

The Influence of Interpersonal Communication Skills on Marital Stability (Case of Married Couples Aged 0-5 Years in Bekasi City)

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ABSTRACT:

In the marriage that experiences adjustments at the beginning of the married couples aged 0-5 years, interpersonal communication is very important so that the relationship can develop and stabilize. This initial period is prone to conflict due to differences that must be adjusted between partners. Interpersonal communication skills are important in this critical period to understand each other and reduce the possibility of problems that can affect marital stability. This study aims to determine the effect of interpersonal communication skills on the marital stability of married couples aged 0-5 years in Bekasi City using social penetration theory. Social penetration theory illustrates that self-disclosure and changes in communication can deepen a relationship, allowing it to develop from a more casual to a more intimate connection. Quantitative explanatory methodology was used in this study. The results obtained showed that there was a positive influence of 40.7% and a significance of 0.000 < 0.05 from interpersonal communication skills on the marital stability of married couples aged 0-5 years in Bekasi City. It can be concluded that there is a significant effect of interpersonal communication skills on the marital stability of married couples aged 0-5 years in Bekasi City.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Submitted: 19 July 2024 Revised: 28 August 2024 Accepted: 30 September 2024

KEYWORDS

interpersonal communication, marital stability, married couples aged 0-5 years

INTRODUCTION

Marriage, as a sacred milestone in human life, symbolizes the formation of a new family unit. Marriage is a sacred promise between a man and a woman to share the joys and sorrows of life. According to Anotasi UU No. 1 of 1974 (2018), marriage is the union of two people recognized both religiously and legally, to form a happy household for life. Every married couple dreams of building a stable and happy household.

Newlyweds must adapt to each other and overcome the challenges that arise during this adjustment period (Hurlock, 1980). Conflicts during this phase can destabilize a marriage.

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Initially, marriages are often filled with beauty and stability, but later, conflicts and disagreements may arise, destabilizing the relationship and potentially leading to divorce.

Divorce is often seen to resolve marital problems. Various problems and other factors such as household disharmony, psychological unpreparedness of spouses, and economic problems can weaken the stability built within the household, often resulting in divorce (Apriliani & Nurwati, 2020). Based on data from the Bekasi City Religious Court in 2022, there were 4,887 divorce cases in Bekasi City, an increase of 12.9% compared to 4,327 cases in 2021. Of these divorces, 73% were filed by wives, while 27% were filed by husbands.

Data from the Bekasi City Religious Court from January 2019 to September 2023 also shows the high frequency of divorce in the first five years of marriage. Couples married for 0-5 years make up the majority of divorce applicants in Bekasi City. In this phase of marriage, 32.1% of divorce cases were recorded. The initial five years of marriage are considered a critical phase and the core of marital dynamics due to the many new experiences associated with married life, such as the transition to marriage itself and the challenges of raising the first child (Kendhawati & Purba, 2019).

Divorce can be triggered by various factors. The data from the Annual Report of Bekasi Religious Court shows that the main factor causing divorce in Bekasi City in 2022 was disputes and arguments, which reached 86%. Ongoing disputes and arguments are often the result of communication failures between husband and wife. This imperfection in communication leads to an increase in the number of conflicts, which in turn can disrupt marital harmony, even threatening the stability of the marriage relationship (Henry et al., 2020).

Communication is an important process for conveying messages in human life. In addition, communication can shape the quality and determine the stability of a marriage or family. The communication that couples need when entering into early marriage is interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication with a partner is important when entering early marriage. Interpersonal communication is a type of communication that is carried out intimately and most effectively influences a person with the impact received directly (Hanani, 2017). Newly married couples need a lot of communication to adjust to each other.

Mimi Sakinah Hilma, Yanuar Luqman, and Triyono Lukmantoro (2022) in their research revealed the importance of communication skills with couples. Couples who have many topics to talk about when communicating are more likely to share information about themselves. This can make the relationship progress towards making it more intimate. Joseph A. Devito (in Ruliana & Lestari, 2019) explains that interpersonal relationships are formed through several stages that must be passed by all parties involved, including: (1) contact (the parties involved interact with each other and this process will determine the continuation of the relationship), (2) involvement (increases the sense of compatibility due to being involved and involved in the relationship), (3) familiarity (improves interpersonal relationships characterized by closer interaction), (4) deterioration (occurs when a person is dissatisfied with the way they are in the relationship and can cause conflicts that affect subsequent relationships), (5) repair (begins to find out what caused the problem and resolves it so that the relationship works again), and (6)

breakup (the separation or breakup phase occurs when the relationship can no longer be repaired).

