

The Importance of Effective Communication in Building Family Harmony

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ABSTRACT

This community service activity was part of the Family Guidance and Counseling course in Susukan 3 Hamlet, Margokaton, Seyegan, Sleman, Yogyakarta. The activity aimed to enhance Family Welfare Movement (PKK) mothers' understanding of effective communication and proper parenting in building harmonious families. The methods included lectures, group discussions, Q&A sessions, and the distribution of physical infographics. In the first session, participants received material on "Effective Communication as the Key to Building Harmonious Families." In contrast, the second session focused on good parenting, particularly in managing tantrum behavior in children. The results showed increased participants' knowledge, demonstrated by enthusiastic discussions and quiz-based evaluations.

Introduction

Every married couple dream long-term of a healthy and happy family life. Affection and mutual trust build a positive family atmosphere (Noffiyanti, 2020), as Rifqi (2019) stated that families should be a place for their members to express good behavior and emotions. However, life's challenges necessitate parental strategies for building a harmonious family, especially for those with children. Thus, nurturing a family environment promotes the optimal development of children's potential and talents to achieve their future success (Ulfa & Na'imah, 2020).

Parents are pivotal in guiding children as leaders and educators, primarily responsible for their care and moral development (Lestari, 2016). A child's success often hinges on parental influence as primary figures in the learning process of their morals and character formation. Conversely, dysfunctional families foster negative emotions, leading to children's uncontrolled emotional outbursts and impaired social adjustment (Laela, 2017; Pratama, Syahniar, & Karneli, 2016). As a result, children may seek escape outside the family environment to address their inner difficulties, potentially resulting in aggressive behavior (Rofiqah & Sitepu, 2019).

Family parenting shapes child development, particularly as children transition from parental dependence to independent identity formation (Roini, 2018). During this period, youth tend to observe and imitate the behavior of mature role models and align with their parental expectations (Anisah, 2021). The initial role model imitation of adolescence comes from the parenting patterns within their families, as the primary learning environment, fosters foundational skills like speech and societal norms (Mahmudi, 2020). Early parenting patterns often guide adolescents' actions and worldviews (Fellasar & Lestari, 2016).

Family disharmony is prevalent in Indonesia, evidenced by rising divorce rates. According to the Directorate General of Population and Civil Registration (Dukcapil), 3.97 million individuals out of 272.29 million Indonesians' total population (equivalent to 1.46%) were divorced by June 2021 (Kusnandar, 2021). This trend is a significant concern due to its far-reaching impact on social and family structure in Indonesia.

Many Indonesian families struggle to maintain household harmony, contributing to high divorce rates (Kusnandar, 2021). This issue prompts inquiry into barriers to family cohesion and potential solutions to reduce divorce. Consequently, this study investigates how parenting practices foster harmonious families, offering insights for parents and prospective families.

Metode

This activity employed participatory and interactive methods to enhance Family Empowerment and Welfare (PKK) mothers' understanding and engagement in Family Guidance and Counseling practices. Participants included 12–15 PKK mothers from Susukan 3 Hamlet, Margokaton Village, Seyegan District, Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta Special Region. The program was conducted over two sessions on November 4 and 29, 2024, to educate participants on good parenting patterns and effective communication strategies to foster family harmony.

The preparation stage included coordinating with PKK leaders to assess family needs via interviews. The interview results revealed several issues regarding theme selection, session scheduling, venue choice, and tailored materials and infographic preparation. The implementation stage commenced with PKK remarks and introductions from the Universitas Mercu Buana Yogyakarta (UMBY) Guidance and Counseling (BK) student team. Sessions featured discussions and lectures, the first on "Good Communication: The Key to Forming a Harmonious Family" and the second on "What is a Good Parenting Pattern for Children?".

Materials were presented via visual infographics to enhance conceptual clarity and participant comprehension. Post-presentation, icebreakers boosted engagement, followed by Q&A sessions for experience-sharing and deeper insights. Participants sharing family communication experiences received small incentives. Sessions concluded with material summaries, acknowledgments to PKK mothers and supporters, and formal closure.

