

The Inauguration of Female Employees and Domestic Tensions: Understanding Divorce in PPPK Female Employees)

Ribka Novianeli¹, Denok Kurniasih²

^{1,2}Universitas Jenderal Soedirman

ABSTRACT: This article examines the relationship between the appointment of female teachers as Government Employees with Fixed-Term Contracts (Pegawai Pemerintah dengan Perjanjian Kerja/PPPK) and the escalation of household tensions that culminate in divorce. Drawing on perspectives from public sector human resource management and social role theory, the study explores how changes in employment status, income, and women's social position generate imbalances in domestic relations. A qualitative approach is employed through in-depth interviews with female PPPK teachers who have experienced marital conflict and divorce, supported by national and regional divorce statistics. The findings indicate that improvements in women's administrative and economic status are not consistently accompanied by transformations in household gender roles, resulting in psychosocial strain, authority conflicts, and breakdowns in spousal communication. This study underscores that public employment policies oriented toward formal equality must be complemented by supportive social policies to minimize the risk of family dysfunction.

KEYWORDS: PPPK, female teachers, divorce, public sector human resource management, gender roles

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the Government of Indonesia, through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology and the National Civil Service Agency, has taken a major policy step by appointing honorary teachers as Government Employees with Fixed-Term Contracts (Pegawai Pemerintah dengan Perjanjian Kerja/PPPK). By 2024, more than 600,000 honorary teachers had been formally appointed, resulting in a significant increase in the number of PPPK personnel within the state civil apparatus. The PPPK appointment policy constitutes part of broader civil service management reform aimed at enhancing professionalism, employment certainty, and the welfare of educators.

For teachers, this policy carries implications beyond administrative status, bringing substantial changes to social standing, economic conditions, and bargaining positions within the family. However, improvements in formal status are not always accompanied by socio-cultural readiness at the household level. Alongside growing job stability and economic security, a critical social issue has emerged, namely the rising incidence of divorce among PPPK teachers. National data indicate that women act as plaintiffs in the majority of divorce cases in Indonesia, a trend that has intensified in parallel with women's increasing participation in the formal labor sector. This phenomenon suggests the presence of deeper structural issues rather than purely individual or moral family problems.

Within the PPPK context, many female teachers were previously employed as honorary staff with unstable income and relatively weak domestic bargaining power. Appointment as PPPK fundamentally alters this configuration through increased income, the presence of state legitimacy, and a strengthened professional identity. This study is grounded in the assumption that household tensions experienced by female PPPK teachers cannot be separated from the dynamics of public administration and public sector human resource management, particularly with regard to status transitions, role redistribution, and institutional adaptation failures within the private domain.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous studies indicate that increased female participation in formal employment is often accompanied by domestic conflict when it is not balanced by an equitable redistribution of household roles. Research on work-family conflict emphasizes that women employed in the public sector experience dual pressures arising from bureaucratic performance demands and persistently traditional domestic expectations. Smith and Brown (2021) demonstrate that rising female income can trigger spousal resistance when power relations within the household remain unchanged. These findings are consistent with Hidayah (2020), who shows that work-related stress in the public sector has a significant impact on women's mental health and the quality of marital relationships.

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However, most existing studies remain general in nature and do not specifically address the PPPK scheme as a form of state contractual employment characterized by abrupt status transitions. This study addresses this gap by positioning PPPK as an administrative arena that generates social consequences extending to the household level. It offers a significant scholarly contribution across three main dimensions. At the conceptual level, the study expands public administration scholarship by linking public employment policy—particularly the Government Employees with Fixed-Term Contracts (PPPK) scheme—with divorce as a social outcome of state policy. Such an approach remains relatively uncommon, especially in developing countries and in the Southeast Asian context, where employment policies are typically analyzed from administrative and institutional perspectives without considering their social implications in the private sphere. Accordingly, this study frames divorce not merely as an individual issue, but as a structural consequence of state intervention through public personnel management policies.

