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## DIGITAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION

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# Working Women's Marital Adjustment in Terms of Communication Skills

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### Abstract

This study aims to determine how communication skills affect working women's marital adjustment. The data collection tool used in this study is a questionnaire. The respondents in this study are 76 women who are married and working. The sampling technique used is the purposive sampling technique. At the same time, the data analysis technique used in this research is simple regression analysis. The results showed the influence of communication skills by 43.6% on marital adjustment in working women. Communication in marital relations has an important role. Women who are married and working as much as possible improve communication skills considering that time with their partner is reduced compared to women who do not work.

**Keywords:** Communication; Marital Adjustment; Working Woman

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### Introduction

Social beings inherent in humans encourage someone to establish relationships with other people. The relationship with the most substantial level of dependence is the husband and wife relationship in a marriage, but married life often not following what is expected. In a marriage, the conflicts that occur are very diverse. Conflicts and disputes in a household are sometimes unavoidable.

The union between two unique personalities with their respective beliefs and different experiences makes conflict possible. According to Hurlock (2002), the causes of problems in marriage can occur due to various things, namely: limited preparation for marriage, roles in marriage, young marriage, unrealistic concepts of marriage, mixed marriages, shortened courtship, romantic marriage concepts, and lack of identity. It can cause turmoil in the household, leading to divorce and separation as an option.

Based on the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) results from the National Socio-Economic Survey (Susenas), in 2015, as many as 5.89% of married couples divorce. The amount is about 3.9 million out of 67.2 million households. Then the divorce rate in Indonesia continued to increase in 2020; the divorce percentage rose to 6.4% from 72.9 million households or about 4.7 million couples (Maharrani, 2021). Women who work for a relatively long time have a higher risk of divorce than women who do not work for a short time (Poortman, 2005). In line with this, research from Dave (2015) found that there was a significant difference in marital adjustment between working and non-working women. The results show that working women face more marital adjustment problems than those who do not work. Women who work have additional responsibilities and are more likely to experience adjustment difficulties than those who are not.

In the first and second years of marriage, married couples usually adjust well, not only with each other but also with each other's family members and even with each other's friends. Adjustment to a partner is essential adjustment. If marriage adjustments can be made, then divorce can be suppressed in line with Spanier's research (1976) on divorce or separation related to unhappiness and misadjustment in marriage. Currently, couples who work together are required to have flexibility in exchanging or sharing roles, both in matters of earning a living and working at home. According to Dalimunte (2013), most husbands expect their wives to be responsible for household affairs and children, whether the wife is working or as a housewife. The husband considers himself to have to develop a career and provide for household needs, so almost all of his time is devoted to career development and making money. Not infrequently, the wife has no more time for her husband and children, let alone household matters. Dalimunte (2013) explains that everyone who decides to get married wants a happy marriage. One indication of the success of pair adjustment is the success of building togetherness in carrying out family obligations (Lestari, 2014).

Regarding marital adjustment, communication skills are considered very important. Research conducted by Andjariah (2005) found that what makes a happy marriage is good communication between husband and wife. Research by Janetius (2004) shows that solid marital adjustments are couples who communicate regularly.

Creating quality communication with a partner takes work, especially if the husband and wife are busy with outside work. In addition to spending much time outside, both felt tired from their respective activities. According to Cangara (2013), what drives humans to want to communicate with others is the fundamental biological theory, namely the need to maintain their survival and adapt to their environment.

Based on this background, roles as mother, wife, and work must be able to run in a balanced way without anyone being left out. Marriage adjustment is significant, especially for working women. Then communication skills become essential in marriage adjustment because good communication will help people understand each other and what they want. This study aimed to determine the effect of communication skills on marital adjustment in working women.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Marital adjustment**

Marital adjustment is a process of modifying, adapting, and changing individual and partner patterns in behaving and interacting to achieve maximum satisfaction in the marital relationship (DeGenova & Rice, 2005). According to Lidz (2016), marital adjustment refers to the sexual adjustment of the couple. Whereas marital adjustment is a shift that everyone needs to suit each other's personality and allow the linkages needed to produce cooperation concerning family patterns that must be studied. Involving different ethnic and social patterns, it becomes a social system that can be applied to find perfection in family romance in each couple.