Results and Discussion

Results

This family guidance and counseling program resulted from collaboration between Universitas Mercu Buana Yogyakarta and Susukan 3 Hamlet, Margokaton Village, Seyegan District, Yogyakarta Special Region. It introduced effective communication and parenting patterns of harmonious families to the PKK women within the Family Guidance and Counseling model. Program outcomes highlighted that family harmony stems from togetherness, fostered through shared meals, casual interactions (e.g., health inquiries, joking), external activities, weekend chores, and mutual support. These practices strengthen family bonds, understanding, and making quality time.

Family communication facilitates member interactions and instills life values. Children navigate social environments, but poor family communication hinders their development. Findings revealed diverse factors contributing to modern family disharmony.

The stages of this activity include:

Activities	Activity description
Counseling Activities	Introductions
	Providing material on harmonious and effective family communication
Dialogue and Discussion Activities	Sharing and Q&A
Discussion and Q&A Activities	Incentives for unique and interesting questions about family problems and obstacles to achieving harmonious family communication



Figure 1. Extension activities and provision of materials.

Discussion

Harmonious families foster healthy personality development (Endriani, 2017). Families strive for happiness, which is reflected in their efforts to form a harmonious and healthy family. It contributes to developing a positive society, ultimately becoming the foundation for the nation's progress. However, inadequate parenting styles can lead to estrangement, discomfort, and relational disharmony (Tar Mujiyanto, 2020; Shihab, 2020).

A literature review on parental roles in child-rearing revealed supportive findings. Sainul (2018) demonstrated that spirituality directly affects family harmony by strengthening love-based relationships. Married couples should integrate spirituality into their daily lives to foster harmony. It involves meeting family members' physical and spiritual needs (Sholihah & Faruq, 2020). Family harmony is a shared responsibility within the family, especially for married couples who are parents in a household.

Novasari and Suwanda (2016) found that authoritarian parenting undermines family harmony and children's social behavior, whereas democratic styles enhance it. That means greater authoritarianism correlates with poorer social outcomes, and vice versa. Sonia and Apsari (2020) noted that parents employ diverse styles for educating and raising children, influenced by their backgrounds. Therefore, couples with children require adaptive coping strategies to overcome differences (Saidiyah & Julianto, 2016).

Parenting shapes children's emotional, social development, and self-concept (Anisah, 2021). Applying various parenting styles, such as authoritarian, permissive, and democratic, results in differences in a child's self-concept (Roini, 2018). Healthy parenting—characterized by wise, supportive, consistent, calm, caring, relaxed, and responsible interactions—best supports development and independence, encouraging children to emulate parents (Rahman, 2018). Healthy parenting impacts include: (1) wise explanations boosting self-confidence; (2) support enhancing self-esteem; (3) consistency fostering assertiveness and ability confidence; (4) peaceful environments modeling positive behavior without pressure; (5) concern for emotions increasing self-confidence and empathy; (6) relaxed, wise trust-building making children feel valued; and (7) responsibility teaching accountability (Suteja & Yusriah, 2017).

Conclusion

The collaborative family guidance and counseling workshop between Universitas Mercu Buana Yogyakarta and Susukan 3 Hamlet effectively educated PKK mothers on the role of effective communication in family harmony. It featured materials, discussions, and interactive activities to heighten awareness of parenting styles supporting children's emotional and social development. Findings show that family harmony depends on parental communication and parenting patterns. Healthy approaches—thoughtful communication, emotional support, consistency, and responsibility—foster children's self-confidence, independence, and empathy. In contrast, authoritarian or permissive styles adversely affect development and relationships.

Prior studies underscore spirituality and affectionate relationships as harmony's foundation. Thus, harmonious families serve as children's educational environments and pillars for positive, productive societies. This program suggests that families, particularly couples, adopt supportive parenting and communication strategies to enhance child development and familial bonds. Sustaining family harmony—the basis of happiness—promotes resilient generations and societal advancement.

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