

THE EFFECT OF SELF-DISCLOSURE ON MARITAL SATISFACTION IN COUPLES WHO HAVE NOT HAD CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine whether there is an effect of self-disclosure on marital satisfaction in couples who have not had children. The sample used in this study of 60 people consisting of 30 couples who have been married for 3 years or more but have not had children. This research was conducted in Indonesia. The method used in this research is quantitative by using purposive sampling technique. This study uses 2 psychological scale which is constructed by the author based on the theory of marital satisfaction by Blaine J. fowers and David H. Olson and the theory of self-disclosure by Judy Pearson. Data analysis techniques in this study using the Rasch model of the Winstep, while the hypothesis test using SPSS v.16.00 consisting of normality test by using chi-square, linearity test and regression test using regression analysis of the predictors. The results of this study indicate that there are significant self-disclosure on marital satisfaction in couples who have not had children at 37,5% with a significance of 0.000 ($\text{sig} \leq 0.05$). Based on the analysis of demographic data can be seen that the average subject who has a high self-disclosure will experience marital satisfaction is also high. Thus, it can be said that self-disclosure has a positive effect on marital satisfaction in couples who have not had children.

Keywords: Self-disclosure, marital satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Man is a social being, where in living life he always needs the help of other humans to meet needs. This is what makes humans carry out various forms of social interaction with other humans. Social interaction can be established through relationships such as friendships, friendships, romances and marriages. According to Erikson (in Papalia, 2008) establishing intimate relationships that demand sacrifice and compromise is a crucial and important developmental task for the individual in the early adult developmental stage. This is because basically in the individual there is a need to form a relationship that is strong, stable, close and caring.

According to Berk (2010) early adulthood starts from the age of 19 to 40 years. Berk (2012) says that a person classified in early adulthood is in the stage of a warm, close, and communicative relationship, either with or not involving sexual contact. If he fails to form intimacy, he will feel excluded from others, lonely, and even blame himself (in Taufiqurrachman, 2014). This then makes most people decide to get married in early adulthood.

Marriage is the emotional and legal commitment of two people to share physical and emotional intimacy, sharing tasks and economic resources (Olson & DeFrain, 2006). Marriage is also a

stage of development in a person's life that gives happy feelings such as feelings of belonging, protection, and feeling safe (McKay, Fanning & Paleg, 2006).

Based on some of the expert opinions above, it can be concluded that marriage is the highest form of commitment of a relationship between a man and a woman that involves intimacy physically and emotionally for the sake of creating mutual happiness. Every couple who decides to get married will want to have a quality marriage, which is a marriage that lasts until death separates and of course makes both parties happy. One of the most important expectations is to achieve marital satisfaction (Turner & Helms, 1995, in Vidaya, 2011). But not always these expectations can be achieved easily. Marriage can indeed create intimacy and happiness, but it is not uncommon for differences of opinion to arise that result in conflicts in the marriage. If the conflict is not resolved immediately, it will be more complicated and result in divorce.

The National Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN) said that the divorce rate in Indonesia has increased to 200 thousand cases from 2 million couples who marry per year. According to the child psychologist, Ine Indriani, M.Psi (in *Republika Online*) divorces that generally occur are caused by various factors including, infidelity and sexual problems, economy, children, household tasks, life changes (such as having a baby, changing workplaces and places of residence), jealousy, infidelity of one of the partners, love, relationships that are getting farther away, and differences in desires. Divorce is also often the result of alcohol and drug consumption and misalignment in the household. The number of divorce cases can be prevented if each spouse can achieve their own marital satisfaction.

According to Olson and DeFrain (2006), marital satisfaction is a subjective feeling of a married couple regarding feelings of happiness, satisfaction, and joy towards their marriage as a whole. Duvall and Miller (1985) say that marital satisfaction is influenced by background characteristics and current characteristics. Then it can be concluded that marital satisfaction is a subjective feeling felt by a married couple about happiness in their marriage that is influenced by background factors and current circumstances. The background factor in question is the things that each couple already had before they got married. Meanwhile, factors during the marriage period are various actual interactions that develop between couples during the marriage. Duvall & Miller (1985) emphasize that factors during the marriage period have a greater influence on marital satisfaction than pre-marriage factors, since anything that has happened in the past cannot be changed except by accepting and understanding the past characteristics of both parties.

Based on the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale, there are 10 scales that can measure marital satisfaction, including personality, communication, conflict resolution, financial management, activities in leisure, sexual relations, family and friends, equality of roles, religious orientation, children and parenting. One of the important factors influencing marital satisfaction is the child. According to Bird & Melville (1994, in Santrock, 2006, in Dini, 2008) children and marriage are two inseparable things, since one of the goals of marriage is to have offspring (children) as well as to obtain social recognition in the upbringing of children.