### **Criteria of Marital Adjustment**

Hurlock (2002) describes the criteria used in assessing the success rate of a person's marital adjustment. These criteria:

- a. Husband and wife happiness  
Happy couples derive happiness from successfully performing their respective roles. The existence of love allows them to make sexual adjustments and accept the role of parents.
- b. A good relationship between parents and children  
A good relationship between parents and children shows the success of marriage adjustments. If the relationship is terrible, it causes conflict and makes adjustment difficult.
- c. A reasonable adjustment in children  
Having children who can adjust to the social environment proves parents' success in adjusting to their marriage and their role as parents.
- d. Ability to derive satisfaction from differences of opinion.  
Differences of opinion that occur will end with three possibilities: tension without a solution, one of them relenting, or each trying to understand the views and opinions of others. The first and second possibilities can only reduce tension, while the third possibility can lead to satisfaction in marital adjustment.
- e. Togetherness

- Having time together and having a good relationship proves that marital adjustment is successful.
- f. Good financial adjustment  
Financial problems are a source of conflict in the family. Regardless of the amount of income, the ability to manage income is needed to avoid financial difficulties.
  - g. Adjustment with a good couple's family  
The existence of a good relationship with the family of the couple can minimize the possibility of relationship tension.

### **Aspects of Marriage Adjustment**

Four aspects of marital adjustment, according to Spanier (1976), that can affect the success of husbands and wives in making marital adjustments include:

- a. Dyadic consensus or agreement in a relationship  
Dyadic consensus is an understanding or agreement between partners on various issues in marriage, such as finance, recreation, and religion. A husband and wife will face conflicts in various aspects of their marital life due to their differences. The agreement that exists in marriage will find various issues that must be decided, such as managing the budget and how to divide household tasks, and the couple will realize that they have different perspectives on various things.
- b. Dyadic cohesion or closeness in a relationship  
Dyadic cohesion or closeness is how much couples do various activities and enjoy being together. The amount of time spent together will affect individual satisfaction with marriage.
- c. Dyadic satisfaction or satisfaction in relationships  
Dyadic satisfaction, or the degree of satisfaction in a relationship, is how husband and wife can carry out their roles in the household well. Blumstein states that newly married couples will carry out an identity bargaining process where women or men will readjust to each other with their partners when they find things that are not what they expect from their partners.
- d. Affectional expression or expression of feelings  
Affection is an understanding of expressing feelings and sexual relations, and problems. For some, it is not easy to let others know who they are, what they feel, or what they think. They may be afraid that other people know how they are, so they fear being rejected by their environment and loved ones. Therefore, they are careful of themselves and their partners by limiting the thoughts and feelings expressed to their partners.

### **Factors Causing Problems in Marital Adjustment**

Hurlock (2002) describes several factors of difficulty in marriage adjustment; these conditions are:

- a. Limited preparations for the wedding  
Most couples still need knowledge about married life, such as parenting and money management.
- b. Role in Marriage  
There is a tendency for roles to change in marriage and the couple's concept of the role of husband and wife in the household makes marriage adjustment more difficult.
- c. Early-age marriage  
Early marriage and becoming parents at a young age make a person have little opportunity to gain knowledge and experience from the environment. It makes a person jealous of others who have better opportunities, making marriage adjustment difficult.
- d. Unrealistic concept of marriage  
Someone who is in an environment that does not support their development tends to have an unrealistic concept of the meaning of marriage.
- e. Mixed marriage  
Husband and wife who have different family backgrounds have difficulties in marriage adjustment.
- f. Short courtship  
Dating in a short time means the couple has little time to try to solve various problems before marriage.
- g. Romantic wedding concept  
Excessive expectations about a romantic married life in adolescence can lead to disappointment and increase the difficulty of marital adjustment.

- h. Lack of identity  
When an individual is known by the environment with an identity given by others, it can make the individual lose his identity.

### **Aspects of Communication Skills**

Communication skills, according to Bochner & Kelly identify indicators of communication skills to create excellent and effective communication (in Joseph A. DeVito, 1997), namely as follows:

- a. Openness
  1. The openness of the communicator shows the willingness to open up and reveal information that is usually hidden between the communicator and the person he is interacting with.
  2. Communicators show their openness by acting spontaneously toward others.
  3. Transparency is acknowledging that feelings and thoughts are real.
- b. Empathy  
Empathy is a person's ability to know what another person is experiencing at a specific moment. Empathic people can understand the motivations and experiences of others, feelings, and attitudes, as well as hopes and desires for the future.
- c. Supportive attitude  
Showing a supportive attitude is manifested in the form of:
  1. Descriptive. Terms of descriptive communication help create a supportive attitude, not feeling an event is a threat.
  2. In spontaneity, someone who communicates spontaneously and is frank and open in expressing his thoughts usually acts similarly.
  3. Professionalism.
  4. The meaning of professional is to be tentative and open-minded and willing to listen to opposing views, and willing to change positions if circumstances require
- d. a positive attitude  
Positive attitudes in communication can be classified in at least 2 ways, namely:
  1. Attitude. Showing positive attitudes and feelings in communication situations, in general, is critical because communication will occur effectively. Meanwhile, a negative attitude can annoy people, and communication will soon be cut off.
  2. Encouragement. Behaviour encourages respect for the existence and importance of others. Positive encouragement generally takes the form of praise or appreciation. Meanwhile, negative encouragement is punitive and creates hatred.
- e. Equality  
Equality is the speaker's extent to the recipient for achieving equality in the meaning and message of communication. In other words, individuals have equality with others regarding speaking and listening.

### **Communication and Marriage**

The husband and wife relationship provides the basis and determines the colour of the whole relationship in the family. Many families fall apart when there is a failure in a husband and wife relationship. The key to the longevity of a marriage is the success of making adjustments between partners. This adjustment is dynamic and requires a flexible attitude and way of thinking. Adjustment is a continuous interaction with oneself, others, and the environment (Lestari, 2012).

Three indicators for the adjustment process include conflict, communication, and various household tasks: attitudes and ways of conflict resolution mark adjustment in marriage. Positive communication is one component in carrying out constructive conflict resolution. However, communication is essential in all aspects of marital life, not just conflict resolution. The most crucial role of communication is to build closeness and intimacy with a partner. If the closeness and intimacy of a partner can always be maintained, it indicates that the adjustment process between the two has been going well (Lestari, 2012).

David H. Olson and Amy K. Olson (in Lestari, 2012) ten aspects distinguish between happy and unhappy couples: communication, flexibility, closeness, personality compatibility, conflict resolution,

sexual relations, and activities at the same time. Leisure, family and friends, financial management, and spiritual belief. Among the ten aspects that stand out more are communication, flexibility, closeness, personality compatibility, and conflict resolution.

### **Communication Skills Scale**

In this study, researchers used the Marital communication Inventory by Bienvenu (1970). Three previous studies used the MCI scale to measure the communication skills of married couples. These studies include research conducted by Vogel (1980), Murphy & Mendelson (1973), and Elliott (1982). In addition to the MCI scale, researchers also found other measuring tools to measure communication skills in married couples, but these measuring tools are used for experimental research. The measuring tool is the SCS or Skill Communication Scale. MCI (Marital Communication Inventory), according to Bienvenu (1970), marital communication is the main element in the infection between couples. It is not intended to measure communication content but instead prioritizes itself with the pattern, characteristics, and communication style. Among other things is the ability of partners to listen, understand each other, express themselves, and say things.

### **Working Woman**

A study by Stefanie et al. (2000) found that the higher economic demands and the opportunity for women to achieve an education level equivalent to men have made women able to enter the world of work and develop careers in various fields. For married women, the decision to work and have a career depends on themselves and how the family responds, especially the husband, because, for them, domestic life is a priority besides their desire to work. A woman's career will only cause problems if she is properly and professionally prepared and good at dividing her time between household and career (Setyowati & Riyono, 2003).

According to Surya (2001), working women can obtain personal satisfaction that can support happiness. Surya also explained that the way working women can be successful in building a harmonious household is through interpersonal communication and the religiosity that exists within a person.

### **Material and Methodology**

This study aims to analyze communication skills' effect on working women's marital adjustment. The population in this study were 76 working and married women. Purposive sampling is a technique where people are selected based on specific criteria made by researchers based on research objectives (Kriyantono, 2012). The data collection technique used a questionnaire with a Likert measurement scale, which used five answer options: Strongly Not Appropriate, Not Appropriate, Neutral, Appropriate, and Very Appropriate. A scale with five answer choices is preferred. The statements of items in the questionnaire are divided into two: favourable and unfavourable. Precise statements are statements that support or favour the attitude object. Unfavourable are statements that do not support the attitude object (Sugiyono, 2012)—for validity, using content validity through expert adjustment, testing reliability using Alpha Cronbach with the help of the Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS) version 20 program. Data analysis techniques using a simple regression test with the help of SPSS version 20.0.

