

## The Role of Interpersonal Communication in The Family (Literature Review to Minimize Divorce Cases)

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### ABSTRACT:

One of the strong bonds resulting from a sustainable relationship between individuals is marriage. However, along the way, commitment in marriage is often accompanied by challenges and problems that often occur. Even if this situation cannot be adequately resolved, it has the potential for a divorce rate that continues to increase. Referring to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Indonesia in 2024 explains that 408,347 cases continued to emerge and were spread across several major cities, such as West Java, East Java, Central Java, North Sumatra, and DKI Jakarta. So, it can seriously impact other family members, from children to closest relatives. Ironically, some of the adverse effects that arise can be in the form of trauma, inhibited emotional development and drastic changes in a person's mood. This study aims to analyze the role of interpersonal communication in the family in more depth. Using a descriptive qualitative method, the study results show that a concrete strategy is needed to optimise family life, one of which is the openness of communication. That way, divorce cases can be minimized to create a comfortable environment and form a positive mindset for children.

**Keywords:** *Interpersonal Communication, Family, Divorce, Marriage*

### INTRODUCTION

As social beings, human existence cannot be separated from the presence of other humans. There is even a continuous interdependent bond, meaning that the success of human life takes place in an atmosphere of mutual support and togetherness. Therefore, marriage is one form of dynamic and fundamental social relationship between individuals. With this marriage, a new identity is formed, namely the family. Marriage is highly recommended for everyone who

wants it, is physically and mentally ready, and can carry out the rights and obligations of each household member. The implementation of marriage is not limited to sexual desire or desire but must fulfil the obligations and responsibilities of husband and wife (Sevriana, 2023).

The welfare or overall happiness in the household will be more complete when there is a child whom all parties even very much desire. With that, it is common for many parents to prioritize all needs and time for their children. In general, a child is an individual who is still relatively small. The birth of a child will allow parents to carry out their new role as well as possible. This is where the presence of a family becomes the initial and smallest means for someone to start life or to be able to work together. One of the functions of the family is to carry out education for children because education is not only carried out in formal education; parents also have the obligation and responsibility to help their children if they have difficulty learning, adjusting to the environment and monitoring the child's development. Children's education is the primary foundation for shaping the future of individuals and society.

Furthermore, applying good parenting patterns and mindsets given by people will significantly influence the formation of their child's identity (Ningrum, 2024). So, to support the child's growth, development and learning process, parents should be able to build harmonious and healthy relationships within the family. Especially for children at a certain age who are in the development stage, the child's mindset and character are greatly influenced by the presence of both parents.

The absence of a role from one or both parents is feared to affect the child's psychological, emotional or social condition, especially in cases of divorce, which over time continues to be a very undesirable trend, but the reality is unavoidable. Lately, if we look closely at divorce cases that often occur in marriage, it is indeed quite concerning and is the most painful event for all parties. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), throughout 2024, 408,347 cases were recorded throughout Indonesia, showing a significant increase from previous periods.

Meanwhile, according to Matondang (2014), several indications of causes, such as differences of opinion, quarrels, or disputes that continue to occur, can cause a loss of love and affection in household life. Besides, naturally, there are many social pressures or instability from

diverse human characters, which can give rise to problems and trigger a lack of awareness to maintain relationships in the household.

In line with that, divorce cases are also often the result of infidelity. This action is indeed a deviant phenomenon in a marriage relationship. Infidelity can eliminate self-confidence or trust in a partner, give rise to psychological or physical violence between partners, and even lead to criminal acts such as murder (Faishol & Azzahra, 2022). Thus, the most obvious and frequent change in attitude in cases of infidelity is the tendency to keep things secret, act defensively (be defensive), and many lies appear in a relationship.

Regarding the problem of infidelity in the current era, ironically, it can be done by anyone, both men and women, including public figures, politicians, religious figures, or ordinary people. Amid the increasingly rapid flow of modernization, acts of infidelity have even attracted attention in studies of interpersonal relationships and social dynamics. The popularity of social media, with its benefits, has also become a part of the phenomenon of infidelity, according to Moh. AS (2022), the increasingly rapid progress of social media can negatively influence its users. In this case, social media can help millions of people in the world connect, including many already married people, and it can be used as an intermediary to have love adventures but not with their legal partners.

