an effort to assess the compatibility of the couple who are to be married. This activity is performed in the form of fortune-telling to conclude whether the two couples are compatible or not.¹⁴ The practice of fortune-telling in Islam includes two terms. Firstly, *Tafa-ul*, which refers to the prediction of good fortune and gives a sense of optimism with an implementation process that has no elements of shirk, *khurafat*, and sin.¹⁵ Secondly, *Tathayyur* is the activity of predicting bad luck with the process of implementation mixed with shirk, *khurafat*, and sin.¹⁶ The practice of *merasi* falls into the category of *Tafa-ul* which is a permissible basis and not a haram act that is contrary to faith.

2.2. Revitalization

The process of giving new life to something to restore it or renew it in order to stress its significance is referred to as revitalization.¹⁷ Very often, the word revitalization refers to the

Nusantara Melayu Riau Dalam Pengembangan Budaya,” (Bridal Customs of Riau Malay Archipelago in Cultural Development), 21-26.

¹²Zaharah Abdullah Che, Yahya Zaharah, and Salleh Fatimah, “Adat Perkahwinan Masyarakat Melayu , Kesejajarannya Dengan Nilai Islam (Marriage Customs of the Malay Community, Its Alignment with Islamic Values), *Kajian Di Shah Alam, ICOMHAC2015 Eproceedings* (2015): 622-635.

¹³Malasari and Darmawan, “Budaya Adat Pengantin Melayu Riau Dalam Pengembangan Budaya Kewarganegaraan” (Riau Malay Bridal Culture in the Development of Civic Culture), *Humanika* 2, no. 2 (2017): 11-23; Pulungan, “Tradisi Merasi Dalam Adat Perkawinan Melayu Riau (Studi Analisis Terhadap Penentuan Kafaah Calon Pengantin Di Kelurahan Bagan Batu).” *Merasi Tradition In Malay Marriage Customs In Riau (An Analytical Study of The Determination Of Kafaah For Bride And Groom In Bagan Batu Village)*, s 179.

¹⁴Fitri Rafianti, Arik Dwijayanto, and Azharuddin Mohd Dali, “The Dialectics of Islamic Law and Customary Law on Marriage Concept of Javanese Muslim in Malaysia,” *Justicia Islamica* 18, no.2 (2021): 126, <https://doi.org/10.21154/justicia.v18i2.3126>; Malasari and Darmawan, “Budaya Adat Pengantin Melayu Riau Dalam Pengembangan Budaya Kewarganegaraan,” (Riau Malay Bridal Culture in the Development of Civic Culture); 11-23.

¹⁵Alizar Usman, “Tepung Tawar / Peusijeuk Dalam Perspektif Teori Tafa’ul,” (Tepung Tawar / Peusijeuk in Perspective of Tafa’ul Theory), *Al-Mursalah* (2015): 20-26

¹⁶Khairul Hafiz Noor Hisham, Mohd Anuar Ramli, and Syed Mohd Jeffri Syed Jaafar, “Unsur Kearifan Tempatan Dalam Fiqh Budaya Dan Seni Melayu,” (Elements of Local Wisdom in Malay Cultural Fiqh and Arts), *Academia.Edu*, (2018): 155-174.

¹⁷Sylwia Krzysztofik, Magdalena Ślebocka, and Aneta Tylman, “Revitalisation as a Process of Restoring the Identity of a Place through Protection of Its Cultural Heritage – a Case Study of the City of Łódź,” *Studia Miejskie* 26, no. 6 (2017): 167, <https://doi.org/10.25167/sm2017.026.06>, Jeanne Francoise, “Revitalization of the Kuto Besak Fort in Palembang as an Indonesian Defense Heritage Asset,” *KnE Social Sciences* 7, no. 4 (2022): 105, <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v7i4.10520>.

process, method, and conscious attitude of making something vital to revive something that was previously less useful.¹⁸ Revitalizing *merasi* practice is related to local wisdom as an effort to find compatibility between a couple wishing to get married through divination.¹⁹ The act of revitalization is an effort to revive a marital stage in society that is almost extinct, eroded by technological developments.²⁰ It is also important to note that revitalization may also revive local wisdom that has begun to be rotten by time. It also faces challenges from puritanism.

Revitalization may have a considerable impact. The study of revitalization to bring back local wisdom that is almost extinct by the development of technology and the influx of foreign cultures is very substantive. Most of the cases of divorce occurring in newly married couples are caused by incompatibility, so prolonged disputes arise until they break the bond of marriage.²¹ Revitalization is related to the philosophy of life, beliefs, and socio-cultural and historical backgrounds that are marked by the harmony of community interactions.²² In general, the implementation of revitalization is expected to: 1) revive the stages before the marriage contract according to Islamic law 2) increase the role of parents, family, and traditional people in shaping the household of a new couple 3) strengthen the identity of couples who want to get married, and 4) encouraging the formation of a harmonious and peaceful family.