At the empirical level, the novelty of this research lies in its focus on female teachers appointed as PPPK, rather than on women workers in general. PPPK represents a new employment regime within Indonesia's bureaucratic reform, characterized by contractual arrangements, transitional dynamics, and significant adaptive uncertainty for both individuals and their families. By examining female PPPK teachers as the primary subjects, this study provides globally relevant empirical evidence on how changes in public sector employment status can influence gender relations and household stability. This focus makes an important contribution to the international literature on public sector employment and gender, which has thus far been dominated by studies conducted in developed countries with permanent civil service systems.

At the policy level, the study demonstrates that bureaucratic reform and public employment policies are not family-neutral. Although designed to enhance efficiency, professionalism, and job security, the PPPK policy entails social implications that have not been fully anticipated, particularly with regard to the household dynamics of female public employees. These findings open a new avenue of discourse on the importance of a family-sensitive public human resource management approach—one that is oriented not only toward individual performance, but also toward the sustainability of social relations and the well-being of civil servants' families.

Based on these contributions, future research should be directed toward deepening the analysis of findings and discussion through the application of the developed theoretical framework, enabling a more precise and reflective demonstration of the relationships between public policy, gender dynamics, and divorce. Furthermore, policy implications should be articulated in a more substantive and strategic manner, moving beyond normative recommendations to emphasize the state's role in anticipating and managing the social consequences of public employment policies.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical development in this study extends beyond the concept of women's dual roles by incorporating **Status Inconsistency Theory**, as proposed by Lenski and further developed in contemporary public policy scholarship. This theory explains that social tension arises when an individual experiences upward mobility in one dimension of life while the surrounding social environment is unprepared or unable to adapt to that change. In the case of female teachers appointed as Government Employees with Fixed-Term Contracts (PPPK), a significant rise in administrative status occurs, marked by state legitimacy as public officials, more stable income, and formal recognition within the bureaucratic structure. However, this status advancement is not accompanied by a corresponding shift in expectations that continue to position women as the primary caregivers and managers of household responsibilities. At the same time, the social and economic status of spouses—particularly husbands—often remains stagnant or relatively lower. This misalignment across status dimensions generates household authority conflicts, feelings of threat among partners, and symbolic delegitimization of the husband's role (Ateşoğlu & Demirkasımoğlu, 2025). This phenomenon is highly relevant to public administration studies because PPPK status is not merely the result of individual mobility, but a direct product of state policy intervention (Wiedner, 2020).

This perspective is reinforced through the **Gendered Public Human Resource Management** approach, which asserts that public policies designed to be formally neutral often produce socially uneven outcomes. Although the PPPK policy does not differentiate by gender at the regulatory level, in practice it generates distinct social consequences for women (Головчук et al., 2025). The state strictly regulates employment contracts, performance standards, and bureaucratic discipline, yet provides insufficient mechanisms to anticipate or manage the relational impacts of such policies within households. When women acquire a new status as state employees, the change affects not only their individual work identities but also reshapes power relations and expectations within the family. This dynamic is commonly described in policy studies as a **policy spillover effect** into the private sphere. Consequently, divorce among female PPPK teachers should not be reduced to individual failure, but understood as an externality of public employment policies that are insufficiently sensitive to family dynamics.

Further psychosocial analysis is developed by incorporating the concepts of **role conflict** and **emotional labor**. Female PPPK teachers occupy positions that demand intensive emotional regulation both within bureaucratic environments and in domestic settings (Sondari et al., 2023). On the one hand, they are required to maintain professionalism, comply with bureaucratic regulations, and meet performance targets as public officials (Sholihah & Indrawati, 2020). On the other hand, they are still

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expected to perform the role of the “ideal wife,” preserving household harmony and managing the emotional needs of family members (Saleem et al., 2022). When women’s emotional resources are depleted in the public sector without adequate structural support, the household ceases to function as a space of recovery and instead becomes an arena of continued conflict (Yucel & Chung, 2021). This condition helps explain why many divorce cases emerge after the official issuance of the PPPK appointment decree rather than during the earlier period when women were still employed as honorary teachers.