In recent years, surveys on infidelity behaviour in Indonesia have shown surprising results. Infidelity is universally considered a moral violation due to the low commitment in the household bond. GoodStats in 2024 revealed that Indonesia is in second place with the highest level of infidelity in the Asian region. Uniquely, the picture of infidelity itself is increasingly clearly explained through works of audiovisual art/films that have the potential to go viral and are actually based on true stories from a number of parties.

Although on the other hand, Hamid (2018) also said that divorce is sometimes the best way out. The efforts and final decisions that both husband and wife who are connected in a household bond want to achieve in solving complex problems. Therefore, how the communication interactions occur greatly influences the creation of a strong, harmonious, and satisfying relationship to avoid the possibility of divorce cases that can impact all family members.

As well as a wise, proactive, and mutually supportive approach between children and parents and between husband and wife.

Effective communication is important in the family as a foundation to unite each member and enable them to share feelings, thoughts, and hopes. It can even prevent misunderstandings/miscommunication to minimize feelings of alienation, which can ultimately help each other grow as a team. In a psychological review, by building good communication, each family member will feel appreciated and can develop good social interaction skills. According to Ayup et al. (2024) the increasingly complex challenges of the era, such as social change, rapidly developing technology, and high economic demands, often change how parents interact with children.

Within the family, interpersonal communication practices ideally involve empathy, understanding, and openness. These skills help convey messages clearly and make family members feel free to express their thoughts and feelings without fear of being judged. This is, of course, very useful for building trust and can be the basis for harmony in the family (Solida: 2024). Effective interpersonal communication in the family requires ongoing efforts from each family member. Parents must build listening skills, while children must also be encouraged to develop an attitude of mutual respect towards parents at home and with others outside the home. This is an increase in the quality of interpersonal communication that will contribute to each family member's emotional and social development. By focusing on the role of interpersonal communication based on DeVito's perspective with five aspects, including (1) openness, (2) positive attitude, (3) support, (4) equality, and (5) empathy, it is used as an analytical tool in this paper to strengthen the role of families that support each other so that they can minimize divorce cases. This research is expected to contribute to scientific thinking, especially in the study of Interpersonal Communication and Family Communication, as an understanding of improving the quality of solid relationships between individuals and the ability to manage conflict.

### **Interpersonal Communication**

Interpersonal communication is usually called interpersonal communication, which is a process of exchanging messages carried out by one individual with another individual to

communicate feelings, emotions, ideas, and information that is done face to face. According to DeVito (Liliweri, 2017), Interpersonal communication is sending and receiving messages verbally or non-verbally between two or more people, with direct feedback. This interpersonal communication is usually carried out by several parties, such as children with parents, employers with employees, siblings, teachers and students, or two friends. There are five functions of interpersonal communication (Hanani, 2017), including:

1. To generate more meaningful bonds between humans.
2. To generate good human character.
3. To find out the characteristics of other people.
4. To train someone to build empathy for others.
5. To train someone's intelligence, such as intelligence in socializing, language and interpersonal.

Meanwhile, according to Rogers & Kincaid (1981), the characteristics of the interpersonal communication process are: (1) two-way message flow, (2) the communication context is face-to-face, (3) high feedback levels, (4) the ability to overcome high levels of selectivity, (5) the speed to reach large targets is very slow, and (6) the effects that occur are in the form of changes in attitude. So that interpersonal communication can run effectively, DeVito explained again that 5 important aspects must be considered by the actors, as follows:

1. Openness

namely, the reciprocal relationship carried out by someone on the information received when communicating. Communication must be based on honesty, both in thought and action.

2. Positive Attitude

namely, the actors are expected not to have suspicions and destructive prejudices against the other person so that the communication situation can be conducive.

3. Support

namely, interpersonal communication, which is effective if a person exhibits supportive behaviour. Alternatively, in other words, the actors must provide each other with

support for the message conveyed. Including the need for an attitude to listen to the interlocutor's words so that they can provide input/suggestions on the ongoing topic.

4. Equality

namely, the same level between them so that they will not give rise to a more dominant attitude.

5. Empathy

namely, a person's ability to put himself in the position or role of another person.

## METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with data collection techniques in the form of library studies/literature studies in several written sources, such as scientific journals, reference books, articles, or other reliable references relevant to the focus of the research problem. According to Moleong (2014), qualitative research is defined as research with research procedures that produce descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and behaviour that can be silent. Meanwhile, according to Indra & Ika (2019), a literature study combines information relevant to the research topic being studied to be collected and utilized. Information can be obtained from various sources, namely scientific books, encyclopedias, new and previous research reports, articles/journals, and theses/dissertations. This study focuses on the dynamics of marital relationships and how family members need to play their respective roles. The fulfilment of communication elements is also crucial in this study, as researchers try to analyze more deeply the efforts that can be made to maintain balance in the bonds of marriage in order to prevent problems that can even lead to divorce. After that, the researcher analyzed the data using an interactive model by Miles and Huberman with three approaches, namely (1) data reduction, (2) data presentation, and (3) concluding/verification (Sugiyono, 2017).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The creation of harmony in the bonds of the household is truly the foundation for building a happy, lasting and prosperous family by human rights. In household life, husband and wife are undoubtedly expected to form a good relationship continuously, in the sense of a harmonious atmosphere, namely by creating mutual understanding, openness, care, mutual respect and mutual fulfilment of needs (Mukarrahma et al., 2024). However, the level of education a person possesses is often very relevant to the formation of his ability to manage household life. Not infrequently, various factors affect the sustainability of relationships and behaviour between individuals, including social, cultural, and technological changes or changes in societal traditions, which sadly worsen the quality of interaction between family members. In line with that, Mardiyah (2023) stated that the functioning of the role of the family as a whole, ideally, will indeed be able to lead a person to be able to go through stages after stages of growth in his life, starting from: the learning stage to the development stage which in the end can increasingly lead them to become a collection of meaningful memories in the future. This is where face-to-face communication must be optimized to build emotional closeness and realize the effectiveness of interpersonal communication in a family, even in today's modern era.

A happy family, of course, is achieved according to each family member's abilities. Therefore, in the family context, communication cannot be ignored, as face-to-face communication is important because it allows the transmission of emotions and nuances that cannot be fully captured through textual or digital communication. Losing this aspect of communication can lead to misunderstandings and feelings of neglect among family members, which, if not addressed, can worsen conflicts and differences of opinion (Cahyono, 2016). However, along the way, every family will face various conflicts that, if not resolved properly, will develop into more serious problems. Ironically, this situation can lead to the risk of divorce, which, from year to year, has continued to increase. Besides, the social pressures that have emerged in today's society increasingly show that divorce is no longer something taboo/disgraceful but has become commonplace.

Even so, as a husband and wife sailing the family ship, they will face many challenges. All the quite complicated problems, such as financial inability, differences in child-rearing patterns, disloyalty to partners, domestic violence or work pressure, sometimes make a person's trust and intimacy decrease in the household bond. Looking at the divorce case, it is an emotional decision to move towards an official separation between husband and wife so that some can no longer carry out their roles and responsibilities as a couple for specific reasons. On the other hand, the child will experience the heaviest impact of the divorce itself. In a psychological review, children, as the most vulnerable party in a divorce, can experience significant long-term impacts on their well-being, such as emotional problems, decreased school education, social problems, and the risk of mental health problems. The reason is that these various impacts appear not only after the divorce occurs / in a short period. However, it can last for a long time and can affect several other aspects of life in the future (January 2023). So, the harmony of relationships in the family greatly influences the physical growth and development of the soul or education of a child.

Also, the family's existence originates from someone learning to communicate and interact. From the family, all members can learn about right or wrong things, and not infrequently; many parties make the family a place to return and take refuge. This is where communication in the family should ideally occur interpersonally. The formation of good, routine and intensive communication between parents and children, or between a husband and wife, will, of course, lead to an attitude of empathy or openness by each individual. Even with good communication, the members will have the ability to manage emotions more stably.

