

Interpersonal Communication in Maintaining Marital Harmony : Ethnographic Study of Married Couples Aged 15-20 Years in Bekasi

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ABSTRACT

Being married for 15-20 years is not easy. Various challenges experienced by couples can reduce marital harmony – the importance of good communication between couples to keep the relationship from being damaged. This research uses Relational Maintenance Theory. This qualitative research uses the post-positivism paradigm and ethnographic methods, data collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and literature studies. The result of this study is that husband and wife often get differences in how to educate children, communication problems, and differences in character and culture. Communication is the first way couples solve problems, such as continuing to communicate using media when their partner is in a bad mood. Married couples also take several ways to maintain their marital relationship, such as openness, assurance, sharing duties, joint activities, and complementarity and understanding. Interpersonal communication carried out by married couples with a marriage age of 15-20 years is quite good, and they can maintain the harmony of their marriage to date.

Keywords: *interpersonal communication; marriage; relational; nurturing; harmony*

INTRODUCTION

Every married couple always wants happiness in their marriage. But marital harmony cannot be obtained easily. In marriage, there are times when there are ups and downs. Of course, there will be obstacles that must be faced by couples. Various forms of exams faced can be from various causes. This can start from small problems that continue to be conflicts and if not resolved properly, will lead to quarrels and even divorce.

According to Laura Young on the www.self.com website where she is a licensed clinical social worker in New York who helps individuals and couples navigate relationships, the number one problem in marriage is poor communication. In this case, based on the 2022 BPS Report conducted by the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics, there were 447,743

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divorce cases in 2021 and 279,205 of them were caused by continuous disputes and quarrels. Meanwhile, in West Java there were 52,475 cases and 3,376 cases in Bekasi in 2021 with similar causes of divorce. These constant disputes and quarrels led to the highest divorce in Indonesia.

This is in line with the results of a VOI interview conducted with a private employee who had divorced in 2018. The private employee claimed to have experienced a divorce because of communication problems in his relationship, namely the absence of openness from his ex-wife about his activities that made him upset and led to arguments. Reported from the www.kompas.com website based on a Yourtango survey of 100 mental health professionals found that 83% of wives feel angry about their husband's attitude that often does not listen when he is giving advice and pouring out their feelings. The absence of effort or effort from the husband to listen to the wife's suggestions and feelings can reduce the harmony of their relationship. When such an attitude is carried out continuously, there is no longer such a thing as harmony but separation.

As time goes by, those who are in a long marriage can have more obstacles in their relationship that affect the harmony of their marriage. Based on the results of the study, the age of marriage of 10-15 years tends to be the worst problem and about 65% of women say they are less happy in their marriage due to problems with in-laws, money management, household chores, household responsibilities, raising children or intimacy where the same problems keep recurring including unresolved problems that arise new problems (James, 2015).

The vulnerability of 10-15 year old marriages is because the people we knew 15 years ago are not the same as the people beside us now where those people are growing and changing. Most people avoid problems in their relationships rather than talking about them and using infidelity to get out of the zone.

Judging from the many divorce cases caused by communication, the importance of communication between couples to solve a problem well in order to find a good way to get out of the problem so that there are no prolonged problems in the relationship. Especially in a marriage relationship that does live together in ups and downs for a long time, it is important to be open from every couple who lives it. No matter how complicated these things are, it is important to communicate together in order to establish a harmonious relationship and avoid major problems that lead to divorce, even if the issue is very uncomfortable to discuss. The number of divorce cases due to husband and wife communication factors is behind the author to discuss further how interpersonal communication of married couples who are still together in maintaining the harmony of their marriage.

Previous research conducted by Ridwan and Supratman entitled *Interpersonal Communication Patterns in Elderly Couples* showed that married couples who have been in a household for many years have diverse characteristics in their implications as husband and wife couples. Meanwhile, verbal and non-verbal messages also have diversity arising from each partner, as well as self-concept that is formed as an application in symbolic interactions with their partners or self-awareness (Ridwan and Supratman, 2018). But in this study still needed an in-depth explanation from couples about openness in marriage carried out by elderly couples. Therefore, in this study, researchers used ethnographic methods to be able to observe

directly how interpersonal communication from married couples for 15-20 years in the Bekasi area. If in previous studies focused on verbal and non-verbal communication from elderly couples, this study focused on how relationship maintenance strategies are carried out by couples to maintain marital harmony.