### **Result and Discussion**

Researchers prepared 2 scales, namely the marital adjustment scale and communication skills. The marital adjustment scale was measured using a questionnaire adapted from Spanier (1976), consisting of dyadic consensus or agreement in a relationship, dyadic cohesion or closeness in a relationship, dyadic satisfaction or satisfaction in relationships and affectional expression. Meanwhile, the communication skills scale was obtained from a scale adapted from the Marital Communication Inventory (MCI) compiled by Bienvenu (1970), consisting of 46 items. The scale is based on a partner's ability to listen, understand each other, express themselves, and say something.

The process of distributing questionnaires is done online using google docs. In distributing the questionnaire, using the snowball sample method, the researcher randomly contacted several respondents who met the criteria and then asked the relevant respondents to recommend friends, family, or acquaintances who they knew met the criteria to be used as research respondents. The researcher then contacted the person in question to determine whether they met the criteria as respondents. The

results of the questionnaire distribution obtained 76 respondent data that is ready to be processed by the researcher. The results of the item discrimination power test carried out on the Marriage Adjustment.

The reliability of the marital adjustment scale measuring instrument is in the range of 0.893. While the reliability coefficient of the marital adjustment scale measuring instrument after the invalid item is removed is 0.941. Meanwhile, based on the results of the item discrimination power test conducted on Communication Skills, the reliability of the communication skill scale is in the range of 0.901. While the reliability coefficient of the communication skill scale measuring instrument after the invalid item is removed is 0.943.

#### Normality test

This study used the SPSS 20.0 for the windows program for the Normality Test, namely the Kolmogorov Smirnov test. Based on the Kolmogorov Smirnov normality test on the marital adjustment variable, a significant result of 0.244 ( $p \geq 0,05$ ) was obtained. It shows that scores for the marital adjustment variable are normally distributed. Based on Kolmogorov Smirnov's normality test on the communication skill variable, a significant result of 0.20 ( $p \geq 0,05$ ) was obtained. It shows that the distribution of communication skills variable scores is normally distributed.

**Table 1.** Normality Test Results

Variable	<i>Kolmogorov - Smirnov</i>	P	Information
Marriage Adjustment	0,244	$\geq 0,05$	Normal
Communication Skills	0,20	$\geq 0,05$	Normal

Source: Research processed data

#### Linearity Test

For the linearity test, the F values were 204.27 and 61.78, with a significance of 0.000 ( $p \leq 0,05$ ). Thus, it can be concluded that there is a linear relationship between the communication skills variable and the marital adjustment variable.

**Table 2.** Linearity Test Results

Variable	F	Sig.	P	Information
Communication Skills with marriage adjustment	61,78	0,000	$< 0,05$	Linear

Source: Research processed data

#### Hypothesis testing

The results obtained through simple regression analysis showed an F value of 57.284 and a significance coefficient of 0.000 ( $p \leq 0,05$ ). Based on these results, the hypothesis is that communication skills significantly contribute to marital adjustment in working women.

From the regression test results, the R square value is 0.436 (43.6 %). The communication skill variable contributes 43.6% to the marital adjustment variable. While the remaining 56.4% was caused by other factors not included in this study. The results of the regression test are shown in the table below:

**Table 3.** Communication Skills Regression Test Results on Marital Adjustment

F	Sig.	R Square
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57,284	0,000	0,436

Source: Research processed data

### Subject Description Analysis

Research To obtain a more comprehensive picture of the Effect of Communication Skills on the Marital Adjustment of working women, the researchers added descriptive data as additional analysis in this study.

Researchers divide the type of work into five categories: civil servants, private employees, professionals, and entrepreneurs. It is easier to find out each category's frequency, percentage, and empirical mean. The results of the descriptive analysis in the category of type of work are described in the following table:

**Table 4.** Description of Respondent Data by Type of Work

Type of Work	Percentage %
Civil servant	14,5%
Private employees	35,5%
Professional	35,5%
Entrepreneur	9,21%
Etc	5,27%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Research processed data

Researchers divided the age of marriage into 5 categories. Namely 0-2 years, 2-5 years, 5-10 years, 10-15 years, and >15 years. It is easier to find out the frequency, percentage, and empirical mean of each category of Age of Marriage.

The results of the descriptive analysis in the age category of marriage are described in the following table:

**Table 5.** Percentage of Respondent Data by Marriage Age

Marriage Age	Percentage %
0-2 years	64,5%
2-5 years	29%
5-10 years	2,63%
10-15 years	0%
>15 years	3,94%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Research processed data

This study's research subject data based on the number of children were divided into five categories. Descriptions of research subjects based on the number of children can be seen in the table below:

**Table 6.** Percentage of Respondent Data by Number of Children

Number of Children	Percentage %
0	52,7%
1	31,6%
2	13,1%
3	2,63%
>3	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Research processed data

From the results obtained, communication skills influence 43.6% of marital adjustment. According to Surya (2001), one of the ways that a working wife can be successful in building a household is by making adjustments between herself and work, accompanied by support from her husband. Such support can be developed through effective interpersonal communication between husband and wife. Communication skills are dyadic skills that need to be developed by couples; both of them need to work together to build good communication.