According to Duvall and Miller (in Fitrianah et al., 2023), effective interpersonal communication optimally influences conflict resolution. Communication by married couples in marriage can make them open up to each other and feel comfortable when conveying messages and telling stories, even when they face problems. Interpersonal communication in marriage helps couples to be able to understand and express thoughts and feelings directly to their partners (Marheni, 2019). So that the course of a marriage relationship can be maintained with good interpersonal communication skills to partners.

Vita Sari Gumay, Dewi Kurniawati, and Nurbani (2024) in their research showed a significant influence of 73.2% between doctors' therapeutic communication and nurses' communication style on service quality in Deli Serdang Regency Hospital. The image of the hospital is well improved along with the quality of hospital services that produce satisfaction in pregnant women. This study serves as a reference for using social penetration theory, suggesting that interpersonal communication can influence various aspects of relationship development. This influence makes a relationship intimate until the comfort and openness of the other party is achieved.

Rena Latifa, Salsabila Salsabila, and Heri Yulianto (2021) in their research showed that religiosity and marital commitment had an effect of 22.4% on marital stability. Marital stability also contributes to the psychological well-being and career development of female journalists. The study became a reference in using Buehlman & Gottman's dimensions on the marital stability variable. Buehlman and Gottman (in Carrére et al., 2000) predict marital stability and divorce by looking at how couples interpret the early years of their marriage. A partner who is overly critical during the first three years may lead to disappointment and a perception that marital problems are not their responsibility, increasing the likelihood of divorce.

Naeem Atanda Balogun, Abdulrazaq Olayinka Oniye, Muiba Alaba Aliu-Balogun, Usman Olakunle Balogun, Rafiat Ajibade Oyekunle, Shakirat Oluwatosin Sulyman-Haroon, Hauwau Haliru Bunza, and Musbau Dogo Abdulrahaman (2019) in their research mentioned that couples can sometimes face marriage failure and have marital conflicts because of their negative behavior. Stable spouses give praise with positive comments to explain negative actions, while unstable spouses complain about their partner's negative behavior without considering the consequences. This can worsen to the point of using harsh words, leading to distance, separation, and divorce. To maintain marital stability, positive words of praise should be used to offset the negative actions of the spouse.

According to Rakhmat (2018), there are several components needed to improve interpersonal relationships: (1) trust (trusting the behavior of others to achieve goals), (2) a supportive attitude (an attitude that supports others and reduces defensiveness when communicating. This attitude will be successful in interpersonal relationships as it seeks to understand the message the other person is conveying), and (3) an open attitude (this attitude can lead to successful communication because it gives the other person a sense of comfort to speak).

Interpersonal communication is an important aspect in establishing a relationship, especially marriage. Couples in the early years of marriage from 0-5 years as the topic of this study have a level of vulnerability to problems that are novelty in this study. This research focuses on Bekasi City, which has not been done by many similar previous studies. If previous studies have not focused much on marital stability as the dependent variable in the context of interpersonal communication skills, then this study can provide new insights. Exploring the influence between interpersonal communication skills and marriage stability, especially at the early age of marriage 0-5 years, can provide a new understanding of the factors that affect marriage stability in the early stages. Couples who have been married in the initial five-years period are experiencing an adjustment phase from living alone to starting a family. Therefore, the formulation of this study is to assess how much interpersonal communication skills influence the marital stability of married couples aged 0-5 years in Bekasi City. In addition, the purpose of this study is to determine the effect of interpersonal communication skills on the marital stability of married couples aged 0-5 years in Bekasi City, so that domestic life remains under control and can take wise steps to undergo a stable marriage.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this research is an explanatory survey type with a quantitative approach. The hypothesis in this study consists of H0 and Ha. H0 is that there is no effect of interpersonal communication skills on marital stability of married couples aged 0-5 years in Bekasi City. Meanwhile, Ha is that there is an effect of interpersonal communication skills on marital stability of married couples aged 0-5 years in Bekasi City.