The location of the study was chosen in Bekasi, because based on the West Java Religious Court Case Statistics report, there were 4086 divorce cases with a marriage age of over 10 years. Meanwhile, at the age of marriage of 15-20 years, there were at least 93 divorce cases in May-December 2021. Based on these data, it was also obtained that the areas with the most divorce cases were in Harapan Jaya Village, Bintara Village, Bojong Menteng Village, and Pengasinan Village.

The high number of divorce cases with a marriage age of 10 years and over, the author limits the age or length of marriage to 15-20 years. The author is located in Bekasi in order to obtain centralized information according to the problems raised. In this region there are couples who come from different cultures so there are also differences in the characteristics of each partner. In addition, there are many couples with husband and wife conditions both working. These things are certainly not easy to do if there is no good communication between couples as an effort to maintain a marriage relationship that has been lived for a long time to remain harmonious.

Humans are born with different physical characteristics, characters, and traits in each person. Humans cannot choose or determine skin colour and physical shape when they are born. All these provisions are nothing but gifts from the one and only God. The different conditions of every human being were created by God with the aim that each human being could respect and respect each other's differences that occurred in society (Rhizky, 2020).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Relational Maintenance Theory

Relational Maintenance Theory describes the various behaviors exhibited by couples in an attempt to maintain the relationship. This theory focuses on "what is done" rather than "what is not done" in relationships. Relational maintenance generally refers to a set of behaviors, actions, and activities that individuals use to maintain a desired state of relationship (Littlejohn, S.W & Foss, 2009). There are four definitions of relational maintenance:

1. Relational maintenance to maintain relationships that have been established to maintain the existence or existence of relationships.
2. Relational maintenance to maintain relationships under certain circumstances or conditions and is expected to maintain relationships stably at varying levels of conditions,
3. Relational maintenance to maintain a satisfactory relationship between both parties.

4. Relational maintenance to maintain relationships that experience repair after conflict. This expression actually has two different meanings. The first is to keep the relationship in good condition after experiencing conflict and the second is to repair the relationship that has been damaged due to conflict.

There are nine relationship maintenance strategies that are considered communicative strategies including:

1. Positive, refers to a positive attitude, communication in a cheerful optimistic way, and generally pleasant relationships
2. Openness, is a variety of thoughts, feelings and discussions about relationships. It is important to have self-disclosure from both parties, to understand each other because open communication and increased self-disclosure are often classified as close behaviors.
3. Reassurance, including messages or behaviors that show love and commitment to the relationship.
4. Sharing duties, responsibility for performing tasks and working in shared relationships such as housework and child care
5. Social Networking, refers to communicating and getting acquainted with people around to expand relationships. This can include friendships and family relationships.
6. Together, do activities and spend time with your partner.
7. Mediated Communication, is communicating in various forms other than face-to-face such as online communication, using telephone, mail and others.
8. Avoidance, is the attitude of avoiding certain topics or couples when one of them is in a bad mood.
9. Antisocial behavior refers to avoiding unfriendly social behaviors such as jealousy, sarcasm, and violence.

Of the nine communicative strategies for maintaining relationships above, there are five main strategies commonly used by married couples, namely positivity, openness, reassurance, task sharing, and social networking (Littlejohn, S.W & Foss, 2009).

Based on the description above, the author understands that relational maintenance or relationship maintenance is carried out to maintain the relationship that exists so that it exists, is not damaged and maintained in quality, so as to satisfy both parties. Through this theory, it can be further discussed what things are done by those who are related in maintaining good relations so that the desired goals are achieved. Related to this study, Relational Maintenance Theory is used to explain how married couples in marriages of 15-20 years maintain relationships under any circumstances and situations, including when resolving conflicts experienced by couples.