2.3. Divorce

In Arabic, divorce is called *talak* referred to as the termination of physical and mental bond between husband and wife.²³ The marriage bond is broken by divorce, as the last alternative after

¹⁸M. Khusna Amal, "The Role of Islamic Religious Higher Education in the Revitalization of Religious Moderation in Indonesia," *Dialogia* 19, no. 2 (2021): 293-325, <https://doi.org/10.21154/dialogia.v19i2.3327>.

¹⁹Rafianti, Dwijayanto, and Dali, "The Dialectics of Islamic Law and Customary Law on Marriage Concept of Javanese Muslim in Malaysia,"; Pulungan, "Tradisi Merasi Dalam Adat Perkawinan Melayu Riau (Studi Analisis Terhadap Penentuan Kafaah Calon Pengantin Di Kelurahan Bagan Batu)" (Merasi Tradition In Malay Marriage Customs In Riau (An Analytical Study Of The Determination Of Kafaah For Bride And Groom In Bagan Batu Village), 179.

²⁰Mariusz Kwiatkowski, "Revitalisation and Local Cohesion. The Role of Social Economy," *Studia Regionalne i Lokalne* 5, no.1 (2021): 60-83, <https://doi.org/10.7366/1509499518304>.

²¹T M Zainuddin and Kuntari Madchaini, "Analisis Faktor Penyebab Perceraian Dengan Alasan Perselisihan Terus-Menerus Perspektif Fikih Munakahat," (Analysis of Factors Causing Divorce on the Ground of Continuous Dispute from the Perspective of Munakahat Jurisprudence), *Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* (2022); Armansyah Matondang, "Faktor-Faktor Yang Mengakibatkan Perceraian Dalam Perkawinan," (Factors that lead to divorce in marriage), *Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan Dan Sosial Politik* (2014): 141-150.

²²Okky Nur Alim, Apik Budi Santoso, and Jurusan Geografi, "Analisis SWOT Strategi Revitalisasi Objek Wisata Waduk Mrica Kecamatan Bawang Kabupaten Banjarnegara," (SWOT Analysis of Revitalization Strategy for Mrica Reservoir Tourism Object in Bawang Sub-district, Banjarnegara Regency), *Geo-Image*, (2022): 11-23.

²³Loredana Terec-Vlad, "The Divorce. Comparative View between Old and Current Regulations - Social Significance," *Journal for Ethics in Social Studies* 5, no. 1 (2022): 40, <https://doi.org/10.18662/jess/5.1/40>; Qian Wu, "Foreign Divorce Damage Compensation System and Its Inspiration to Our Country," *International Journal of Education and Humanities* 7, no. 3 (2023): 96, <https://doi.org/10.54097/ijeh.v7i3.6096>; Zeinab Asadi and Sadeghi Azar, "Study of Vinay and Darbelnet's Seven Translation Strategies in Four Translations of Divorce Surah of Qur'an," *Journal of Teaching English Language Studies* (2018): 76-102.

all efforts to maintain the household have been made but no harmony could be established.²⁴ The paradigm of marriage, as a form of sacred promise that every couple keeps, certainly faces the twists and turns of life. The phenomenon of a long household journey cannot be separated from the attitude of husband and wife who maintain the continuity of the sacred promise so that disputes and quarrels can be muted²⁵. *Talak* is one of the Islamic laws described by the Qur'an in detail and is not easy without strong reasons underlying it.

Divorce in the context of Islamic law is related to causes and factors with the initial basis of the law being permissible. This basis may increase to the *sunnah* and even mandatory divorce, and divorce may also become *makrūh* and *haram*.²⁶ The construction of five laws cannot be separated from the level of emergency conditions or not divorce. If the relationship between husband and wife is in a situation of prolonged dispute and quarrel despite the improvement attempts from both parties, then divorce becomes obligatory.²⁷ Conversely, divorce can also be *haram* when the husband and wife are in a good atmosphere and then divorce occurs without any reason and or a third person intervenes in the marriage.²⁸ The misalignment in the behaviour of husband and wife in the context of Islamic teachings is a factor which creates disharmony and must be avoided.

3. Methodology

The current study focused to revitalize the practice of *merasi* for prospective couples intending to get married while discussing the compatibility of the two. Firstly, *merasi* as local wisdom can be used as a means to sustain the marriage contract after the compatibility of the couple has been ensured. Secondly, the practice of *merasi* can be taken into consideration as a means of preventing early divorce cases which have been increasing from year to year. Thirdly, the compatibility of couples before marriage with the practice of *merasi* is included in acculturation as an early effort. This research explores the revitalization of *merasi* as a tool for assessing compatibility among prospective couples before marriage. Using qualitative methods, it analyzes local wisdom and

²⁴Ines Majnarić, "Characteristics of High-Conflict Divorces Of Parents With Minor Children," *Ljetopis Socijalnog Rada* 29, no. 1 (2022): 48, <https://doi.org/10.3935/ljsr.v29i1.487>; Sahar A. Abdel-Fattah et al., "Divorce Etiquette in the Holy Qur'ān," *Information Sciences Letters* 12, no. 7 (2023): 3013-3021, <https://doi.org/10.18576/isl/120728>

²⁵Abdullah Abdullah, Hijrah Hijrah, and Hery Zarkasih, "Criticizing The Muslim Divorce Tradition in Lombok: An Effort to Control The Women's Rights," *Justicia Islamica* 19, no.1 (2022): 316, <https://doi.org/10.21154/justicia.v19i1.3168>; Ye. M. Potapchuk and A.I. Balukova, "Factors of Interpersonal Compatibility Of Future Marriage Partners," *Habitus* 24, no. 2 (2021): 167-171, <https://doi.org/10.32843/2663-5208.2021.24.2.30>.