The subjects in this study are interpersonal communication skills and marital stability. Interpersonal communication skills and marital stability were chosen as objects because they are important elements in the life of a marriage relationship. In addition, the selection of interpersonal communication skills and marital stability as objects in this study is based on Bekasi City divorce data, which shows that most of the reasons for divorce are caused by disputes and arguments that occur continuously in the marriage relationship. The object of this study is married couples aged 0-5 years, which is in the adaptation phase and there are various differences between husband and wife while living a married life. The selection of married couples aged 0-5 years as the object of this study is based on the existence of divorce data in Bekasi City which always increases every year and shows that most of the reasons for divorce are caused by disputes and arguments that occur continuously in the marriage relationship.

Data collection was carried out using a questionnaire survey technique in the form of a google form distributed in December 2023 - February 2024 via Instagram. This research was conducted on 1,199,150 residents in Bekasi City with married status. The sample was obtained as many as 100 people using the Taro Yamane formula with a precision of 10%, which was determined using a purposive sampling technique with the criteria of being married, the age of their current marriage in the 0-5 years category, and domiciled in Bekasi City. This study uses interpersonal communication skills as variable X and marital stability as variable Y. The

interpersonal communication skills variable in this study has five dimensions as the operational variables, namely openness, empathy, supportive attitude, positive attitude, and equality. The marital stability variable in this study consists of eight dimensions as the operational variables, namely fondness, we-ness, expansiveness, negativity, disappointment, disillusionment, chaos, volatility, and glorifying the struggle.

Each variable to be studied applied a measurement scale using a Likert scale. Data analysis was carried out using the Pearson's Correlation Product Moment validity test by seeing if r count > r table (0.361) then the statement was declared valid. In this case, 1 invalid statement was obtained on variable X and 2 invalid statements on variable Y. The reliability test used the Cronbach Alpha formula by seeing if the reliability coefficient value was> 0.6 (Siregar, 2013). Regression analysis using simple linear regression with the help of the SPSS version 25 application. The correlation test is used with the Pearson's Correlation Product Moment formula. The coefficient of determination test is used to determine the amount of influence of variable X on variable Y. Hypothesis testing was based on the regression test results through the SPSS application, showing a significance value of <0.05, leading to the rejection of H0 and acceptance of Ha (Bungin, 2005).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents in this study were spread throughout Bekasi City, and their demographics were analyzed based on gender, age, and marital status. In the gender category, 74% of respondents were female and 26% of respondents were male. The age category includes 23% of respondents aged 21-25 years and 77% of respondents aged 26-34 years. As for the marital status category, 74% of respondents were wives and 26% of respondents were husbands.

Interpersonal communication is a form of communication that has stages of interaction and relationships ranging from close to separation (Afrilia & Arifina, 2020). Interpersonal communication can bring the direction of one's relationship better and avoid possible problems that can occur due to interactions that occur through communication. The interpersonal communication skills variable in this study has five dimensions, namely openness, empathy, supportive attitude, positive attitude, and equality. The following are the results of the answers of 100 respondents in the five dimensions of variable X (interpersonal communication skills):

Table 1 Dimensions of Interpersonal Communication Skills (n = 100)

Interpersonal Communication Skills							
Dimension Mean Percentage							
Openness	372	93%					
Empathy	345	86,25%					
Supportive Attitude	365	91,25%					
Positive Attitude	372	93%					
Equality	376	94%					

Source: (Research Results, 2024)

Based on Table 1, it was found that the equality dimension placed the highest position with 94% of respondents. This shows that there is an element of equality in marriage. This equality includes needing each other in life, helping each other solve problems with a partner, and trying to understand situations that occur in marriage. In social penetration theory, the equality dimension is in line with the idea that interpersonal communication can benefit from needing each other and contributing to the journey of marriage, making the relationship more intimate.