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is a communication process that occurs between two or more people and takes place face-to-face that allows each participant to directly receive feedback both verbal and non-verbal (Mulyana, 2010). Interpersonal communication is the interaction that occurs between two or more people who form relationships with others (Andriani, 2018). Interpersonal communication is defined as the process of sending and receiving messages between two or a small group of people with some immediate effects and responses (Soyomukti, 2012). Based on the explanation above, the author understands that interpersonal communication is a process of conveying various information verbally and nonverbally carried out by two or more people in this case there is a change in message, both as communicants and communicators with the aim of achieving the same meaning of interaction.

Elements of interpersonal communication in general are used for the process of interpersonal communication (Devito. J.A., 2016):

1. Source and Receiver, each individual performs the function of formulating and sending messages and also the function of receiving and understanding messages. In communication there are processes of encoding and decoding. Encoding is an activity that refers to the act of generating messages such as speaking and writing. Decoding is the act of understanding a message like listening and reading.
2. A message, a signal that acts as a stimulus for the receiver and is received by one of our senses: hearing, sight, touch, hearing, smell, taste, or a combination of all these senses. Messages can be planned, unintentional, and spoken. Messages can be expressed verbally or nonverbally.
3. Channels, means or media to convey messages to recipients can be telephone, email, face-to-face, instant messaging and so on.
4. Noise, obstacles that can cause interference. These barriers are anything that prevents the recipient from receiving the message. The recipient may misunderstand the message he receives. Disorders that can hinder the process of interpersonal communication: a. Physical noise: external interference that interferes with the transmission of signals or messages to speakers and listeners, such as the sound of passing motors, poor internet signals, illegible handwriting and so on, b. Physiological noise: disorders that occur in the sender or receiver of messages, such as hearing loss, visual impairment, articulation problems and so on. c. Semantic Noise: a disorder that occurs when a communicant and communicator have different systems of meaning that include language differences, the use of jargon or terms that are too complicated, or terms that are ambiguous or too abstract so that their meaning can be easily misunderstood.
5. Context, the environment that influences the content and form of communication activities. This environment includes the environment in which communication takes place, namely physical (where communication occurs), sociopsychological (the role of communication participants, drives, motivations, attitudes, and so on), temporal (when

and where certain messages enter into the atmosphere of communication events, and culture.

6. Ethics, every act and behavior of communication has a moral dimension, what is good and bad, what is right and wrong.

Regarding the elements of interpersonal communication, the author understands that the couple can turn into both a source and a receiver in the process of communication. The husband can be the sender of the message about his wishes and the wife becomes the recipient of the message to understand her husband's wishes and vice versa.

Cultural Behavior

Basically, culture is the order that governs the life of a society. Through a particular value system in a society, culture is used as a guideline of life or frame of reference in acting and behaving by the society that supports that culture (Syamaum, 2019). Then a person's behavior and culture become interconnected, because humans are social beings who interact with each other and perform certain habits that eventually become their ordinary culture (Mahdayeni, Alhadad, M.R & Sale, 2019). Likewise, cultural communication becomes part and behavior of communication and vice versa communication determines, maintains, develops, or inherits culture (Nurhidayah, 2017). According to Kuswanto, communicative behavior is the action or activity of a person, group or audience when participating in the communication process (Rifa'i, 2017). The existence of cultural differences causes individuals to have differences in how to communicate. The way we communicate, the circumstances in which we communicate, the language and styles used, and nonverbal behavior are all responses to cultural functioning. How we interact with the culture we live in also shapes our character. Therefore, communication that is insensitive to the value system of a cultural community can generate conflicts (Nurhidayah, 2017).

Wedding

Marriage is a ceremony to tie the marriage vows performed by two people with the aim of formalizing the marriage relationship in front of the ruler so that more relationships are established between them and protect each other (Chapman, 2013). Marriage is a legal relationship between a man and a woman with the expectation that they will complement each other, accept responsibility, and act as husband and wife involving sexual relations, the desire to have children, and determining the division of each other's duties (Khairunnisa, 2016). The author understands marriage as a legal relationship in the eyes of God and in the eyes of the law between a man and a woman who love and cherish each other by involving sexual relations in them and are expected to have children.