²⁶Qurrotul Ainiyah, and Imam Muslih, "Dilema Hukum Keluarga Di Indonesia -Studi Analisis Kasus Perceraian Di Indonesia," (The Dilemma of Family Law in Indonesia - An Analytical Study of Divorce Cases in Indonesia), *Jurnal Istiqro* 6, no. 1 (2020): 560-570, <https://doi.org/10.30739/istiqro.v6i1.560>; S. H M. Arafah, "Faktor Dominan Perkara Cerai Gugat Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Kerukunan Keluarga Pasca Cerai- Studi Di Pengadilan Agama Parepare Tahun 2019-2020," (Dominant Factors of Plaintiff's Divorce Cases and Their Implications for Post-Divorce Family Harmony - Study at the Parepare Religious Court in 2019-2020), (2022): 38-51.

²⁷Fathonah K. Daud, and Nurrohman Syarif, "Hak Cerai Perempuan Dalam Hukum Keluarga Islam Maroko," (Women's Right to Divorce in Moroccan Islamic Family Law), *Al-Ahwāl: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam*, 1, no. 4 (2021): 149-172, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ahwal.2021.14204>.

²⁸Fikri Fikri et al., "Kontekstualisasi Cerai Talak Dalam Fikih Dan Hukum Nasional Di Indonesia," (Contextualization of Divorce in Jurisprudence and National Law in Indonesia), *Al-Ulūm* 19, no. 1 (2019): 151-170, <https://doi.org/10.30603/au.v19i1.643>; Abdel-Fattah et al., "Divorce Etiquette in the Holy Quran," 3013-3021

Islamic teachings, drawing data from literature, research findings, and observations of harmonious couples practicing *merasi*.²⁹

Data was collected through observation, literature review, and content analysis of local wisdom. The initial process of this research is an observation of *merasi* activities in the community and the reality of local wisdom. The second process is a literature review with literature searches including books, journals, and research reports. In addition, the content analysis of local wisdom and the suitability of Islamic teachings was carried out in the context of deductive method, namely concluding from specific to general, and the inductive method, namely concluding from general to specific.³⁰ The presentation of data was based on the implementation of *merasi* practice in couples who would be married before the engagement procession until the marriage contract. The implementation of *merasi practice* in acculturation was narrated in the form of charts and constructions that can be analysed easily. Additionally, a structured narrative was created with illustrated examples. The process of data analysis was carried out by organizing it into a pattern, category, and basic description so that the content analysis of this local wisdom goes straight with Islamic teachings. The analysis of actions was related to researching the compatibility of prospective couples to be married in legal construction and as a means of early prevention of divorce.

4. Results

4.1. The Urgency of Early Divorce Prevention

The bond of marriage has roots that relate to the nature and instincts of the two partners. In a marriage, two mated couples are drawn together by an internal and external attraction. Both sides of the attraction can be in the form of love, liking, charm, and others. This is not enough to be the foundation for building a harmonious household and requires the compatibility of the couple as seen in the science of *fa-al*. The current study emphasized the revitalization of *merasi* practice as local wisdom so that households would be far from disputes and divorce cases. The early prevention of divorce must be carried out since the statistical facts of divorce cases in 2021 reached 447,743 and increased to 516,334 cases in 2022. Meanwhile in 2023, divorce cases decreased to 463,654 in Indonesia. This comparison reflects that divorce cases are still very high, although there was a decrease of approximately 10% in 2023 based on statistical data from the Central Statistics Agency (PPS) released on 28th February 2024. Graph 1 shows the number of divorce cases from 2015-2022.

²⁹Alison B. Hamilton, and Erin P. Finley, "Qualitative Methods in Implementation Research: An Introduction," *Psychiatry Research* 11, no. 2 (2019): 280, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2019.112516>.

³⁰Mourad Zair, and Redhouane Bensassi, "The Effect Of Using Deductive And Inductive Methods on The Verbal Interaction Of Physical Education And Sport Professors," *Sportske Nauke i Zdravlje* 22, no. 2 (2022): 137-142, <https://doi.org/10.7251/SSH2202137Z>.



