# OPENNESS OF COMMUNICATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR FAMILY HARMONY

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**Abstract**
This research aims to understand the urgency of openness in communication, as well as its impact on family harmony. The research method used is a literature review by referring to two main sources of research, namely primary and secondary data sources. Primary data sources Refer to scientific articles, research results, documents, and books related to the research topic. Meanwhile, secondary data sources include reports, archives, and documentation that complement research results. Based on the research conducted, the results shown are that openness helps smooth communication and also increases the level of family harmony. Apart from that, this research also mentions two family communication patterns that can be applied to increase family harmony, namely pluralistic and interpersonal communication patterns.
**Keywords:** Openness, Communication, Family Harmony

*Abstrak*
*Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk memahami tentang urgensi keterbukaan dalam komunikasi, juga dampaknya terhadap keharmonisan keluarga. Adapun metode penelitian yang digunakan yaitu kajian pustaka dengan merujuk pada dua sumber utama penelitian, yaitu sumber data primer dan sekunder. Sumber data primer merujuk pada artikel ilmiah, hasil penelitian, dokumen, dan buku yang berkaitan dengan topik penelitian. Sedangkan sumber data sekunder, yaitu berupa laporan, arsip, juga dokumentasi yang melengkapi hasil penelitian. Berdasarkan penelitian yang dilakukan, maka hasil yang ditunjukkan adalah keterbukaan membantu dalam kelancaran komunikasi juga meningkatkan tingkat keharmonisan keluarga. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga menyebutkan dua pola komunikasi keluarga yang dapat diterapkan untuk menambah keharmonisa keluarga, yaitu pola komunikasi pluralistik dan interpersonal.*
*Kata kunci: Keterbukaan, Komunikasi, Keharmonisan Keluarga*

## INTRODUCTION

Marriage is one of the symbols that indicate individuals involved in it are building a family construct with a legal foundation, both legally, religiously and culturally. According to Zuhrah, the effort to build a harmonious family now faces significant challenges. This is because the phenomenon of marriage today often lacks the commitment, vision, mission, and aligned hopes of both partners, whether the husband or wife (Zuhrah, 2023).

Speaking of marriage and harmonious families, as reported by tvonenews.com, it is mentioned that in the last three years, the number of marriages occurring in Indonesia has

decreased. Notably, this decline has reached 2 million couples. Moreover, in contrast to the decreasing number of marriages, the divorce rate has increased drastically over the past three years. In 2023, the number of divorce cases in Indonesia stood at 463,000 cases, with the highest figure recorded in 2022 at 500,000 cases, and 447,000 cases in 2021 (Angka Pernikahan Turun, Angka Perceraian Naik Drastis. Apa Penyebabnya? 2024).

In line with this explanation, Hidayati revealed that Indonesia must urgently address the issue of marriage and the increasing problem of divorce, which has been rising since 2015. Beyond the divorce issues included, the number of cases continues to surge and is at an alarming level because it impacts the development of those involved, especially children. Divorce and family disharmony significantly affect the physical growth and mental development of children. Every divorce case that occurs automatically causes children to be the most affected, as they lose the complete role of the family, especially from both parents (Hidayati, 2021).

In essence, every marriage undertaken by individuals does not include divorce as a goal. On the contrary, all married couples, and the families they form, hope for a harmonious life. According to Umah, the purpose of marriage, particularly in the context of Islam, is to fulfill religious guidance, obtain offspring, and establish a harmonious, prosperous, and happy family. Therefore, marriage and family building should not be done carelessly and must be well-prepared. Every couple planning to build a family must ensure readiness in aspects such as age, economy, and mental state, which should at least be stable (Umah, 2020).

According to databoks.katadata.co.id, it is explained that based on a Snapchart Survey conducted by RB Consulting, 58% of respondents stated that family is the main source of their happiness. The presence of family, and the moral and emotional support they provide, can help individuals endure difficult times and increase their well-being and happiness. Besides being a source of happiness, 46% of respondents also revealed that family can be a source of stress in their lives. This situation occurs when family life at home is not harmonious, marked by conflicts and poor communication (Survei, n.d.).