Interpersonal Relationships

It is a reciprocal relationship between two or more people, temporary or permanent in which individuals are interdependent and need each other to share feelings, thoughts, perform activities together and develop emotional bonds (Lubis, K., Daharnis, & Gratitude, 2019). In relationships, of course, there can be communication going on in them between the people in the relationship. This communication is called interpersonal communication. Based on articles published on the website www.mindbodygreen.com There are four basic types of relationships: family, friendship, acquaintance, and romantic relationships. Usually when people talk about being in a particular romantic relationship that involves emotional and physical intimacy, the level of ongoing commitment and ethical monogamy.

The main barriers that hinder the effectiveness of emotional communication (Devito. J.A., 2016):

1. People's rules and customs, social and cultural customs may have taught us that it is inappropriate to express feelings such as the patterns of behavior seen in movies and television that show men who are strong and never cry or will be perceived as weak. That's not the right way to advise men to communicate their feelings more openly.
2. *Fear*, the feeling of fear will reveal the feelings experienced or if expressing these feelings will cause conflict.
3. *Inadequate personal skills*: Lack of interpersonal skills can create feelings of uncertainty or doubt that can lead to withdrawal.

From the description above, it can be understood that interpersonal relationships are closeness between two people or in a group that involves feelings and behavior towards each other. The author also understands that interpersonal relationships are romantic relationships. In this case a marital relationship takes place between two men and a woman involving feelings, commitment, romantic and sexual. In addition, not everyone in a relationship can express their feelings easily. There are some obstacles that occur either because of rules or habits that already exist in society, fears, or lack of interpersonal abilities. Likewise, in a marital relationship, this can happen.

Marital Harmony

Harmony is a concept that refers to achieving balance in a relationship (Lestari, S., Faturachman, Adiyanti, M. G., & Walgito, 2013). A harmonious relationship means a relationship that is harmonious (Jannah, 2017). Harmony is manifested from interpersonal relationships that provide a pleasant or emotionally happy atmosphere for the party concerned and others who observe it (Jannah, 2017).

Marital harmony is the key to marital happiness (Herawati, 2016). Marital harmony is a condition that shows peace in marriage as an expression of the couple's ability to carry out functions according to their roles which is characterized by reduced tension and disappointment (Herawati, 2016). Healthy communication between husband and wife promotes marital harmony and stability. A healthy communication style can make it easier to deal with confidants and build stronger, healthier partnerships (Immanuel, 2020). The ability to accept and respect a partner is also important in maintaining domestic harmony (Herawati, 2016).

METHODOLOGY

This research takes approximately 5 months, starting from determining the topic of the problem to be raised, making a research proposal to collecting research results. Precisely from March to July 2023. The author lives in the same housing as the couple studied so that the author has long observed and interacted with the three couples who were the object of research.

The paradigm used in this study is the paradigm of post-positivism. Post-positivists believe with certainty that reality exists and that there are good reasons to try to know it (Tracy, 2013). This paradigm looks at events more deeply, does not pay attention to the surface of these events like a positivist flow, and is structural, assigning meaning as inferential, and interested in understanding (Samsu., 2017). The post-positivism paradigm in personal relationships is used to understand communication in those relationships, where participants' views as data sources focus on experiences and meanings in those relationships (Allen, 2017). This study used a qualitative descriptive approach. Qualitative research is research that emphasizes understanding social life problems based on real conditions or *Natural setting* which is holistic, complex, and detailed (Murdiyanto, 2020). Qualitative research is one of the research processes that produces descriptive data in the form of speech or writing and the behavior of people observed (Ningrum, 2015). The data collected in qualitative research is in the form of words or images, so it does not emphasize numbers (Sugiono, 2013). But it comes from interview scenarios, field notes, personal documents, memos, and other official documents (Ningrum, 2015)

The author used ethnographic methods in this study. The term ethnography comes from the word *Ethno* (person/social/cultural group) and *Of* (writing/notes). Ethnography has its roots in anthropology, which is basically the study of individuals or societies that naturally live in specific cultural situations that describe their socio-cultural activities and patterns (Samsu., 2017). Ethnography presents a view of the life of the subject who is the object of study (Hadi, A., Asrori, 2021). Ethnography is a research method used to discover knowledge that belongs to or is contained in a particular culture or community. Ethnography seeks to study what knowledge people use to interpret their experiences (Samsu., 2017). This method is used by researchers to understand human behavior in its culture and environment. The main purpose of this method is to understand the experience of human life (Raco, 2010). This type of ethnography expresses the state of the object written in the third person by describing facts in detail and reporting information from what was observed or heard from participants (Creswell,

JW, & Poth, 2018). In this study, the authors lived in the same area as the couples studied, so the authors have long understood how the cultural behavior of the three couples and in more depth conducted interviews about how these three couples maintain the harmony of their household.