Children are the most important aspect in marriage because the main purpose of marriage is to obtain offspring. In addition, the presence of children has various positive impacts on married life. Child is considered the most beautiful gift in marriage (Bird & Meville, 1994). Children can also prevent divorce because parents do not want to hurt their child's heart (Papalia, 2002). A study mentioned that couples who decide to have children, in addition to being able to feel happiness together, can also prevent the occurrence of divorce, since the presence of children

adds complexity in marriage as well as creates a bond between spouses (Warte, Haggstrom & Kanouse, in Zanden, 1997, in Dini, 2008).

The presence of children in marriage is something that every couple yearns for, but not all couples are immediately blessed with children quickly. Some couples can easily have offspring, but there are also couples who find it difficult to make it happen. The absence of children can cause feelings of disappointment, frustration, and sometimes lead to acts of blaming each other on married couples (Smolak, 1993, Dini, 2008).

The greatest pressure on the absence of this child is felt by the wife, although the husband also feels the same, yet the wife shows greater psychosocial pressure (Lee, Sun & Chao, 2001, in Keumala, 2008). The absence of a child can lower the wife's self-efficacy and make her feel inferior. As a result the wife shows reactions of depression, feeling guilty, anxious, helplessness, and fear (Bird & Meville, 1994).

This is in line with the results of data collection conducted through interviews and observations with married couples who have not had children at the age of six years of marriage, on February 26, 2016 at the subject's home. Here is one excerpt of the statement on the part of the husband:

"Everyone must want children in marriage, the first year, the second year to the third year we are still convinced that God has a good plan, but the extended family, relatives and neighbors are constantly asking for the presence of our scourge. This sometimes makes my wife feel sad and often shuts herself up because of her guilt. But as time went on, until the sixth year of our marriage, my wife and I had completely surrendered to God. We also no longer take other people's talk to heart, because the most important thing is that the communication between my wife and I is smooth, so that there is no longer any misunderstanding between us and the big family. Although we still have hopes and efforts to have children, Thank God we have been quite happy until now." (M.A, husband, 32 years old).

Based on these data, it can be concluded that every married couple is very much expecting the presence of children. These expectations arise from oneself, one's partner, family, friends and the surrounding environment. When this hope does not appear immediately, it is not uncommon to cause conflicts. However, this conflict can be resolved if communication between husband and wife goes well. Good communication occurs if the information you want to convey can be well received by the interlocutor, in this case it is between the husband and wife. Self-disclosure is a form of effective communication where a person provides information about thoughts, emotions, feelings, ideals, and so on with the intention of providing accurate information about himself (Papu, 2002). In addition, Self-disclosure can release feelings of guilt and anxiety (Calhoun and Acocella, 1990).

In living a married life, it is very necessary to have a high Self-disclosure from each partner so that communication between spouses runs well and effectively. That way the conflicts that occur can be resolved properly in order to achieve satisfaction in marriage. The presence of children is important and can have a positive effect on married life, but the presence of children is not the only aspect that can affect marriage. Based on the research of Hendrick (1981) it can be seen that there is another factor that is positively correlated with marital satisfaction, namely self-disclosure.

According to Morton (in Baro, et al., 1994) Self-disclosure is the activity of sharing feelings and information that is familiar with others. Person (1987) defines Self-disclosure as a person's

act of providing personal information to others voluntarily and intentionally intending to provide accurate information about himself. Based on the opinions of some experts it can be concluded that Self-disclosure is the provision of personal information to others that includes life experiences, feelings, emotions, opinions, and so on.

According to Pearson (1983) the dimensions of Self-disclosure include, (1) the amount of information disclosed, (2) positive/negative nature, (3) depth of information, (4) time to disclose information, and (5) interlocutor. Pearson (1983) also explained that there are several advantages obtained from high Self-disclosure, including, a person can understand and accept himself as well as others so that he can develop a deeper and meaningful relationship. In addition, low Self-disclosure can lead to dissatisfaction in the marriage that ultimately gives rise to divorce.

According to Hurlock (1994) during the early days of marriage sometimes married couples had to make adjustments to each other. In this period of self-adjustment, sometimes both husband and wife often experience a problem that can cause emotional tension, in this case it is the absence of a child in marriage. If problems like this are not immediately faced and resolved, there will be prolonged misunderstandings. Any problem can be solved if each couple is able to apply Self-disclosure in married life. If problems like this are not immediately faced and resolved, there will be prolonged misunderstandings. Any problem can be solved if each couple is able to apply Self-disclosure in married life. This is because Self-disclosure can bring out feelings of guilt or shame about hidden problems, so that it can help each partner to see themselves in a more positive direction because they have opened secrets (Sarwendah Indrarani, in *Our Psychology*, 2011). Seeing a positive relationship between Self-disclosure and marital satisfaction, this study aims to find out how much influence Self-disclosure has on marital satisfaction in married couples who do not have children.