In-depth field data further highlight the importance of incorporating the voices of research participants to construct a non-normative analysis. Interviews reveal relatively consistent narrative patterns among informants. Many women reported that after being appointed as PPPK, they were perceived as having “changed” by their spouses and extended families, even though the change primarily related to formal employment status. The introduction of symbolic state status into the household was perceived as a threat to partners’ identity and self-esteem, particularly in previously hierarchical gender relations (Jurczyk et al., 2019). Conflicts also emerged in financial management and decision-making authority. Although women now contribute stable income, this increased economic contribution does not automatically translate into recognition of domestic power, and in some cases provokes resistance.

Resistance to the redistribution of domestic roles becomes a recurring source of tension. Female PPPK teachers often face situations in which their work demands are equivalent to those of permanent civil servants, while household responsibilities remain fully assigned to them. This unresolved double burden generates latent conflict that eventually escalates into open confrontation. In this context, divorce is perceived by many informants not as failure or deviation, but as a rational decision to exit chronic pressure that can no longer be resolved through domestic compromise. Divorce claims thus represent a form of women’s agency to reclaim control over their lives, mental health, and dignity. Accordingly, divorce should be understood as a structural response to public policy-induced tensions rather than merely as a personal or moral issue.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To deepen the analysis of the appointment of female employees and household tensions—particularly in the context of divorce among female PPPK teachers—several research methods can be considered. These methods are intended to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by female teachers in balancing professional responsibilities and private life. The methodological approaches that may serve as research guidelines include qualitative methods, longitudinal studies, social network analysis, comparative case studies, ethnographic methods, feminist approaches, narrative analysis, and qualitative surveys using focus group discussions.

A qualitative approach is particularly suitable for exploring individual experiences in depth through in-depth interviews using a case study design. Participants are selected purposively and consist of female PPPK teachers who have experienced serious household conflict or divorce following their appointment. Data collection is conducted through in-depth interviews, narrative observation, and document analysis, including religious court decisions and regional divorce statistics.

Longitudinal studies allow researchers to observe changes and developments in the lives of female PPPK teachers over time. By collecting data at multiple points, researchers can examine how work and household dynamics interact and how tensions increase or decrease across different phases. This method also facilitates a deeper understanding of the factors that trigger divorce and how these factors evolve alongside changes in employment conditions and personal circumstances.

Social network analysis can be employed to examine the social relationships of female PPPK teachers within both workplace and household contexts. By mapping their social support networks, researchers can identify available sources of support and assess how these networks influence the tensions experienced by women in their dual roles. This approach helps clarify how social interactions contribute either to well-being or to additional pressures.

Comparative case study designs, which contrast the experiences of female PPPK teachers across different regions or social contexts, can provide broader insights. Researchers may select sites with varying social, economic, and cultural characteristics to examine how these factors shape household tensions and divorce dynamics. Ethnographic methods further enable an in-depth exploration of the everyday lives of female PPPK teachers within their socio-cultural environments. Through participant observation and in-depth interviews, researchers can capture how cultural norms, social expectations, and gender relations contribute to household tension and marital dissolution, offering a richer and more nuanced understanding of participants’ lived experiences.

A feminist methodological approach can also be applied to examine how power structures and gender norms shape the experiences of female PPPK teachers. This perspective highlights issues of gender inequality, social expectations, and structural constraints that contribute to household tensions and divorce. Rather than focusing solely on individual experiences, this approach situates women’s experiences within broader social and institutional contexts.

Narrative analysis may be used to explore the personal stories and lived experiences of female PPPK teachers related to their work and family life. By collecting and analyzing these narratives, researchers can understand how participants construct meaning from

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their experiences and how such interpretations contribute to household conflict and divorce. This method provides deeper insight into how divorce and domestic conflict are understood within the context of public employment.

Finally, qualitative surveys employing focus group discussions can provide a space for female PPPK teachers to share experiences and perspectives collectively. Group discussions often generate richer data and reveal themes that may not emerge in individual interviews. This method can also foster a sense of community and mutual support among participants.

From these methodological options, this study adopts a qualitative approach using in-depth interviews. The primary objective of the interviews is to explore the experiences, perspectives, and emotions of female PPPK teachers regarding their professional roles and the impacts on their household lives, as well as to understand how these factors contribute to the phenomenon of divorce. Open-ended questions are employed to allow participants to express their thoughts freely. Interviews are conducted either face-to-face or via online platforms, depending on participants' preferences and comfort. The interviewer follows the conversational flow and poses follow-up questions based on participants' responses to deepen the discussion. A safe and supportive interview environment is ensured to encourage open sharing of personal experiences. Interviews are recorded with participants' consent for further analysis, and strict confidentiality of participants' identities is maintained.

V. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The main findings indicate that appointment as a Government Employee with a Fixed-Term Contract (PPPK) often becomes a turning point in household conflict, not merely because of improved economic conditions, but primarily due to shifts in power relations and social identity. The majority of informants reported the emergence of spousal jealousy and resistance toward the wife's elevated status, conflicts related to financial management and decision-making authority, rejection of the redistribution of domestic tasks, and deteriorating communication resulting from emotional and psychological exhaustion.

This phenomenon demonstrates that public employment policies are formally gender-neutral yet socially gender-blind. The state acts as a provider of status but fails to establish adequate mechanisms for social adaptation within civil servants' families. In contrast to earlier studies, this research emphasizes that divorce among female PPPK teachers is not a personal anomaly, but rather a structural consequence of public policies that are insufficiently integrated with social dimensions. Based on in-depth interviews—particularly with female teachers holding PPPK status—the following key findings form the basis of the discussion.

1. PPPK Appointment as a Turning Point in Household Tension

Field findings reveal that the appointment of female teachers as PPPK constitutes a critical turning point in the household dynamics of informants. Nearly all participants stated that domestic conflict increased significantly after receiving the official appointment decree, rather than during the earlier phase when they were still employed as honorary teachers.

This shift is not solely attributable to increased workload, but rather to the social and symbolic status transformation associated with PPPK appointment. For many informants, the appointment introduced state legitimacy into the private sphere of the family, indirectly altering their bargaining position within household relations. However, this status change was not always adaptively accepted by spouses.

Analytically, these findings reinforce the argument that public employment policies generate a spillover effect into the domestic sphere. Through PPPK appointments, the state not only formalizes employment relationships but also produces social consequences that extend beyond bureaucratic organizational boundaries.

2. Status Disparities and Spousal Resistance

One dominant pattern emerging from the interviews is the presence of post-appointment status disparities. Many informants reported that their new PPPK status triggered household tension, particularly when spouses did not experience comparable improvements in social or economic status.

In several cases, spouses exhibited defensive, suspicious, or openly resistant attitudes toward the wife's changing role. This condition reflects what the literature describes as status inconsistency, wherein an increase in status in one dimension—administrative and economic—is not accompanied by adjustments in social relations within the immediate environment.

Such status disparities frequently manifest in conflicts over household authority, including control over financial decisions, child-rearing practices, and regulation of time and mobility. In this context, PPPK status functions not only as a professional identity but also as a symbol of power perceived to threaten established domestic relational structures.

3. Role Conflict and the Unnegotiated Double Burden

Subsequent findings show that most informants experienced chronic role conflict resulting from the failure to redistribute domestic responsibilities. Although formally recognized as state employees with high performance demands, domestic expectations imposed on informants remained largely traditional.

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Female PPPK teachers are required to meet administrative targets and professional standards while continuing to shoulder primary domestic responsibilities without equitable role negotiation. This condition creates an unnegotiated double burden that is psychologically more taxing than workload alone. Over time, accumulated emotional fatigue contributes to declining spousal communication quality and the escalation of latent conflict. These findings reinforce the view that household conflict among female PPPK teachers stems not from individual adaptation failure, but from structural shortcomings in managing role transitions produced by public policy.

4. Work Stress, Emotional Strain, and Spousal Communication Dysfunction

Field data indicate that work-related stress experienced by informants does not remain confined to bureaucratic settings but spills over into domestic relationships. Many informants disclosed that emotional exhaustion resulting from work demands diminished their capacity to manage household conflict constructively. As a result, spousal communication became more reactive, less empathetic, and increasingly confrontational.

In several cases, conflicts that initially centered on practical issues—such as time allocation, finances, and childcare—evolved into disputes over identity and self-worth. This dynamic generated recurring cycles of tension that were difficult to resolve, particularly in the absence of adequate psychosocial support from workplaces or extended family networks. These findings underscore that work stress in the public sector contains an emotional dimension that is often overlooked in public HRM policies.