This research is descriptive qualitative, meaning research that describes, explains, explains and answers in more detail the problem to be studied by learning as much as possible about an individual, group or an event (Irawan, 2020). This research is intended to discover or clarify a symptom, reality or social phenomenon that exists (Samsu., 2017). Research that is descriptive is not intended to test a particular hypothesis, but rather to describe what a symptom, variable, or state is (Samsu., 2017). The data produced in this qualitative descriptive research is presented in the form of words and language (Hadi, A., Asrori, 2021).

To determine research informants, the authors use techniques *Purposive sampling*, namely the determination of information sources (informants) based on certain objectives or considerations first (A, 2014). In other words, informants are determined by certain predetermined criteria.

The criteria for informants are as follows:

1. Have been married for 15-20 years
2. Couples who live in the same house and are not separated
3. Have children
4. Resident at Bekasi
5. Prepare to be interviewed

The reason the author chooses couples who already have children is because according to the author, they not only play the role of husband and wife in the marriage relationship, but also as father and mother. So that the responsibilities and roles of both increase, which when busy taking care of children, household chores, even work, communication or time for both is reduced. However, they have been able to maintain the harmony of their marriage relationship all these years.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted on 3 married couples to answer questions about their communication in maintaining marital harmony. The author conducted interviews with 3 couples who had different marriage ages with the same time span of 15-20 years. Going through a marriage for a long time is not an easy thing for informants. Various ordinary domestic problems have been felt by them. Especially for those who have many children and work. Educating and nurturing children who are starting to grow up is not easy, differences in the way of education often occur quarrels between couples.

Economic conditions that require husbands to work extra or even erratic working hours due to work demands make husbands able to spend days outside the home so that wives feel worried and sometimes suspicious, especially husbands are also not people who like to

communicate at all times with wives when there are activities outside. So, the wife asks how the husband is doing first by contacting him through *handphone*.

In addition, the differences in the character and culture of each partner, and when they live in different places, also change their behavior and character into a positive thing. The length of marriage also makes each couple better understand the character of their respective partners. Although there are disagreements or disagreements that occur during the relationship, they have their own ways of resolving problems without major conflicts or even domestic violence.

Communication is important in a relationship. Communication that every couple has is a way for them to stay open about everything that happens, be it about personal problems or issues involving harmony in the relationship. The way of communication carried out by each couple can also be said to be interesting, such as communication that is only done together in the room because they do not want their children to know when there is a problem, consensus deliberation, or just discussing at lunch time because the couple is both working.

In addition to communication, informants also do small things to maintain the harmony of their marriage, such as helping their wives with homework, bringing work home, or simply taking their children and wives for a walk and eating out. Such simple things make them happy. The importance of maintaining communication between couples and doing positive things can maintain relationships and minimize something that can have a bad impact on the couple and the relationship itself, so that it remains in good condition, despite conflicts.

1. Problems in marriage aged 15-20 years

In living a marriage for 15-20 years, there are various problems faced by couples. As experienced by the first informant, R and J. They are a married couple who have been married for 19 years. According to J, problems that occur in his marriage are considered natural and are usually caused by disputes caused by the way of educating children. He also added that his son, who sometimes plays outside without knowing the time, often quarrels with his wife.

Not only the first informant, the second informant, M and A who have been married for 17 years also have problems that are not much different. From M statement during the interview, she revealed that there are temptations in her marriage. The problems faced also vary, be it about children, economics, or personal feelings because they are bored and suspicious of husbands who spend a lot of time working in the "fields". Moreover, A is also not the kind of person who likes to ask how his wife is doing when working outside, unless he really hasn't returned home, he will contact her husband.