Referring back to Ningrum's view (2020), children usually imitate what they see, feel, and hear from their surroundings. Therefore, an approach should start from the parenting process at home to build a child-friendly environment. In line with this, Yuliana (2023) also stated that a warm, friendly relationship between parents and children will make the child feel more comfortable and support their growth and development, which stimulates optimally. Affection and mutual respect between children and parents are the basis for proper parenting. From all kinds of urgency that can hit a family's resilience at any time, DeVito's perspective regarding the five aspects in the application of interpersonal communication is quite relevant to be

implemented to reduce the tendency towards the risk of divorce. According to Susiana and Susanti (2023), more constructively, ongoing interpersonal communication can achieve a harmonious family with complete love, understanding, and peace. However, the busyness of 4.0 technology in modern family life will remain another dilemma that can hinder healthy relationships in household ties. Interpersonal communication between parents and children, or between a husband and wife, is similar to an effort to create two-way communication so that the interaction between them is practical and positive. Open and honest communication can help reduce misunderstandings, conflicts, and tensions in the family, as can identifying DeVito's first aspect, openness. This is also where, along with the development of the era, parenting styles and patterns in the family become increasingly dynamic. In carrying out their lifelong roles, parents need to adapt and be familiar with social media, the popularity of which has been no longer foreign lately.

The reality of social media has become part of everyday life. In the family, parents should be the ones who can be the vanguard for their children in providing an understanding of the use of digital technology more wisely and proactively. That way, open dialogue can run as it should. Even positively, social media can be an adequate space for a husband and wife to exchange information or communicate smoothly without any space or time limitations (Kilapong et al., 2020). However, in principle, some negative assumptions cannot be avoided from the impact of using social media, which can cause cracks in household ties. However, when each family member can positively convey their ideas, values, and expectations, this condition can align with strategic efforts to strengthen family relationships—especially those based on DeVito's second aspect, namely a positive attitude. Nazarullah (2018) explains that adequate understanding will be achieved through the ability to convey messages concisely and precisely through the selection of structured words with a series of good sentences that support so that each family member can provide feedback in a constructive, helpful and positive way. Mainly to avoid various criticisms that are demeaning or not constructive at all.

Then, to improve the quality of relationships and emotional bonds in a family, the third DeVito aspect, namely support, must be maximized. For example, good time management

reduces a person's psychological burdens. Each family member must prioritize joint activities, whether just for eating together, exercising, or vacationing. In other words, without exception, all members must be involved to strengthen their social relationships further. Also included in this situation is that to maintain the balance of the roles of each family member, the division of tasks in the house must be based on a fair and non-dominant attitude.

Furthermore, the strength of this support will be oriented towards the fourth DeVito aspect, namely equality. In this case, equality does not require accepting and agreeing to the verbal and nonverbal behaviour of others (Immaculata, 2018). Problems that often trigger chaos in household ties lie in the weakness of gender equality, a human right. Some harmful stereotypes are indeed difficult to avoid in Indonesia. It can help certain parties develop their potential, but most importantly, strengthening interpersonal communication in the family can be done, primarily through good closeness between parents and children. The implementation of gender equality can be a stimulus for children to be more mature in interacting with the outside world or being able to face various problems.

Overall, in everyday life, the aspects DeVito speaks are very much related to each other. In the practice of interpersonal communication, parents will also direct and guide a child to empathize with the situations/circumstances they see. In line with DeVito's aspect of empathy, families should teach and develop children's concern for others. The advancement of digital technology, which is increasingly busying humans, must still be responded to well to increase empathy between family members. The same is true with the form of heart-to-heart communication. Moreover, even through communication that prioritizes empathy, each couple in a household, both husband and wife, can create a warm and intimate relationship.

## CONCLUSION

The increasing divorce rate in Indonesia should be a more serious concern for the government, both at the regional and national levels, even though it needs to be strengthened by the role of education or religion to maintain family unity. In essence, everyone always longs for a conducive and peaceful household life. However, the dynamics of household life in the

modern era will certainly provide various upheavals that can even affect its harmony. So how important it is to raise awareness in terms of openness of communication, emotional management, and social support to complement each other as the foundation of a harmonious family. The presence of parents at every stage of the child's development is truly a fundamental process to form character, ethics, etiquette, and practice of positive values for the child. Through effective interpersonal communication, the function of the family, one of which is as a guardian to ensure the creation of a comfortable and safe environment, can be optimized as well as possible just as parents will be able to oversee children's growth, starting from emotional well-being and academics to social behaviour, especially by what is expected.

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