THEORETICAL STUDIES

Marriage

Marriage is the highest form of commitment of a relationship between a man and a woman that involves intimacy physically and emotionally in order to create mutual happiness. Every couple who decides to get married will want to have a quality marriage, which is a marriage that lasts until death separates and of course makes both parties happy.

Marital Satisfaction

Marital satisfaction is a subjective feeling determined by the fullness of the expectations of both parties in living a married life, can be felt within a certain period of time and is influenced by background factors and current circumstances (marriage period). Given the importance of the current situation, in living a married life, it is necessary to apply a "take and give" pattern in various ways in order to achieve the marital satisfaction felt by married couples. Thus married couples who want marital satisfaction will always evaluate their interactions and daily activities.

Dimensions of Marital Satisfaction

The ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale (EMS) is a measuring tool on marital satisfaction created by Fowers and Olson (1993). In the measuring instrument, there are items that can represent the components of marital satisfaction, namely:

a. Personality

The personality issue in question is the perception of the individual and the level of satisfaction with the personal character of the partner which is indicated by behavior.

- b. Communication
Marital satisfaction can be seen from the individual's feelings and attitudes towards communication in his relationship.
- c. Conflict resolution
Good strategies and processes of solving problems or conflicts between spouses will support marital satisfaction and can build trust in each partner.
- d. Financial management
The attitude and concern of each individual on how to manage financial problems in their economic circumstances can support marital satisfaction.
- e. Activities in your leisure time
The organization of activities in free time and the intensity of time spent with the couple will indicate good marital satisfaction.
- f. Sexual intercourse
The extent to which couples are satisfied with expressing affection for each other, the level of comfort in discussing sexual issues, attitudes towards sexual behavior, child birth decisions and the couple's fidelity in sexual terms can indicate good marital satisfaction.
- g. Family and friends
An individual's assessment of his relationship with relatives, parents, friends, in-laws, in-laws, as well as friends of the spouses also determines marital satisfaction.
- h. Equality of roles
A good assessment of the division of roles and responsibilities in the household such as housework, the role of the breadwinner, the role of parents and the role in sexual relationships can support marital satisfaction.
- i. Religious orientation
One's attitude and concern in terms of religious beliefs and practices in a family and religion towards marriage also support marital satisfaction.
- j. Child and parenting
The division of parenthood and the way spouses handle childcare issues can also determine marital satisfaction.

Factors Affecting Marital Satisfaction

There are figures who bring up their concerns about the factors that influence marital satisfaction. Duvall and Miller (1985) are one of them. Duvall and Miller stated that marital satisfaction is influenced by background characteristics and current characteristics. The background factors in question are the things that each couple already has before they get married, namely the conditions of parental marriage, childhood life, the application of parental discipline, sex education, the level of education, and the introduction period before marriage. Meanwhile, what is meant by the current state of affairs factor is the characteristics that couples have during marriage which include the expression of marriage, equality of roles, beliefs, communication, sexual relations, social life, income and place of residence.

Self-disclosure

Self-disclosure is the provision of personal information to others that includes life experiences, feelings, emotions, opinions, and so on that are confidential and have never been disclosed to others honestly.

Dimensions of Self-disclosure

Based on the definition put forward by Judy Pearson (1983), it can be seen that the dimensions of Self-disclosure include:

- a. Amount

- In this case it is explained that each person does not disclose the same amount of information about himself.
- b. Valence (positive or negative)
The positive nature of Self-disclosure includes statements about oneself that can be categorized as praise. While the nature of negative Self-disclosure is a critical statement that is an evaluation of the self.
 - c. Depth
In this case it is explained that the presence of communication is considered in-depth.
 - d. Time
Self-disclosure tends to increase as time increases in contact with others.
 - e. Interlocutor
In general, a person will do Self-disclosure to the closest person or to a loved one.

Factors Affecting Self-disclosure

According to Devito (1986) there are several factors that affect Self-disclosure, namely:

- a. Revealing yourself to others
In general Self-disclosure is a reciprocal relationship.
- b. Audience size
A number of fears felt by individuals for revealing stories about oneself are more common in small groups than large groups.
- c. Topics
The topic affects the number and type of self-disclosure. Found that self-disclosure regarding money, personality and physique is less talked about than talking about taste and interests, attitudes and opinions, and also work.
- d. Valence
The value (positive and negative qualities) of self-disclosure also has a significant effect. Positive self-disclosure is preferred over negative self-disclosure.
- e. Sex
Many studies indicate in general, that women are more open than men but both make almost the same negative disclosures in terms of number and degree.
- f. Race, nationality, and age
There are differences in race and nationality in self-disclosure.
- g. Acceptance of relationships
A person who is a place for individuals to disclose influences the frequency and likelihood of self-disclosure.