Figure 1. Number of Divorce Cases

Source. Central Bureau of Statistics, Year 2022

The life of young couples should be full of harmony, joy, and zest. However, there have been disputes and quarrels which show that there is no harmony between the two. The tally of divorce cases that occurred in 2023 reached 463,654 cases. These cases were divided into two forms; 1) gugat divorce, where the wife filed for divorce, totaling 347,654 cases or 75% 2) the divorce in which husbands filed for divorce, totaling 115,913 cases or 25%. The wife's lawsuit was more than the husbands with the main causal factor being disputes. One of the early preventions of divorce is the revitalization of research on the compatibility of couples before the marriage contract. Efforts to prioritize *merasi* practice may lead towards early divorce prevention. Divorce cases caused by disputes and quarrels topped the list with 284,169 cases or 63.41% of the total number in Indonesia. It can be seen in Figure 2 as follows:

The statistical data indicates a significant rise in divorce cases in Indonesia over the past decade. Projections for 2023 suggest approximately 463,000 cases. This translates to an average of 1,200 divorces per day, based on a 365-day year. This means that every single day the Courts give their verdict on an average of 1200 cases per day. The increasing cases of divorce show the declining family life. Divorce cases can be prevented by increasing the values of local wisdom that exist in the Indonesian Muslim society.

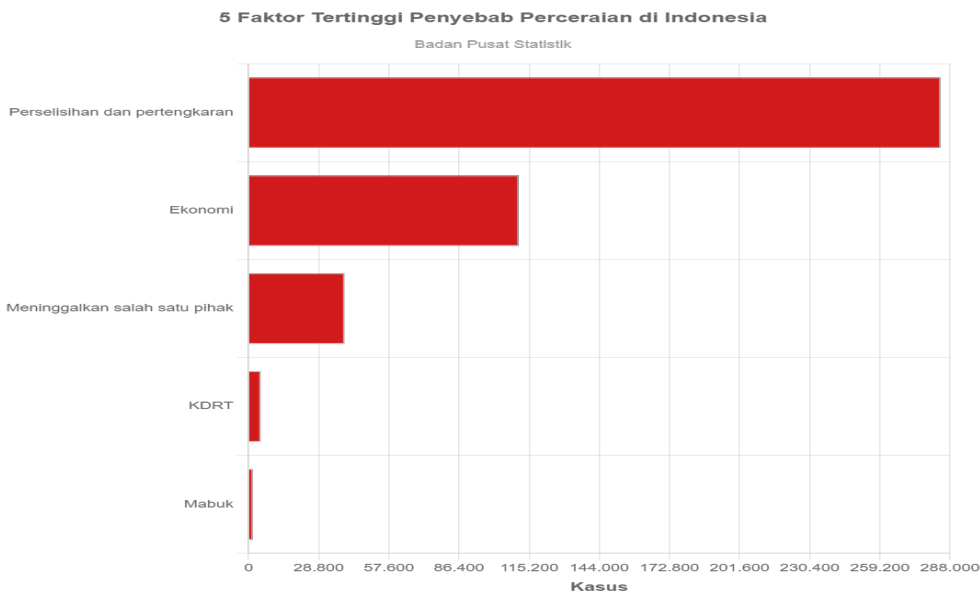


Figure 2. Factors Causing Divorce

Source. Central Bureau of Statistics, Year 2024

4.2. Merasi Practice Construction

The culture practiced before marriage is challenged by the changing lifestyles of the millennial generation and puritanical groups. The dynamics of the *merasi* practice is part of long-standing acculturation and may be used as an important means of efforts in considering the continuity of the marriage contract. Several stages are considered before the marriage contract is carried out according to the Islamic laws; namely *merisik*, *merasi*, *antar kata*, and *antar tanda*. To more easily understand the term *merisik*, *merasi*, *antar kata*, and *antar tanda*, Table 1 below can be seen:

Table 1. Pre and Process Stages of Marriage

Pre-Wedding Stages		Stages of the Marriage Process	
<i>Merisik</i>	The process of reviewing prospective spouses, whether they are already engaged or not, as well as determining their marriage skills and readiness for marriage	<i>Antar Kata</i>	Activities before proposing with the process of messengers from the male side conveying the desire to propose and then determining the day of engagement
<i>Merasi</i>	The practice of discerning a marriage partner by divining compatibility	<i>Antar Tanda</i>	Engagement activities of the couple who are to become husband and wife
Decision	Compatible or Not	Marriage Settlement	The marriage bonding process; a form of harmony

Source. Data Processed by Researchers, Year 2024

The practice of *merasi* is carried out by dividing the unity of names between two people who are about to make a marriage contract. The practice refers to three components: 1) Step (*Neutral condition; there may be compatibility and there may not be*), 2) Mate (*The compatibility of the couple*), and 3) Death (*The substance is avoided*). A count of the number of Arabic letters corresponding to the initial letter of the man's name is added to the initial letter of the woman's name from the Arabic letters and is then summed up in one count with divisions on multiples of three; "Step," "Mate," and "Death." Calculations on the full multiples of three, namely "Death," are considered as not continuing the marriage process. If there is an excess of three multiples of two, it means; "Mate." The level of "Mate" is used as a standard of compatibility for couples. The excess of one means "Step" which is positioned neutrally between being compatible or not, however, this position is better than the position of three, that is, "Death." The addition between letter of the two people to be matched is determined by the excess if it is below 30, if it is more than 30 then it is divided by 3 again and then taken on the excess of 1-2 "Step," "Mate." If the exact division is on the multiples of three, that is, "Death," then the marriage plan is eliminated. Table 2 shows the construction of *merasi* as follows:

Table 2. Construction of *Merasi* Practice in Calculation

Arabic Letters	Latin Letters	Number Count	Typology of Terms			Description
			Steps	Meeting	Death	
ا	A	1	✓			Step (S), Mate (M), and Death (D) = 3
ب	B	2		✓		
ت	T	3			✓	
ث	TS	4	✓			Beginning of male names (X ¹) dan female (X ²)
ج	J	5		✓		
ح	H	6			✓	X ¹ + X ² = X ³ X ³ : 3 = D (If the division is full), S (If the side division 1) dan M (If the residual division 2).
خ	Kh	7	✓			
د	D	8		✓		Looking at the second stage: X ³ – (Full division – residual 1 atau 2) = X ⁴
ذ	Dz	9			✓	
ر	R	10	✓			X ⁴ : 3 = S/ M/ D
ز	Z	11		✓		
س	S	12			✓	Looking at the third stage: X ⁴ – (Addition of full and residual distributions) = X ⁵
ش	Sy	13	✓			
ص	Sh	14		✓		X ⁵ : 3 = S/ M/ D
ض	Dh	15			✓	
ط	Th	16	✓			Looking at the third stage: X ⁴ – (Addition of full and residual distributions) = X ⁵
ظ	Zh	17		✓		
ع	`A	18			✓	X ⁵ : 3 = S/ M/ D
غ	Gh	19	✓			
ف	F	20		✓		Looking at the third stage: X ⁴ – (Addition of full and residual distributions) = X ⁵
ق	Q	21			✓	
ك	K	22	✓			X ⁵ : 3 = S/ M/ D
ل	L	23		✓		
م	M	24			✓	Looking at the third stage: X ⁴ – (Addition of full and residual distributions) = X ⁵
ن	N	25	✓			
و	W	26		✓		X ⁵ : 3 = S/ M/ D
ه	H	27			✓	
ء	Hamzah	28	✓			Looking at the third stage: X ⁴ – (Addition of full and residual distributions) = X ⁵
ي	Y	29		✓		
لا	LamAlif	30			✓	

Source. Data Processed by Researchers, Year 2024

The realization of *merasi* practice can be illustrated by a man named Zaki (Z=11) and a woman named Sinta (S=12), then $11+12=23$. Afterwards, $23:3=7$ with the remaining 2, then it is located in the “Mate” position. Then, $23-9$ (the result of $7+2$) = 14, and $14:3=4$ with a remainder of 2, so it lies in the “Mate” position. Finally, $14-6$ (the result of $4+2$) = 8, and $8:3=2$ with a remainder of 2, it is located in the “Mate” position. In this prediction, it can be concluded that Z and S are compatible and may continue to the next stage. The author made a formula in three stages of research. Firstly, the initial male (X^1) and female (X^2) names are then carried out $X^1 + X^2 = X^3$, $X^3:3=D$ (If full division), S (If side division 1) and M (If residual division 2). Secondly, $X^3 -$ (Full division - remainder 1 or 2) = X^4 , $X^4: 3=S/M/D$. Thirdly, $X^4 -$ (Addition of full division and remainder) = X^5 , $X^5:3= S/M/D$.

The construction of *merasi* practice in determining a man's match with a woman proceeding to a marriage contract faces the mental readiness of both. The mental readiness of both is very much related to accepting the results of determining the mate or not. This has a paradigm in the hope of forming a household that is *sakinah* and far from conflict. The practice of *merasi* is always accompanied by the *istikharah* of the two prospective brides and those who wish to form a household until the end of life. If there are similar results from *istikharah* and *merasi*, then the two families would confine their desire to meet. In Malay culture, the practice of *merasi* serves as an initial benchmark for assessing compatibility before moving to the proposal stage. This tradition is further enriched by incorporating Islamic teachings, particularly the recommendation to perform *istikharah* prayers.

4.3. Revitalizing Merasi Practice

The implementation of a marriage is based on the harmony that would unite two different people with different backgrounds. The different backgrounds of each partner merge into a harmony of love. This paradigm is the compatibility between couples who would continue the implementation of marriage contract. Harmony cannot be achieved without any effort, both by the parents or close relatives, and the person who is getting married. To achieve compatibility in each community, different methods are used. The method used in Malay culture is called *merasi*.

