

FAMILY MATTERS: ADDRESSING DIFFICULTIES IN FAMILY RELATIONSHIP THROUGH INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP

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ABSTRACT

An interactive workshop was being held in The Ministry of Manpower in cooperation with Dharma Wanita Persatuan organization. The workshop discussed recent family issues regarding keeping the passion and commitment, practicing good communication and good parenting, while maintaining positive regards to each other. Of all 433 workshop participants, we matched the data of pre-test and post-test from 74 participants. The result showed potential benefits of the workshop indicated by the improved knowledge by the participants. Implementation and relevance to daily life were discussed further in this filed report from the workshop.

Keywords: Family, Intimacy, Communication, Media Literacy, Intervention.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesian society is everchanging, alongside with the technological development. Due to the rapid changes in many aspects, the society cannot rely on mere old wisdom in doing things, younger generation lives different life compared to their parents and grandparents world. More women now are joining the workforce and there is a perception shift on women's role in the society (Cinamon & Rich, 2005). People also have difficulties in expressing their interest to others (Cortina & Areguin, 2021). Thus, Indonesia has seen the rise of divorce rate (Saputra, 2019), and some even postpone or decide not to marry in recent years (Turunnya angka pernikahan, 2025).

We breakdown several important aspects of today's family problems. Keeping passion in a long-term relationship is one of them (Perel, 2007), as many family felt an absence of the sparks they used to feel for their partner. Passion is not the only aspect that contributes to the problem, the way the husband/wife communicate and how they maintain the positive regards to each other also determine the quality of the relationship. Lastly, the relationship with the children also contributes to the quality of family relationship as a whole. Especially when the children are exposed to materials on the internet that pull them away from family.

Regarding to this matter, we constructed an interactive workshop for the workers and also the spouses of the workers. The workshop was being held in The Ministry of Manpower and joined by the employees. Dharma Wanita Persatuan, the organization of civil worker's wives also joined the workshop. We suggest that the workshop will improve the participants' knowledge about some important aspects in family relationship.

2. METHOD

The interactive workshop activity in this research is a form of an intervention program that can be evaluated regarding its effectiveness and dynamics (Yates, 2012). The workshop was conducted at The Ministry of Manpower (Kementrian Ketenagakerjaan RI), organized by Universitas Mercu Buana, Ministry of Manpower, and Dharma Wanita Persatuan. The participants in this workshop were employees of The Ministry and the member of Dharma Wanita Persatuan organization. There were 433 individuals participated in the workshop, 203 participants have submitted their response for pre-test and 74 participants have completed the post-test. Due to unequal numbers of pre-test and post-test, we utilize descriptive analysis to see the proportion of answers from the group as a whole. The result will show the change of dynamics in the group, complemented with some notable discussion occurred in the workshop.

The interactive workshop consisted of six major topic of discussions lead by one author for each topic under one major topic of "Addressing Difficulties in Family Relationship". The topics ranged from the dynamics of attraction and how to maintain it in long-term, communication, parenting, harmonizing role as a working mother and digital literacy for parents. Here are the topics delivered by the speakers:

1) Romantic Interaction, Motivation, and its Challenges - Ahmad Naufalul Umam

The topic discussed about Sterberg's (1986, 2007) triangle of love theory, the notion of consummate love that is consisted of passion, intimacy, and commitment. Afterwards, it was followed by Rusbult's (1979, 2011) investment model of commitment, the notion of commitment that depends on three major factors such as relationship satisfaction, the size of investment in the relationship, and the quality of the alternatives of the current partner. This session

discussed how attraction with current partner are formed and how to maintain it in a long term relationship. The discussion followed by some cautionary actions that can be done when someone is feeling those kind of attractions with someone else outside the established committed relationship.

2) Empathy for A Better Family - Istiqomah

The topic discussed how empathy is a powerful tool to build a harmonious family, especially in two things those are increasing the relationship quality and reducing stress. The speaker explained that there are two kinds of empathy, cognitive empathy to recognize and understand what others are feeling and experiencing, and also emotional empathy to be able to feel what others feel as well. Emphasizing and utilizing empathy in daily family interaction will produce secure attachment and in turn, it will a stronger sense of social support in the family.

3) Healthy Communication, Happy Partner - Rizki Dawanti

The topic began with an introduction to the pillars of married life, those are love and respect, financial openness, sexual compatibility, and togetherness in daily activities. All of those pillars cannot be established without good communication. Thus, this session talked about some of effective and benevolent ways of telling one's needs. A good communication can only happen when someone is willing to understand others, not just responding to others.

4) Conscious Parenting and The Ikigai Way - Karisma Rizkinanti

Ikigai is a Japanese term for the harmony, in family context, it refers to the meeting point of what one's love, what one's master, what children/family needs, and what makes one feel meaningful (Garcia & Mirales, 2016). Meanwhile, conscious parenting is the manifestation of The Ikigai, where parents do not only doing their duties, but also aware and responsive to their children needs. In conscious parenting, the parents are fully present when interacting with their children, a thoughtful and heartfelt dialogue to express opinion and needs.