Meanwhile, the marriage relationship between MH and S for 20 years had problems that were not much different from the first and second informants. MH said there were differences in understanding, personal feelings due to monotonous relationships, as well as differences in parenting. Moreover, in her opinion, she is the kind of person who wants everything to be in order, in contrast to her slow husband, many considerations. That is what sometimes does not connect and interference appears.

"Sometimes there is a feeling of boredom in the monotonous sense of it, such as 'how come this is just a household?'. Usually, there is a problem of dissynchronization in parenting style, what kind of person I am, what kind of person he is, is not connected. Keep misperceptions, I'm actually not like that. If the type of woman wants everything programmed, yes, I mean after that she, after this, has to be like this, like that.. Well, sometimes it doesn't connect. He is too slow, if I want everything programmed. Well, that's what often brings up aggravation as well."

Based on the answers given by each informant, the author knows that basically the problems that occur in marriages that have been lived for 15-20 years are due to differences in character between each partner which then cause disputes, both about how to raise children and the attitude of the husband.

2. Character Differences

To find out more, the author then asked the informant how the character of each partner was. Based on R words during the interview, she is someone who is ignorant, relaxed and chatty, in contrast to her husband J who is stiff, hard and tends to be quiet. From her husband's character, sometimes she annoyed R. R mother also added that if there are problems in her household, she and her husband keep in touch.

Not much different from the previous informant, the couple MH and S also have differences in character. According to S, MH is a strict person, but close to the children. Because his wife has a *daycare* /kindergarten, which almost every day spends time with small children.

Meanwhile, according to MH, she revealed that she and her husband were taaruf, so there was no dating, but within a month after getting to know each other, the two immediately proposed and got married. So according to him, S is the type of person who doesn't often flirt like men out there who do that to their partners. MH added that her husband is also a rigid, quiet, and *slow* person, in the sense that he likes to consider everything, so it takes a long time to confirm things. These things sometimes make MH upset. However, for MH, behind it all her husband can teach her a lesson.

Likewise with the next informants, namely M and A. According to A, his wife is a good person, diligent in worship and chatty. Meanwhile, M said that A quiet and easygoing character likes to confuse her.

"He's a closed person, doesn't like to talk a lot, doesn't like to be noisy, doesn't like to be angry. So it makes me "this guy why never get angry?", meaning to be firm, yes, but this is just that. So I'm the one who talks more, because he's the one who relaxes."

Judging from the informant's answer, M felt confused because of A less assertive character. Unlike the talkative self. In addition, according to M, she behaved chattering like that because her husband was not strict with children. She also said that her husband-type

doesn't like interacting through *cell phones* with people if nothing matters. Therefore, if the husband is assigned out of town or does not go home, he then contacts him.

From the informant's information above, the author found similarities in the husband's character, where all three have a quiet character. One of the informants said that it was the wife who had to start opening her mouth first so that her husband could open up.

"If he's told he didn't start, he can't do that. For example, there is a problem, it must be me first. I always start." MH said.

Although the three couples interviewed had differences in character and sometimes caused resentment because of things they didn't like about their partners, according to the three couples there was also no major conflict in their household. In addition, according to them, after a long marriage, they understand the character of each partner, so they can position their behavior when responding to these differences. According to informant I J, he responded by accepting the shortcomings and advantages of his colleague. So cover up those shortcomings and see the advantages. He also remained silent because he didn't want to muddy the atmosphere. The same thing was also conveyed by informant II M, she added that she also thought positively. Similarly, informant III MH said the same thing as informant I. She also communicated by telling her husband what she didn't like about him, and vice versa.

From the answers of the informants above, they respond to these differences in character by complementing and accepting each other, in the sense of accepting the shortcomings and strengths of their partners, and covering up these shortcomings by focusing on their strengths. Then also respond with communication between partners, silence and positive thinking.

Cultural Behavior

The way we interact with the culture we live shapes our character and communication insensitive to the value system of a cultural group can lead to conflict (Nurhidayah, 2017). In this case, all three couples have different cultures and the author wanted to find out what their behavior from those cultures was like. As experienced by the couple MH and S. In this case, all three couples have different cultures and the author wanted to find out what their behavior from those cultures was like. As experienced by the couple MH and S.