The practice of *merasi*, by looking at two people who want to get married, can be detected by the names of two persons in the initial letters; harmonious or not. The paradigm of Islamic teachings places the practice of *merasi* as a part of an endeavor, although in faith the issue of “*sustenance, mate, and death*” is included in the circle of faith. The effort is a process before entering the state of *tawakkal*, working to get an ideal partner, harmonious and characterized as part of the construction of faith. *Merasi* with fortune telling can be trusted but not believed. The construction of “Believe” is based on the outside that runs with reason, while “Sure” is based on faith. The Prophet (SAW) explained *Tafa-ul* and not to do *Tathayyur*. This can be seen in Table 3 on the reasoning of Islamic teachings in mate, faith, and effort in the terms “Believe” and “Sure” below:

Table 3. Substance of *Merasi* in the Prophet (SAW’s) Instruction on *Tafa-ul*

<i>Tafa-ul</i>	Description
<p>كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يحب الغال الحسن ويكره الطيرة</p> <p>The Messenger of Allah (SAW) loves good <i>Tafa-ul</i> and hates unlucky assumptions (HR Ahmad Ibn Hanbal No. 8393).</p>	<p>What the Prophet loves is permissible and what he hates is forbidden.</p>
<p>Implementation of <i>Merasi</i></p>	<p>Stages to determine compatibility that are carried out before the match is forbidden.</p>
<p>Discerning with <i>Fa-al</i> Science</p>	<p>The <i>fa-al</i> of good <i>Tafa-ul</i> is also favored by</p>

<i>Tafa-ul</i>	Description
	the Prophet (SAW); trustworthy and untrustworthy. Construction of <i>fa-al</i> is an attempt to form a <i>sakinah</i> household before the marriage contract.
Implementation of Matchmaking	Harmony efforts fall into the same category as an effort to match good men with good women.

Source. Data Processed by Researchers, Year 2024

Rasulullah taught *Tafa-ul* to face the future optimistically. A mindset based on *Tafa-ul* forms an attitude of trust with enthusiasm in business settings. The result of *Tafa-ul* is positive thinking that does not go straight with *Tathayyur*. The mindset that results from it forms individuals who are pessimistic about their future. *Merasi*, then, is not used about *Tathayyur*, as in table 4 below:

Table 4. The Substance of *Merasi* in the Prophet (SAW) Instruction on *Tathayyur*

<i>Tathayyur</i>	Deskripsi
عن عبد الله قال: قال رسول الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم -: "الطَّيْرَةُ شِرْكٌ، وما مِنَّا إِلاَّ، ولكنَّ الله يذْهَبُه بالتوكُّل" 'Abdullah said: Rasulullah (SAW) said: <i>Thiyarah</i> is shirk and none of us has ever thought of it except this. But Allah removes it with tawakkal. (HR Ahmad Ibn Hanbal No. 3687, Ibnu Majah, No. 3538 and Abu Daud No. 3910)	The word <i>Thiyarah</i> is another form of <i>Tathayyur</i> and its implementation is to feel unlucky because of something, to think that something brings profit and harm. The assumption of something that gives misfortune and profit becomes an act of shirk.
Implementation of <i>Merasi</i>	The practice of <i>merasi</i> is not <i>Thiyarah</i> but one of the stages of pre-marriage: it is not associated with anything unlucky.
The act of <i>Thiyarah</i>	The prohibition in the Prophet (SAW) teaching is fortune-telling and assuming that something is unlucky.
Implementation of matchmaking	The practice of bringing a man and a woman together in an arranged marriage that is dependent on something on the level of good fortune and bad luck then falls under shirk.

Source. Data Processed by Researchers, Year 2024

5. Discussion

The current research aimed to analyze the revitalization of *merasi* practice as an effort to prevent early divorce. Moreover, the study also focused on individual and social aspects to build a harmonious household. The practice of *merasi*, as one of the stages of marriage, has begun to be abandoned by jumping from the *merisik* stage to engagement.³¹ The desired construction in the

³¹Shaliza Dasuki et al., “Perkembangan Budaya Populer Dan Perubahan Sosio-Budaya Masyarakat Pasca Moden: Adaptasi Budaya Asing Dalam Perkahwinan Melayu,” (The Development of Popular Culture and Socio-Cultural Changes in Post-Modern Society: Foreign Cultural Adaptation in Malay Marriage): 37-52; Anis Mursyida Sabri, and Mohd Anuar Ramli, “Amalan Bridel Shower Dalam Majlis Perkahwinan Melayu Islam Menurut Perspektif Hukum Islam,” (Amalan Bridel Shower Dalam Majlis Perkawinan Melayu Islam According to Islamic Law Perspective), *Jurnal Islam Masyarakat Kontemporari*, 2021: 149-164

merasi stage includes three components. Firstly, the pairing of an abstract belief between effort and accepting the decree of fate. Secondly, the act of divination is a part of a choice before accepting the decree so that the harmony of the pair becomes a will. Thirdly, the practice of divination is carried out by certain people who have a scientific capacity and understand abstinence. These three components prioritize the practice of *merasi* as an important matter to be revived in the context of revitalization.³² Arranging a harmonious household starts before the marriage contract as a form of early prevention of divorce.³³

The findings illustrate a new challenge pertaining to the importance of the *merasi* practice in obtaining the compatibility of couples before the marriage contract to prevent early divorce. Efforts to prevent early divorce have reinforced the need for *merasi* practice, especially within the globalization of the culture of individualism and hedonism. The couple's harmony appears from the beginning before the marriage contract becomes an optimistic spirit and motivation to build a harmonious household³⁴. Research findings show that *merasi* practice is a must to be revitalized as a part of three important issues facing society at large. Firstly, early prevention of divorce with the help of *merasi* practice before the marriage contract is an effort to reduce the divorce rate that occurs in young couples. Secondly, organizing a harmonious household by returning to the local wisdom of *merasi* practice to make marriage a collective orientation. Thirdly, revitalizing *merasi practice* as part of an effort in Islam is stated as a means that leads towards important decisions, so the law is also important “*La yatimmu al-Wajib Illa bihi Fahuwa al-Wajib*” (Nothing is perfect that is obligatory except with it then it becomes obligatory).³⁵