Daily communication can increase intimacy, trust, and friendship with their partners (Weigel in Latifatunnikmah & Lestari, 2017). The husband feels capable and responsible for meeting his wife's and children's needs so that the wife no longer has to work outside the home. Fulfilling his wife's and children's needs is also one of the husband's commitments at the beginning of a marriage. Similarly, research conducted by Elliott (1982) showed that marital communication is significantly correlated with marital adjustment, both for individuals and couples. Then the study of Vogel (1980) showed a strong positive correlation between marital adjustment and communication between partners.

In line with the purpose of communication, according to Devito (1997), the primary purpose of dealing with other people in communication is the motivation to communicate to maintain warm and close interpersonal relationships because everyone wants to feel loved and loved. On the other hand, communication can be used to distance yourself from other people, argue and disagree with friends, and even end relationships. According to DeVito (1997), interpersonal communication is sending and receiving messages between two people or between a small group of people, with some effects and instant feedback. Tan (1981) suggests that interpersonal communication is face-to-face communication between two or more people (Liliweri, 1997). According to Devito (1997), the general quality of interpersonal communication includes: a) Openness: There is an availability to open up and reveal information that is usually hidden, as long as it meets the limits of reasonableness. b) Empathy: Individuals see and feel other people as they feel. c) Supportive Attitude: Individuals must show a supportive attitude with attitude. d) Positive Attitude: Interpersonal communication is fostered if people have a positive attitude toward themselves. e) Equality: There must be a tacit acknowledgement that both parties are equally valuable and valuable and that each party has something important to contribute. The current phenomenon is that many wives work too busy and sometimes forget to establish communication with their partners. One of the causes of several quarrels, disputes, debates, fights, and so on is misunderstandings in communication. Couples with high commitment will always communicate all the problems in the marriage, trying to find solutions and solve problems more effectively. The more effective the communication, the more harmonious the relationship between husband and wife. Therefore, communication creates and develops marital commitments (Thompson and Webb, 2004). Although effective communication is not always shown from the frequency of communication, husband and wife try to communicate in the form of attention to their partner.

Then this study also obtained results as much as 56.4% caused by other factors that are not included in this study. According to David H. Olson and Amy K. Olson, there are ten aspects to distinguish between happy and unhappy couples: communication, flexibility, closeness, personality compatibility, and conflict resolution. These five aspects are the most prominent. The other five aspects are sexual relations, leisure activities, family and friends, financial management, and spiritual beliefs (Lestari, 2012). According to David H. Olson and Amy K. Olson, aspects other than communication can be studied further as part of the factors that influence marital adjustment.



Accuracy in choosing the words used in conveying ideas to partners can be realized by the presence of a person's communication skills. Intonation when communicating needs to be considered. Then the emphasis on different words, even in the same sentence, can cause different responses in partners.

For additional analysis regarding the categorization of research subjects, it is known that the empirical mean score on marital adjustment and communication skills is at a high score, with communication skills having an empirical mean value of 124.05 and marital adjustment with a value of ME = 97. These results indicate that the subject, working women, have higher communication skills compared to marital adjustment.

Respondents in this study were descriptively obtained respondents with the type of work of private and professional employees, respectively 35.5%. The rest were civil servants, with a percentage of 14.4%, entrepreneurs at 9.21%, and others as much as 5.27%. The age of marriage obtained by respondents with marriage age (0 - 2 years) is 64.5%, (2 - 5 years) is 29%, (5 - 10 years) is 2.63%, and >15 is 3.94%. In addition, 52.7% of respondents in this study do not have children.

## Conclusions

In this study, the hypothesis was accepted that communication skills contributed significantly to the variable of marital adjustment in working women. Communication skills contributed 43.6% to the marital adjustment of working women. In comparison, the remaining 56.4% was caused by other factors not included in this study.

Based on the research results, the advice that can be given is for women who are married and working as much as possible to improve their communication skills, considering that time with their partner is reduced compared to women who do not work. The contribution of communication skills in this study reached 43.6%, which means that communication in marital relations has a somewhat important role. Then for further research, modification of research variables is highly recommended, considering other factors also affect marital adjustment.

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