METHODS

This study used 60 study subjects. The population from this study was married couples who had no children. Meanwhile, the characteristics of the sample in this study were married couples who had been married for at least 3 years but did not have children.

The approach used to select the sample is non-probability sampling. More specifically, this study uses a purposive sampling technique where the sample determination technique is carried out with certain considerations so that the sample obtained in this study only represents a small part of the actual population. Marriage satisfaction variables were measured using instruments created by researchers based on the theory of Fowers and Olson (1993) through the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale (EMS). While the variable of Self-disclosure uses instruments created by researchers based on the theory proposed by the theory of Judy Pearson (1983). The scale used in this study is a Likert type consisting of four answer choices from "very

incompatible", "incompatible", "appropriate", to "very appropriate" stating the respondent's conformity with each given statement.

This research starts from looking for theories that are relevant to the two research variables from various sources. Furthermore, the researcher conducted an expert judgment on both instruments to expert psychologists in the field of marriage and a readability test for 3 couples who had characteristics resembling the subject of the study. Based on the evaluation of the results of expert judgment and readability tests, researchers compiled the instrument for trial activities. The trial of this study was conducted on 30 pairs of husbands and wives who had not had children at least 3 years of marriage age. After that, the researcher processed the data to determine the validity and reliability of the instrument. Furthermore, the researcher conducted the final test using trial data. This is due to the limitations of subjects who meet the research criteria.

After all the data is obtained, the next step of the research is to input the data for further data processing. Data processing is carried out in two stages through the Rasch model application to obtain reliability values and continued with the SPSS version 16.0 application to test assumptions.

RESULTS

Before seeing whether the proposed research hypothesis is accepted, the researcher conducts an assumption test that includes a normality test and a linearity test to ensure that the data is indeed feasible for use in the study. The data used in the normality and homogeneity test is logit data obtained from the results of data processing using the Rasch application.

To see whether the data is in accordance with the normal curve, a normality test is carried out with the Chi-square technique. Data is normally distributed when the sig value (p-value) is greater than the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) or $p > 0.05$. The following are the results of the normality test of the variables of Self-disclosure and marital satisfaction in married couples who do not have children.

The distribution of data on the marriage satisfaction variable has a significance value of 0.905 ($p < 0.05$). This shows that the distribution of data on the marriage satisfaction variable is normally distributed. While the distribution of data on the Self-disclosure variable has a significance value of 0.323 ($p > 0.05$). This shows that the distribution of data on the variable of Self-disclosure is normally distributed. Furthermore, a linearity test was carried out by comparing the p-value and the value of the $\alpha = 0.05$. The linearity test is met if the p-value < 0.05 . The results of the test showed that both variables are linear because the value of $p = 0.000$ and the value of $\alpha = 0.05$.

In the regression analysis, one predictor found that Self-disclosure had an influence of 37.5% on marital satisfaction in married couples who did not have children, while the other 62.5% were influenced by factors that were not studied in this study. It was also later discovered that Self-disclosure had an influence of 49.4% on marital satisfaction in husbands who did not have children, while another 50.6% was influenced by other factors that were not studied in this study. In addition, this study also found that Self-disclosure had an influence of 27.2% on marital satisfaction in wives who had no children, while 72.8% was influenced by other variables that were not studied in this study.

Based on the things mentioned above, it can be seen that Self-disclosure affects marital satisfaction when viewed from the side of the husband, wife and both. This is reinforced by Sadarjoen's theory (in Wardhani, 2012) that the more open couples are to each other, the higher their marital satisfaction. This means that Self-disclosure is an aspect that must be applied by married couples in living a domestic life, which of course still has to pay attention to other factors that can make a marriage quality.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it is known that there is a positive influence of Self-disclosure on marital satisfaction in married couples who do not have children.

SUGGESTION

1. If you want to conduct similar research, it is better if the number of samples is enlarged, such as paying attention to the proportion of the number of samples in demographic data so that the results of the study can be more generalized.
2. In this study, it is necessary to have better control in terms of the distribution of questionnaires so that they are on target and more evenly distributed.
3. In the preparation of the questionnaire, it is also necessary to pay attention to the cultural aspects of the Indonesian people, as well as retest the instrument.
4. For further research, it is expected to be able to measure the level of marital satisfaction based on demographic aspects (ethnicity, occupation, amount of income) so that the results of the study are not biased and can explain factors related to marital satisfaction.
5. From the main results of this study, it is known that Self-disclosure has a positive and significant influence on marital satisfaction. This is also supported by theories of several figures and previous studies that reveal that Self-disclosure is very much applied to achieving marital satisfaction. Therefore, it is hoped that married couples can increase aspects of Self-disclosure in married life.
6. To the marriage counselor in order to be able to make the aspect of Self-disclosure as a reference for advice in providing information to clients who are facing marriage problems by paying attention to the five dimensions of Self-disclosure.

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