The early prevention of divorce with the practice of *merasi* before the marriage contract to achieve harmony between couples is polarized on the purpose of marriage. The sanctity of marriage as a religious institution ought to be reflected in the stages before the marriage contract so that a

³²Pulungan, “Tradisi Merasi Dalam Adat Perkawinan Melayu Riau (Studi Analisis Terhadap Penentuan Kafaah Calon Pengantin Di Kelurahan Bagan Batu)”; Siti Noridayu Abd. Nasir, “Percanggahan Budaya Melayu Dengan Hukum Islam Dalam Adat Perkawinan Di Malaysia,” *Fakulti Bahasa Moden dan Komunikasi*, 2018; Malasari and Darmawan, “Budaya Adat Pengantin Melayu Riau Dalam Pengembangan Budaya Kewarganegaraan,” (Merasi Tradition in Riau Malay Marriage Customs- An Analytical Study of the Determination of Kafaah of Prospective Brides in Bagan Batu Village), 11-23.

³³Mhd Rasidin, Natardi, and Doli Witro, “The Impact of Unequal Marriage on Household Harmony (Case Study in Sungai Penuh City, Jambi),” *Samarah* 4, no. 2 (2020): 313-336, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v4i2.8083>; Dri Santoso et al., “Harmony of Religion and Culture: Fiqh Munākahat Perspective on the Gayo Marriage Custom,” *Ijtihad: Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam Dan Kemanusiaan*, 2, no. 2 (2022): 199-218, <https://doi.org/10.18326/IJTIHAD.V22I2>.

³⁴Qurratul Uyun, and M. Sabiq Rohmatulloh, “Harmonisasi Keluarga: Telaah Fenomena Commuter Marriage Di Indonesia,” (Family Harmonization: An Examination of the Commuter Marriage Phenomenon in Indonesia), *Tasamuh: Jurnal Studi Islam* 14, no. 2 (2022): 69-80, <https://doi.org/10.47945/tasamuh.v14i2.690>; Mohd Sallehuddin Mohd Khairuddin, and Sukimi Mohamad Fauzi, “Impian Dan Realiti Majlis Perkahwinan Orang Melayu Masakini: Kajian Kes Di Pinggir Bandar Kuala Lumpur,” (Dream and Reality of Majlis Perkahwinan Orang Melayu Masakini: A Study of Kes Di Pinggir Bandar Kuala Lumpur), *Geografika* (2016): 1-12.

³⁵Ahmad Suminto, and Sisminawati Sisminawati, “Uṣūl Al-Fiqh Sebagai Metode Penggali Hukum Syarak,” (Uṣūl Al-Fiqh As A Method of Extracting Sharia Law), *Al-Syakhsyiyah: Journal of Law and Family Studies* 2, no. 1 (2020): 1-20, <https://doi.org/10.21154/syakhsyiyah.v2i1.2157>; Abdul Muiz, “Landasan Dan Fungsi Al-Qawa'id Al-Fiqhiyyah Dalam Problematika Hukum Islam Foundation And Function of Al-Qawa'id Al-Fiqhiyyah In Islamic Law Problematic,” (Foundation And Function of Al-Qawa'id Al-Fiqhiyyah in Islamic Law Problematics), *Journal for Islamic Studies* (2020): 103-114.

harmonious couple is arranged from the start.³⁶ The practice of *merasi* is important in responding to the increase in divorce cases. This paradigm is constructed on the basis of *fa-al* science transformed into *Tafa-ul*, not *Tathayyur*.³⁷ The early prevention of divorce with the help of *merasi* practice is based on the Hadīth; كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يحب الفأل الحسن ويكره الطيرة (*The Prophet SAW loves good Tafa-ul and hates al-Thiyarah / unlucky assumptions*). The practice of *merasi* as an attempt to research the compatibility of married couple does not include shirk, *khurafat*, and sin. The identification of *Tathayyur* in the Hadīth; ولكن الله يذهبه بالتوكل، وما منا إلا، ولكن الله يذهبه بالتوكل (*Thiyarah is shirk and none of us has ever thought of this except that Allah removes it with tawakkal*) is a basis for its prohibition. The conceptual data on *merasi* takes into account practices that have nothing to do with immorality, shirk, and *khurafat*. Islam with the law of reality pays attention to the benefits side-related to *al-adah al-muhakkamah*.³⁸