The openness dimension received 93% which means the respondents have openness in their relationship. In marriage, openness means sharing problems with your partner, accepting their opinions, and being honest. In social penetration theory, it discusses how relationships become more intimate because of the self-disclosure factor. One way to reveal yourself to each other with a partner is to stay open.

The supportive attitude dimension found that 91.25% of respondents expressed a supportive attitude towards married lifeThe supportive attitude is to provide support and help one's partner when they face problems, without placing blame. Meanwhile, in the positive attitude dimension, 93% of respondents stated that there was a positive attitude in the husband-and-wife relationship in married life. Positive attitudes include respecting the partner, thinking positively about the partner, not doubting the partner excessively, believing in the importance of the partner, giving praise and appreciation to the partner, and being committed to being with the partner.

According to Sukarelawati (2019), supportive attitudes and positive attitudes are considered the same and can be combined because they include openness, empathy, and positive attitudes that support the creation of interactions. The dimension of supportive and positive attitudes related to social penetration theory is that the theory states that relationships can be predicted by the presence of supportive and positive attitudes that become the norm in the relationship process.

The empathy dimension showed that 86% of respondents stated that there was empathy in the relationship between husband and wife in marriage. The empathy dimension in relation to social penetration theory is important because communication allows people to feel and understand each other and their partners. Empathy generated in communication is one way to bring relationships closer (West & Turner, 2013).

Interpersonal communication skills are in line with the onion layer analogy in social penetration theory. Onion layers are analogous because everyone has layers of self-disclosure and feelings when communicating with others like a multi-layered onion. The outer layer, the openness that occurs is only general and ordinary. Conversely, the deeper the layer, the more intimate and detailed the disclosure will be about life and even personal feelings (Suherman, 2020). The results of this study show that there is openness to each other through interpersonal communication skills that bring the relationship closer. Not only the breadth dimension, interpersonal communication skills also utilize the depth dimension. When undergoing marriage, of course, couples not only know the outermost layer of the onion

analogy, but will slowly get to know the deepest layer. This is because the depth dimension is assumed to increase in line with the development of a relationship (Bungin, 2006).

Marital stability is a condition of a couple's relationship in which they are married and continue to live together, do not separate or divorce, and continue to last the length of their marriage (Priyadharshini & Gopalan, 2020). Buehlman and Gottman created a coding system that includes the way of speaking or conversation, perception, and interaction to the couple that determines the stability in their marriage. In addition, the coding system measures how each partner describes and talks about their partner. This system can determine whether the way couples talk about their marriage to each other will increase insight into the stability of the marriage or the path to divorce. The marital stability variable in this study consists of eight dimensions, namely fondness, we-ness, expansiveness, negativity, disappointment, disillusionment, chaos, volatility, and glorifying the struggle. The following are the results of the answers of 100 respondents in the eight dimensions of variable Y (marital stability):

Table 2 Dimensions of Marital Stability (n = 100)

Marital Stability						
Dimension Mean Percentage						
Fondness	364	91%				
We-ness	373,5	93,38%				
Expansiveness	352	88%				
Negativity	202	50,5%				
Disappointment Disillusionment	142	35,5%				
Chaos	155	38,75%				
Volatility	259	64,75%				
Glorifying the Struggle	359,5	89,88%				

Source: (Research Results, 2024)

Based on Table 2, the marital stability variable shows that the we-ness dimension is the highest dimension, with 93% of respondents. This shows that the husband or wife prioritizes togetherness in married life living together with their partner. When someone enters the world of marriage, with the presence of a partner, unity becomes the main thing. In accordance with the assumptions in social penetration theory that a developing relationship will bring changes in communication that are not intimate to intimate. Relationships that were initially individual when they were single, then turned into a "we-ness" attitude because they had moved on to a new life with a new status, namely husband and wife. Therefore, after marriage there will be differences by prioritizing the partner or family.

Meanwhile, the disappointment disillusionment dimension is the lowest dimension, with an average score of 142 or covering 35.5% of respondents. This is based on the reality of married life, they are able to solve existing problems with their partners, so that whatever difficulties and problems they face can be overcome. Therefore, the disappointment disillusionment dimension obtained the lowest results among several dimensions of the

marital stability variable. These results are consistent with the second-order assumption in social penetration theory, which is that relationships are systematic and predictable. In this case, couples in a marriage relationship can determine the direction of their relationship. The low acquisition of the disappointment disillusionment dimension in this study shows that husbands or wives give each other positive responses and minimize negativity, one of which is by not being disappointed or giving up on various circumstances faced. They strengthen each other and find solutions to change unfavorable circumstances to become more controllable and return to a stable and mutually happy state.