5. Divorce as Rationalization and Women's Agency

Notably, most informants did not interpret divorce as personal failure or moral deviation, but rather as a rational decision to exit chronic pressure that could no longer be resolved through negotiation. Divorce was perceived as a pathway to restoring mental health, emotional stability, and control over personal life.

From this perspective, divorce represents women's agency rather than a passive consequence of household conflict. PPPK status provides economic security and social legitimacy that enable women to make such decisions. These findings challenge dominant narratives that frame divorce solely as family dysfunction and invite a more structural reading of the impact of public policy on the private lives of state employees.

6. Public Policy and Invisible Social Dysfunction

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the PPPK appointment policy is administratively neutral but socially non-neutral. Bureaucratic reforms focused on efficiency, performance, and job security have not fully accounted for social and familial implications, particularly for women.

Within the framework of public sector human resource management, these findings indicate the need for a paradigm shift from an individual performance orientation toward a family-sensitive public HRM approach. Without such an orientation, employment policies risk producing latent effects in the form of increased household conflict and divorce. Accordingly, divorce among female PPPK teachers should not be understood as an individual phenomenon, but as a reflection of structural tensions between state policy, gender norms, and domestic realities.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrates that the policy of appointing honorary teachers as Government Employees with Fixed-Term Contracts (PPPK) generates not only administrative and economic effects, but also significant social consequences within the domestic sphere. PPPK appointment has proven to be a critical turning point in the escalation of household conflict among female teachers, particularly due to the lack of family readiness to adapt to changes in status, professional identity, and power relations. Status disparities with spouses, unnegotiated double burdens, and the accumulation of work-related stress and emotional exhaustion emerge as the primary factors contributing to the deterioration of marital relationships.

The findings affirm that the high incidence of divorce among female PPPK teachers cannot be reduced to individual failure or moral shortcomings within families. Rather, it should be understood as a structural consequence of public employment policies that are formally gender-neutral but socially gender-blind. In this context, divorce emerges as a form of women's rational agency to exit chronic pressures that can no longer be resolved through domestic compromise, while simultaneously reflecting the spillover effects of state policy into the private lives of public employees. The in-depth interview guidelines adopted as the main methodological technique in this study were designed to comprehensively explore the lived experiences of female PPPK teachers. By examining their motivations, levels of satisfaction, and challenges, this research provides valuable insights into household tensions and divorce dynamics among female educators. The findings may serve as a basis for formulating more responsive public policies that support the well-being of female teachers in the future.

Accordingly, this study concludes that bureaucratic reform and public sector human resource management must be reoriented toward a family-sensitive public human resource management approach. The state's role should extend beyond conferring

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employment status and regulating performance to anticipating and managing the social impacts of employment policies on family relationships, particularly for female public servants. Without integrating social and gender dimensions into PPPK policy design, civil service reform risks generating latent social dysfunctions with long-term implications for employee welfare and social stability.

The methodological recommendations outlined in this study aim to deepen understanding of the appointment of female public employees and household tensions, as well as to further explore the factors contributing to divorce among female PPPK teachers. By employing qualitative approaches, future research can yield more comprehensive and in-depth insights and make meaningful contributions to the development of policies and practices that support the well-being of female teachers. Further research in this area is essential to fostering more supportive work environments for women in their dual roles as educators and family members. The government should therefore integrate gender and family perspectives into PPPK employment policies through psychosocial support programs for newly appointed staff, family-based work–family balance education, and the strengthening of public HRM policies that are sensitive to social impacts.

VII. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to express sincere appreciation to all parties who contributed to the completion of this study. Special gratitude is extended to the female PPPK teachers who willingly participated in in-depth interviews and shared their personal experiences with openness and trust, making this research possible. The author also acknowledges the support of relevant government institutions for providing access to secondary data and policy documents essential to the analysis. Academic colleagues and reviewers are gratefully recognized for their constructive feedback, critical insights, and scholarly guidance, which substantially improved the rigor and clarity of this article. Any remaining limitations are solely the responsibility of the author.

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