Awaluddin in his research explained that the development of a child's attitude, character, and personality is based on behavior patterns modeled by the family, especially the father and mother. Therefore, to educate children to become good individuals, parents must have the ability to guide them. Additionally, good communication between parents and children will ensure their emotional development in the future. Thus, it is clear that the involvement of both parents and open communication with their children is essential for creating a family that becomes the most influential support system (Awaluddin, 2023).

Communication indeed plays a crucial role in resolving conflicts and disagreements that arise in marriage or family life. Juanda and Eveline stated that the success of a husband and wife in building a relationship depends on their communication skills. With effective and open communication, a family can evaluate their activities, control their emotions and thoughts, and find solutions to problems more easily (Juanda & Eveline, 2018). Supporting this statement, according to Muhyatun, good communication is a key factor in triggering family harmony. Open communication helps all family members, including the father, mother, and children, to express their feelings, change behaviors, and build family harmony

together (Muhyatun, 2022).

Based on all the explanations above, it is evident that in marriage and family life, problems will inevitably arise that may affect the harmony within it. Therefore, efforts to address these issues are crucial, one of which is openness in communication and understanding between all family members and partners. In this research context, the researcher intends to further explore the urgency of open communication within family members and its impact on household harmony. Thus, this study will contribute to expanding the discussion on the formation of a harmonious family and communication patterns that can be applied in its development.

## METHOD

The method used in this research is a qualitative method with a literature study approach. The data sources in the research are divided into two, namely primary and secondary sources. Primary data sources consist of journal articles, research, and documents that correlate with the main keywords of the study, which are openness, communication, and harmonious family. As for the secondary data sources, they include all archives, reports, and documents that discuss the urgency of communication, communication patterns, and their role in the formation of families, by the title or research keywords. All the data collected from both primary and secondary sources will then be analyzed, and the results will be presented in the findings and discussion section below.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Results

Based on all the data collected, it is evident that communication is the main pillar that determines the direction of interactions within a family. The communication patterns established in a family environment can influence comprehensive aspects such as self-formation, morality, ethics, and even the creation of values and life principles for the people involved. The better the application of family communication patterns, the greater the chances of achieving a harmonious life. Conversely, if a family neglects the communication relationships among its members, the potential for family problems increases. Below is a detailed explanation of the basic concepts of open communication that aid in forming a harmonious family life.

The Urgency of Open Communication in the Family The family is the first social group known to an individual in their life. All forms of communication that occur within the family must be fostered so that all members involved feel a bond and a sense of mutual need for one another. This way, all members, including the father, mother, children, grandparents, and others, can feel comfortable and secure in sharing their emotions and feelings. The more effective the daily communication, the greater the level of harmony achieved, preventing unwanted problems from arising (Sobandi & Dewi, 2017).

Based on research, Sukarno explains that open communication practiced by all family members, especially parents towards children, can help prevent negative behaviors and build a habit of honesty in expressing feelings. With openness in communication between family members, parents can easily provide guidance, explain rules, and clarify the

consequences of children's responsibilities as individuals, family members, friends, and members of society (Sukarno, 2021). In line with this, Nikmah and Sa'adah argue that family harmony lies in the closeness of relationships among members and the parenting style applied to children. One parenting style that incorporates open communication is the democratic parenting style, which emphasizes two-way discussions in terms of communication, home activities, and even discussions about the future (Nikmah & Sa'adah, 2021).

Furthermore, Rahmayanty et al. mention that open communication is a crucial aspect in addressing family problems. Honest, understanding, and polite communication can significantly help in resolving family conflicts, such as financial stress, child-rearing issues, cultural differences, mental health conditions, division of roles, and other marital problems. Thus, families need to enhance their understanding of the importance of communication skills to create a harmonious, supportive family environment that greatly contributes to the well-being of all family members (Rahmayanty et al., 2023).

Supporting Rahmayanty's statement, research by Simanungkalit and Damanik emphasizes that family life will face many failures and disappointments; therefore, warm, intimate, and heartfelt family communication is necessary. One way to improve communication skills for greater openness and effectiveness is by avoiding excessive ambition, ego, and applying love in every spoken word. This prevents misunderstandings caused by communication breakdowns, suspicion, and other issues that could disrupt the family's harmony (Simanungkalit & Damanik, 2022).

Family Communication Patterns for Harmony Concerning family communication patterns, it is known that there are many models available. However, not all communication patterns can directly enhance family harmony. Therefore, it is essential to understand the family members involved and adjust the parenting or communication style accordingly, especially when children are part of the interaction.