The link between marital stability and social penetration theory discusses the process of a relationship that can be predicted as stability. According to Littlejohn & Foss (2011), social penetration theory not only allows relationships to become more intimate, but also allows relationship development to be seen as an increase in the cycle of stability and change because couples can predict the course of their relationship. According to the basic tenets of this theory, developing a relationship will involve greater disclosure or openness to each other. Communication that can bring about openness of the couple will more easily increase stability in the marriage relationship. To build stability in marriage, each partner strives to make their marriage a new and better life and realize their various goals together. The roles and cooperation between husband and wife affect the future journey of domestic life.

Inferential statistical tests such as correlation, regression, coefficient of determination, and hypothesis tests were conducted to determine the influence between interpersonal communication skills (X) and marital stability (Y). These tests were carried out using the SPSS version 25 application. The results of the correlation test using Pearson's Correlation Product Moment are as follows:

Table 3 Correlation Test

	Correlations		
		Interpersonal	
		Communication	Marital
		Skills	Stability
Interpersonal Communication	Pearson	1	.638**
Skills	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-		.000
	tailed)		
	N	100	100
Marital Stability	Pearson	.638**	1
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-	.000	
	tailed)		
	N	100	100
**. Correlation is significant at the	0.01 level (2-tailed	d).	

Source: (Research Results, 2024)

Based on Table 3, the correlation value (r) of 0.638 shows a significant relationship between variables with a Sig. value. 0.000 < 0.05 which shows a significant relationship between interpersonal communication skills and marital stability. The correlation value (r) of 0.638 indicates that the relationship between variables is at a fairly meaningful level, because it is between 0.40 - 0.70. This value shows a positive relationship between the two variables indicating that there is a positive relationship between the two variables.

The results of this study are in accordance with the social penetration theory on which this study is based, discussing how interpersonal communication skills are very important in relationships, especially in marriage because they can make relationships that are initially not intimate become more intimate until the marriage becomes stable.

Table 4 Normality Test

		,			
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test					
Unstandardized Residual					
N		100			
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	.0000000			
	Std. Deviation	2.97343417			
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.061			
	Positive	.061			
	Negative	060			
Test Statistic		.061			
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200 ^{c,d}			
a. Test distribution is Norma	ıl.				
b. Calculated from data.					
c. Lilliefors Significance Corr	ection.				
d. This is a lower bound of t	he true significance.				

Source: (Research Results, 2024)

Based on Table 4, it is known that the data is normally distributed with the acquisition of a significance value or Asymp. Sig. 0,200 > 0,05. The normality test and linearity test are carried out to ensure that the data obtained from the research results are normal and linear so that they can continue in the next test, namely the regression test. The data obtained in this study is normal, so that the linearity test can be carried out to the regression test.

Table 5 Linearity Test

			,				
ANOVA Table							
			Sum of		Mean		
			Squares	df	Square	F	Sig.
Marital	Between	(Comb	721.810	15	48.121	5.356	.000
Stability *	Groups	ined)					
Interpers		Lineari	601.220	1	601.220	66.917	.000
onal		ty					
Commun		Deviat	120.590	14	8.614	.959	.502
ication		ion					
Skills		from					
		Lineari					
		ty					
	Within Groups		754.700	84	8.985		
	Total		1476.51	99			
			0				

Source: (Research Results, 2024)

Based on Table 5, it is known that the linearity test has been fulfilled or the data is linearly distributed with the acquisition of a Sig. value. deviation from Linearity 0.502 > 0.05 and a Sig. value. Linearity 0.000 < 0.05. The data requirements for normal and linear distribution have been met, then a simple linear regression test is carried out.