From MH statement during the interview, she comes from Central Java where in the culture of speaking does not use high intonation, in contrast to her husband S from East Java who speaks in a loud tone. Moreover, S character is quiet which sometimes according to Mom. MH, when her husband gave a statement or statement, made MH easily carried away. So according to MH too, sometimes the mentality of a woman who is not ready to speak loudly like that immediately scares her and cries.

The couple also has differences felt while living in Java and Bekasi. During his stay in Jogja, S had problems with different language meanings, where according to him the language he used during his stay there was considered "smooth", but instead seemed "rude". So therefore, he prefers to be quiet and listen.

Meanwhile, according to MH, at the beginning of living in Bekasi it felt like a challenge, she felt surprised because in that place there were people with different cultures, even though previously she was used to making friends with people of different cultures, but when she entered an environment with many cultures again she was shocked, Where he couldn't respond to people from different cultures, so he stayed at home. But after living here for a long time, he began to understand to respond to people with different cultures.

Communication Problems

Communication has elements that must be considered in order for communication to run effectively. One of these elements is the effect, acceptance or rejection of a message by the communicant is the success of a communication (Creswell, JW, & Poth, 2018). In this case, the couple MH and S often have problems with communication. Where according to MH expression during the interview, when the husband was spoken to or there was an unfinished conversation, S did not listen and instead played the cellphone (*handphone*) or sleep. From the information of informant III above, it can be seen that the resulting effect is that there is a message that is rejected by the communicant, where S does not respond to his wife's words and chooses to sleep, so that input from the message conveyed by MH is also absent.

Similar to informant III, informant I R felt a communication breakdown in the form of physiological noise, which when her husband asked to make coffee, she forgot because her focus was distracted by her young son.

"Sometimes I do, instead of not listening, sometimes I forget. I ask to make coffee, because Juna (her child) is crying, so I forget. The most I remember is, "Where's my coffee?", "Oh yeah, I forgot" like that."

Regarding the informant's answer above, the disturbance that occurred was the recipient of the message, where R lost her memory of her husband's request for coffee, then she remembered it when reminded. In line with informants I and III, further communication problems were also felt by informant II M. She felt a communication problem in her husband, namely a lack of interpersonal skills in expressing things. According to M, she revealed that her husband A silence made her confused because sometimes she did not understand what her husband wanted. He even chose to remain silent as well because there was a fear that it would be wrong if he spoke. But in the end, M still asked her husband why he behaved like that, but before asking, she also looked at her husband's condition first, whether he looked good or not.

With regard to expressing feelings, the three couples who became the author's informant had in common in the lack of expressing feelings, since all three couples expressed that they were not romantic types. So, they don't say romantic things in everyday life like saying

"I love you". One of S informants said that he was not the type of partner who easily expresses things.

"If I'm the type of person who expresses it, it's difficult. Sometimes we actually think too, what should we do, don't immediately "yes". Everything we want to do is thought out in advance, what effect we will do later, we will also calculate it. There are many considerations."

From the informant's answers, it is known that it is not easy to reveal something because something needs to be thought about in advance because of cause and effect. So there are many considerations, so it does not immediately agree to everything. Based on the information of the informants above, the author knows that the three couples who are in a marriage relationship that has been lived for 15-20 years have problems with communication. This is generally caused by the husband's indifferent and quiet character and attitude, thus making the wife upset and confused. From MH statement during the interview, she comes from Central Java where in the culture of speaking does not use high intonation, in contrast to her husband S from East Java who speaks in a loud tone. Moreover, S quiet character which sometimes according to MH, when her husband gives a statement or statement, makes MH easily carried away. So according to MH too, sometimes the mentality of a woman who is not ready to speak loudly like that immediately scares her and cries. The couple also has differences felt while living in Java and Bekasi. During his stay in Jogja, S had problems with different language meanings, where according to him the language he used during his stay there was considered "smooth", but instead seemed "rude". So therefore, he prefers to be quiet and listen.

Judging from the answers of the informants above, the author knows that the culture where he lives in Bekasi, can change their behaviour. But the change leads to positive things. Informants become accustomed and familiar with different cultures, and can do positive things while living in the place.