1.    **Interpersonal Communication Pattern**

In her research, Dewirahmadanirwati (2019) mentions that interpersonal communication is one of the most effective interaction styles in the family environment. The rationale behind this statement is that this communication model does not allow differences in cultural backgrounds, education, habits, personalities, or age to hinder or dictate the messages delivered to one's partner or other family members. Instead, interpersonal communication is often applied to eliminate formality and hierarchy that is frequently mentioned in family relationships.

According to Susiana and Susanti, one communication model that prioritizes openness in its implementation is the interpersonal communication pattern. Interpersonal communication is defined as an exchange of information that often includes elements of encoding through verbal and non-verbal messages. This communication pattern is considered a style that helps establish the foundation for a harmonious family, as it emphasizes the readiness of family members to always understand and respond to each other's needs, hopes, and feelings. Additionally, effective interpersonal communication

allows family members to be more honest and courageous in expressing their ideas, values, and expectations positively, strengthening family ties (Susiana & Susanti, 2023).

Clarifying the above research, Yulianti et al. (2023) explain that before applying a particular communication pattern in the family, several factors must be considered. Implementing interpersonal communication requires mutual respect between the communicator and the recipient, message clarity, empathy, and adaptability to the situation, as well as humility to maintain ethics and the feelings of those involved in the communication exchange. To measure how effective interpersonal communication is in a family, Lestanto et al. (2023) identify three behavioral traits exhibited by communicators and recipients. The first trait is a quick response from both parties during a conversation. The second is mutual support in clarifying the communication through questions. Third, empathy, positive attitudes, and equality should be shown by both parties. If one or at least two of these traits are not present, the applied interpersonal communication pattern must be developed further.

## 2. Pluralistic Communication Pattern

The pluralistic communication pattern is a type of family communication that emphasizes openness in discussing ideas with all family members. For families that adopt this model, respect for the interests of other members and support for the decisions made must be ingrained (Rahmah, 2019). In line with this, Sholeh and Juniarti state that the pluralistic communication pattern is characterized by high conversation orientation and low conformity orientation. This means that in families, parents are more likely to allow children to express their desires and independently make decisions (Sholeh & Juniarti, 2022).

According to research by Azizah, the pluralistic communication pattern is one of the family communication patterns based on Fitzpatrik and Richie's variables. These two figures developed four different communication patterns, including the pluralistic communication pattern, which is based on the aspects of family socialization functions as well as child formation and development (Azizah, 2022). In its application, the pluralistic communication pattern allows communicators and recipients to engage and respond to conversations in a comfortable manner while minimizing confrontation, ensuring the family socialization function is achieved optimally.

## Discussion

Based on the above research findings, it is clear that open communication in the family plays a vital role in fostering harmony. According to Jamil, open communication can be combined with parenting styles and communication patterns that suit the conditions of the family members. A communication pattern refers to a "model" in message exchange activities, involving information exchange by the communicator and recipient, and requiring feedback to avoid futile communication (Jamil et al., 2021).

One technique that teaches openness and can be combined with family communication patterns is the I-Message technique. This technique is part of Psychodynamic and Adlerian approaches. According to Erford, in his book *"40 Techniques Every Counselor Should Know,"* the Psychodynamic and Adlerian approaches provide many techniques aimed at helping individuals and groups strengthen their interpersonal relationships and self-

understanding, including using the I-Message technique in everyday communication (Erford, 2016).

Applying the I-Message technique in family communication can begin with couples wives to husbands and both to their children. The emphasis on "I" in this technique aims to encourage the communicator to express their perspective in real statements, without making others a scapegoat in the issue. According to Muhyatun, the I-Message technique can foster self-confidence, trust in others, and reduce stress caused by miscommunication within the family. This technique can be implemented in many communication patterns as it focuses on expressing one's thoughts and openness within oneself.

**CONCLUSION**

Based on all the explanations above, it can be concluded that openness in communication is extremely important and helps in fostering family harmony. Through the two proposed communication patterns, namely pluralistic and interpersonal communication, all family members are encouraged to discuss their ideas and responses to each other's statements. In doing so, the family will grow with diverse perspectives, broadened knowledge, as well as honesty and mutual respect for the thoughts and decisions of all family members.

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