Table 6 Simple Linear Regression Test

ficients^a Standar ed	diz	
_	diz	
ed		
zed Coefficie	ent	
Coefficients s		
Error Beta	t	Sig.
4.827	1.56	.121
	2	
.077 .6	638 8.20	.000
	5	
1	ts s Error Beta 4.827	ts s Error Beta t 4.827 1.56 2 .077 .638 8.20

Source: (Research Results, 2024)

Based on Table 6, with the regression equation Y = 7.542 + 0.631, it is known that the regression test shows positive results. The value of marital stability for married couples aged 0-5 years in Bekasi City will increase by 0.631 times, indicating that interpersonal

communication skills have a positive impact on marital stability. These results are in line with the regression test equation in Tankoma (2021), which obtained positive regression results and showed that household harmony will increase by 0.348 times every time effective communication between husband-and-wife increases.

Table 7 Test of the Coefficient of Determination

Model Summary						
Mod Adjusted R						
el	R	R Square	Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1 .638 ^a .407 .401 2.98857						
a. Predictors: (Constant), Interpersonal Communication Skills						

Source: Research Results, 2024

Based on Table 7, the coefficient of determination (R Square) is 0.407. These results indicate that interpersonal communication skills have an influence of 40.7% on marital stability. Other factors not included in this study influence the remaining 59.3%.

Table 8 Hypothesis Test

Table of Hypothesis Test								
			Coefficients	a				
				Standardiz				
		Unstai	ndardized	Coefficient				
		Coe	Coefficients s					
Model		В	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.		
1	(Constant)	7.542	4.827		1.56	.121		
					2			
_	Interpersonal	.631	.077	.638	8.20	.000		
	Communication				5			
	Skills							
a. [Dependent Variable: M	arital Stabilit	īV					

Source: (Research Results, 2024)

Based on Table 8, the Sig. value for interpersonal communication skills is 0.000, which is < 0.05, meaning that H0 is rejected, and Ha is accepted. In other words, it shows that interpersonal communication skills affect the marital stability of married couples aged 0-5 years in Bekasi City.

The results of this study are in line with social penetration theory and strengthen the explanation of how much influence interpersonal communication skills have on marital stability of married couples aged 0-5 years in Bekasi City. Open and good communication helps marital relationships aged 0-5 years to be more stable. This is in accordance with the main component of this theory, namely reciprocity, in which one's openness causes others to

also be open. Reciprocity is important in the intimacy of a relationship. This is supported by researchers who show that reciprocity can make relationships less tense and tend to be stable (West & Turner, 2013).

Self-openness is carried out through an interpersonal communication interaction between the parties concerned. Just like the beginning of a relationship in a marriage that is established through a communication process that continues to develop from the initial introduction period to a more intimate direction. Achieving a more intimate relationship or reaching a stable stage is determined by the people in the relationship itself, how they match themselves as a basis for mutual trust (Nurdin, 2020). Therefore, it can be said that this theory is proven in this study, namely that interpersonal communication skills can affect marital stability, especially those whose marriage age is in the 0-5 years period.

Based on these findings, this study is in line with previous research conducted by Paujiatul Arifah (2021) which explains that interpersonal communication skills are important for a person, especially in marriage, because communication is absolutely necessary to maintain a marriage and can better understand problems related to communication relationships. In this case, interpersonal communication skills have a significant effect on marital stability. In addition, research conducted by Hananiah and Sanjaya (2023) revealed that openness helps couples to understand each other. The possibility of successful resolution of a conflict or problem can be created. The skills to communicate which leads to good conflict management can maintain the stability of a relationship.

CONCLUSION

Interpersonal communication skills have a positive and significant influence on the marital stability of married couples aged 0-5 years in Bekasi City. Social penetration theory, which is the basis for this study, explains that the closer a person's relationship with another, the more familiar they are with each other and the relationship tends to be more stable and less stressed. This theory has been proven by the results that there is an influence between interpersonal communication skills on the marital stability of married couples aged 0-5 years in Bekasi City. The skills to communicate with a partner has a significant role in marital stability. Through communication with each other, the relationship becomes more intimate and stronger. Good communication with a partner can make a marriage relationship stable and thriving. The researcher hopes that future studies can use different variables from this study to determine the different effects of the research results. In addition, it is expected to use different research methods and sample populations so that the results become new knowledge that can be used in the future.

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