5) Happy (Working) Mom, Happy (Family) Life - Dearly

This topic specifically address the double burden of being a working mother, carrying the duty of both a capable worker and dependable mother. The session addressed and recognized this huge responsibilities for women, a valid concern towards the psychological stress of being a working mother. The speaker delivered five strategies to deal with this double role. The first strategy is to be mindful and love oneself, doing chores just as a duty without realizing what one is doing may be detrimental to one's mental health. The second strategy is to have supportive social network, it is important to have allies and not facing all of the problems alone. The third strategy is time management, carrying two roles undeniably requires a meticulous time management. The fourth strategy is to prioritize oneself, it is not a call to be selfish but rather a call to be at one's best condition prior to caring for others. Finally, the fifth strategy is to set the boundaries, to be dare to say "no" when a working mom knows that she can't handle more tasks.

6) Parents' Social Media Literacy - Yenny

The last topic addresses how parents are new to the latest technology, and how they need to adapt. Internet-literate parents will be able to protect their teenagers from the negative effects of internet use. Most of the time, teenagers are indulged and overwhelmed by vast information and people on the internet without anyone to consult. By knowing the potential danger of excessive internet use and providing supportive and safe space to the teenagers at home, parents can protect their teenagers better.

Referring to Yates (2012) about program evaluation, we intended our program to improve the participants' knowledge on the topics. Therefore, we administered tests both before and after the workshop to see whether participants gained new knowledge from the materials delivered by the speakers. We utilized multiple choice test for pre-test and post-test, using 12 items (2 items for each topic) to examine participants' knowledge presented in the workshop. The following are the samples of multiple-choice test we used (the correct answer is in **bold**):

[Sample 1 - Attraction and Commitment] Which one is the effective method to strengthen commitment to our spouse?

- A) Giving more time and gifts to our spouse
- B) Listing the bad things of the person who tries to get close to our spouse
- C) Nothing, because by marrying our partner is already the ultimate form of commitment

[Sample 2 - Empathy] These are aspects of empathy, except:

- A) Recognizing
- B) Supporting**
- C) Understanding
- D) Feeling

[Sample 3 - Social Media Literacy] Here are teenagers' positive experiences of using media social, except:

- A) Self-esteem boost
- B) Connectedness with others
- C) Self-disclosure
- D) Social isolation**

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data showed that among all matched data of 74 participants, 76% of them had increased their score in post-test. While 5% of them had reduced score and 18% of participants' score remains the same. This percentage indicates a trend of knowledge improvements among all of the participants. Despite the fact that there were half of participants in pre-test did not complete the post-test, GPower calculation for pre-test and post-test only design participants only requires a total of 70 participants (Faul et al., 2009). In sum, we conclude that our result shows an interactive workshop on family relationship has some potential benefits to the participants regarding their knowledge acquisition.

In the question and answer session, there were two notable discussion regarding the workshop materials. The first discussion started with a question about how to deal with a teenager that turned more private and less frequent to talk to the parents. The parent was concerned because she couldn't see behind her teenage child's locked TikTok and WhatsApp accounts. This question is directly related to the media literacy and family communication topics. There were some suggestions to this question. First, it is important to acknowledge the psychological development of the child, it is normal for a teenager to try to claim their privacy more and trying to be independent from their parents. Second suggestion is to practice active listening and avoiding preach-talk when the parents want a change from their children. Third suggestion is to be present as a friend rather than merely an authority figure that is a parent.

The second discussion started with a question about the declining intimacy from long distance spouse, as well as an anxious concern for other person who might be interested to one's partner in the workplace or in the location where the spouse is working (other town). This question is directly related to the topic of attraction and commitment, and also communication between spouses. The first suggestion regarding to this question was to avoid the worry about something that has not been happened yet, and focusing on building pleasant communication instead to cherish the relationship. The second suggestion was to have some friends to talk to, so the spouses will not carry the all of the emotional burden from each other. Having a supportive social network circle also helps with acquiring fresh information and activities. The third suggestion was to focus on doing and sharing things together rather than accusing and controlling the spouse upon the underlying fear for infidelity. It also had been suggested that the spouses need to be brave to look at unspoken resentment and express it with positive regards to each other.

All of the result shows the relevancy of our workshop materials with the current challenge faced by modern family in Indonesian context. It offers a solution to several issues such as burnout in working mothers (Riyono & Rezeki, 2022), household quarrel that leads to divorce (Saputra, 2019) and also keeping the passion and commitment in long-term relationship (Perel, 2007).

4. CONCLUSION

To sum up, our interactive workshop addressing the problems in modern marriage seems to show potential benefits for the participants, especially in improving their knowledge. The majority of the participants reported higher score on the knowledge. The discussion in the workshop also displayed the eagerness and relevancy from the participants towards the workshop materials. A longitudinal approach is needed to see whether there is a long-term impact of the workshop.

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