Maintaining Harmony at the Age of Marriage 15-20 years

Harmony in a relationship requires two people working together to build a harmonious relationship. Everything that happens in the relationship must be resolved properly. Every married couple has their own way of maintaining a marriage relationship that has been lived for 15-20 years to remain harmonious. In this case, the author knows that one of the things they do is interpersonal communication / between couples. This is in line with what the informant Ibu Murtiningsih said that a harmonious relationship is not only in terms of finances, but also the existence of healthy communication, mutual understanding, complementarity of each partner's shortcomings and every problem can be resolved properly without being brought to the external scope.

1. Positive communication

Of the three couples the authors interviewed, they revealed that communication became a way to solve problems. Like the couple R and J who have a unique way of communicating. When there is a problem, they choose to communicate before going to bed, either in the room. So it is when they fight, where they inhabit each other, but when in front of children they get along. Because they feel uncomfortable if they are secretly like that and are not free to solve problems in front of their children. In addition, when J is at work and there is a problem at home, the wife likes to call the husband to tell him, but to solve it they do it directly at home.

2. Openness

In a successful relationship, openness is an important thing to do to keep the relationship harmonious. With openness, couples become more confident and minimize conflicts that may occur in the future. Especially in domestic life where there should be nothing to cover everything. All three couples revealed that they are open about finances, children, feelings, and other things that happen in the household. According to one of Jinformants, adding that openness regarding these matters must continue to be communicated, so that nothing is covered up so that disputes do not occur.

3. Showing affection

People who are in romantic relationships are closely related to affection. The importance of this affection is so that they can know and feel that the person really wants to be with him. Everything they show their partner is a form of commitment in the relationship. This is also a form of maintaining a harmonious relationship. The long marriage age does not rule out the possibility of fading affection, on the contrary, the informant the author interviewed still showed his affection at the age of 15-20 years of marriage. Although they are not the kind of romantic couples who say "*I love you*" every day, but through the little things that couples do, they show seriousness about their marriage relationship.

4. Divide homework fairly

In a harmonious marriage relationship, it is important for married couples to carry out responsibilities according to their respective roles. Especially if they already have children, their responsibility is not only as a married couple, but also as a father and mother of their children. In addition, in doing the best possible duties / work is done fairly so that new conflicts do not arise in the household. Like the three couples the authors interviewed, they split responsibilities fairly, never complaining if the husband continued to work. Speakers I, II and III revealed that as a wife understands that the husband's obligation is to provide for her family, so for household matters and educating or educating children, wives play a more active role in handling it because they are the ones who are at home and often meet children. However, it is undeniable that when there is time, the husband is also supportive in educating / educating children and helping with housework.

5. Handle well the mood of the partner

As a human being, sometimes *the mood* or mood is not always in a good state. As a couple, as much as possible they need to control the atmosphere so that their partner does not get worse in their mood which can later trigger conflicts.

MH informant said that *when she was* not in a good mood, everything was considered wrong, including when her husband spoke, so S responded calmly, but when he was done with his mood problems, he told her.

CONCLUSION

Interpersonal communication carried out on the three partners who became informants was quite good. The existence of problems that disturb the harmony of the couple's household does not make them separate, but as a learning later and makes their marriage relationship stronger and lasting until now. Because the three partners always communicate, be it when a problem occurs or to solve a problem, although sometimes wives have to start a conversation first because they have a quiet husband. The forms of communication used are verbal and nonverbal, namely face-to-face, using media, and through facial expressions.

In maintaining marital harmony for up to 15-20 years, all three partners carry out communicative strategies to maintain the relationship in their own ways which include: positive (positive attitude and communication in a cheerful, optimistic, generally pleasant relationship), *openness (openness)*, assurances (*messages or behaviors that show affection and commitment to the relationship*), *sharing tasks* (responsibility for performing tasks and working in a common relationship), *social networking* (communicating with people around), *shared activities (doing activities and spending time together)*, mediated communication (communication in *various forms other than face-to-face*), avoidance (*avoiding certain topics or partners when one of them is in a bad mood*), and Antisocial behavior (avoidance of unfriendly social behavior).

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