Revitalizing the practice of *merasi* for couples who want to get married is not against the Islamic laws. The early prevention of divorce that starts before the marriage contract has a harmonious impact which appears from the beginning, far from disputes and quarrels.³⁹ The study of the practice of *merasi* is important and is a must as a form of endeavor following the Prophet instructions in terms of *Tafa-ul*.⁴⁰ Determining a mate is not just a matter for individuals who want to get married, they reflect collective interests (*family and custom*) that want children, grandchildren, and nephews to build a harmonious household.⁴¹

The findings suggest that revitalizing *merasi* practice is crucial. Therefore, to revitalize this practice in the stage before the marriage contract, a mutual agreement is needed. The agreement becomes the basis to conduct *merasi* practice for every young man or woman before entering the engagement stage⁴². Regulations that are in line with the Islamic law become collective policies so that the predicted harmony may become a positive energy and impact the divorce rate and the

³⁶Ridwan Angga Januario, Fadil Sj, and Moh. Thoriquddin, "Hakikat Dan Tujuan Pernikahan Di Era Pra-Islam Dan Awal Islam," (The Nature And Purpose of Marriage in the Pre-Islamic And Early Islamic Eras), *Jurnal Al-Ijtima'iyyah* 8, no. 1 (2022): 110-117, <https://doi.org/10.22373/al-ijtima'iyyah.v8i1.11007>; Edy Sismarwoto, "Islamic Ethical Value of Customary Basis of Marriage Proposal Application in Indonesia," *Indian Journal of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology* 14, no. 3 (2020): 1843-1846, <https://doi.org/10.37506/ijfnt.v14i3.10692>.

³⁷Armand J. Boehme, "Notes from the Fortune-Telling Parrot: Islam and the Struggle for Religious Pluralism in Pakistan – By David Pinault," *Reviews in Religion and Theology* 1, no. 8 (2010): 69-93, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9418.2010.00693.x>; Ildar R. Abitov et al., "Superstitiousness and Paranormal Beliefs of the Russian and Tatar Students," *Man in India* (2017): 568-570.

³⁸Ramli Muasmara, and Nahrim Ajmain, "Akulturasi Islam Dan Budaya Nusantara," (Acculturation of Islam And Nusantara Culture), *TANJAK: Journal of Education and Teaching* 1, no. 2 (2020): 111-125, <https://doi.org/10.35961/tanjak.v1i2.150>; Nur Azizah Rahman et al., "Review the Concept of Al-'Adah Al-Muhakkamah on Tradition 'Batal Wudhu' the Traditional Wedding of Ternate People in Ternate," *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Syir'ah* 20, no. 1 (2022): 170-175, <https://doi.org/10.30984/jis.v20i1.1775>.

³⁹Okwita And Adiningtyas, "Akulturasi Budaya Dalam Pernikahan Masyarakat Melayu Pulau Terong Kota Batam," (Cultural Acculturation in Marriage of Malay Community of Terong Island, Batam City), 1685.

⁴⁰Usman, "Tepung Tawar / Peusijeuk Dalam Perspektif Teori Tafa'ul," 20-26.

⁴¹Paryadi, "Memilih Jodoh Dalam Islam," (Choosing a mate in Islam), *Waratsah: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman Dan Sociolinguistik* (2015): 87-108.

⁴²Aditya and Pane, "Adat Pengantin Nusantara Melayu Riau Dalam Pengembangan Budaya." (Bridal Customs of Riau Malay Archipelago in Cultural Development), 21-26.

formation of harmonious households. Government regulations in managing the age of couples who can marry are effective in strengthening the harmonious households.

5.1. Conclusion

The practice of *merasi* is carried out as a consideration to continue the process of stages leading to the marriage contract. The implementation of this stage is the most important part to determine the compatibility of the couple who are to make the marriage contract. In present times, the practice of *merasi* as local wisdom has been widely abandoned. Even though, the practice of *merasi* may help individuals to get married with an ideal partner. The science of *fā'al* organizes compatibility in the count of the initial letters of the names of the two prospective partners and then adds and is careful with the number of counts so that it is reflected in "Step," "Mate," and "Death." This construction paradigm gets the decision to continue the pre-marriage process with the term "Mate", while it is allowed to continue and may not be in the neutral position of "Step" and asked not to continue in the position of "Death".

The revitalization of *merasi* practice in the stages before the marriage contract revives a local wisdom that can be used as an early prevention of divorce. To stabilize couples who are getting married, the practice of *merasi* is an effective step to determine compatibility between couples. Divorce stems from disputes, quarrels, and long arguments, breaking the bond of marriage. As an effort and endeavor included in the category of *Tafa-ul* which can provide positive energy in Islamic teachings is permissible and follows the rules of *al-mashalih al-mursalah*.

The current study emphasized the practice of *merasi* as an important stage leading to the marriage contract. Furthermore, it also prioritized this practice as local wisdom that has a role in getting harmony in the continuation of the pre-marriage process until the marriage contract. Making *merasi* practice as a stepping stone for early prevention of divorce in this study has limitations in construction. In line with that, further studies are needed for the implementation of this practice following the modern times. Resultantly, it may accommodate changes in the millennial generation who understand the importance of *merasi* practice before the marriage contract.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed.

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The data associated with this study would be provided by the corresponding author upon request.

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