

Gender Communication Patterns in Broken Home Families

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ABSTRACT

Gender communication plays an important role in shaping the dynamics of interaction in families, especially in broken home families. This study aims to analyze the role of gender in gender communication patterns of broken home families in Pampangan hamlet, A'bulosibatang village, Marusu sub-district. The research method used is a qualitative approach with in-depth interview techniques and observation of family members who experience parental separation. The results of the study indicate that the communication pattern applied is a balanced split pattern. Where communication in the family is divided equally, but family members tend to side with one parent. Children still have good communication relationships with both parents, but are closer to one of them. Children who are raised by mothers tend to experience more emotional and open communication, while children who are raised by fathers more often experience instructional, limited, and less expressive communication. So that a mother only elaborates the feminine aspect more in communicating with her children, both girls and boys. Likewise, a father who is more dominant in actualizing the masculine aspect in interacting with children affects the development of the children who live with him. Communication patterns in broken home families in this area are still influenced by the dominant gender construction in society. Therefore, a more inclusive and supportive communication approach is needed to help family members deal with the emotional and social challenges resulting from parental separation.

Keywords: gender, communication, communication patterns, broken homes, families

INTRODUCTION

Communication is a fundamental aspect of human social life, including in the family environment. In the family, communication not only functions as a means of conveying information, but also as a tool to build emotional closeness and understanding between family members. Communication that is responsive to gender issues in the family environment is an important foundation in maintaining healthy and inclusive family dynamics. However, in broken home families, communication patterns often experience significant changes due to parental separation. One factor that influences communication patterns in the family is gender roles.

Gender roles in family communication are related to how men and women interact and convey messages based on the norms and values that apply in society. This usually manifests itself in feminine and masculine communication styles. Gender communication is also a field that seeks to change the way we talk about others, to create a more empathetic and safe space for the entire community. In patriarchal societies, gender roles often determine how individuals communicate, both in terms of emotional expression, decision making, and division of roles in the family. In broken home families, gender roles can be even more prominent due to changes in the family structure that cause children to have to adjust to new communication dynamics.

Gender communication patterns in broken home families can be seen in broken home families in Pampangan hamlet, A'bulosibatang village, Marusu sub-district. In the village there are 7 families experiencing divorce cases. Families experiencing divorce have children who are still young and teenagers. Where divorced parents live their own lives and children must live with one of their parents, either with their father or mother or even their family. The separation of parents experienced by children results in changes in communication patterns between children and parents. Both between fathers and their daughters and sons, and between mothers and their sons and daughters.

The ongoing communication patterns tend to be difficult and complicated due to changes in the structure and dynamics of the family as a result, children who are victims of divorce are prone to being involved in negative behavior, stress and are less able to form social relationships in their environment. As the results of Yulianti's research revealed that in broken home families,

children often experience feelings of confusion and difficulty communicating with both of their parents (Yulianti et al., 2023). In addition, communication patterns in broken home families are often colored by feelings of anxiety, fear, and loneliness. In order to minimize the negative impacts caused, the communication patterns of parents after divorce towards children are very important to help children become resilient. Communication support from all family members greatly helps children become resilient to the situations they experience (Jusnawati, et.al, 2024). In line with the results of Dewi & Destiwati's research, open and involved communication between children and parents, including in joint decision-making and maintaining good relationships, can reduce the negative impacts of divorce (Dewi & Destiwati, 2024). This then encouraged the author to examine further the communication patterns of broken homes in Pampangan hamlet, A'bulosibatang village, Marusu sub-district.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach. Through a qualitative approach, it is expected to provide a more natural and accurate explanation of gender communication patterns in broken home families. The data collection technique used in this study was obtained through primary data by conducting in-depth interviews with adolescent children who are victims of divorce who have been included in the informant category. This secondary data was obtained through documents such as journals and books related to the focus of the study. Data analysis was carried out in three stages, namely; first, the data reduction process which focuses on the selection, simplification, abstraction and transformation of raw data from field notes. In this process, data that is relevant to the focus of the study and data that does not meet the exclusion-inclusion criteria were selected. The second stage is data presentation, namely the arrangement of information into statements that allow conclusions to be drawn. Data is presented in the form of narrative text, initially scattered and separate in various sources of information, then classified according to themes and analysis needs. The third stage is drawing conclusions based on data reduction and presentation. This series of processes shows that qualitative data analysis in this study combines

the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions repeatedly and cyclically (Creswell, 2014).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Gender Communication

Communication is a very important process in a relationship carried out by humans. Through communication, a person can convey messages or information, ideas, reciprocally both as a message sender and as a recipient. An individual, both as a family member and as a society, always undergoes interactions. In this process, communication is one of the requirements for the interaction to occur. The family is the first place for an individual to grow and develop by absorbing every socialization process that takes place, so that communication patterns are important to pay attention to. Friedman suggests that family communication patterns are influenced by many factors, namely situations and conditions, family ethnic background, family form, family life cycle, gender differences, family socio-economic status and family culture. (Nuraida & Zaki, 2018). Communication patterns within the family are influenced by the perspective on the position of family members, whether as subjects or as mere objects, even the gender attributes that are attached and operated in family relationships.

Gender is defined as an attribute attached to humans as a result of social and cultural construction. As a cultural product, gender gives rise to distinctions in terms of roles, behavior, mentality, and emotional characteristics between men and women that develop in society. Fakihi (2010) affirms that gender is a behavioral difference between men and women that is socially constructed, namely a difference that is not natural or not God's creation, but rather created by men and women through a long social and cultural process. This is in line with the definition put forward by Umar (2001) that gender is a cultural concept used to identify differences in terms of roles, behavior and others between men and women that develop in a society based on social engineering.

The instillation of equal gender concepts in the family is largely determined by the communication used by parents. According to Devito, the success of interpersonal communication begins with the fulfillment of aspects of openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality (Efendi, 2023). Referring to these aspects, communication in the family can take place reciprocally and alternately; from parents to children or from children to parents, or from children to children. Where gender communication is established between family members, both female and male. This relationship is closely related to the appreciation and views of family members about how attitudes, identities, behaviors and gender roles have been socialized to them or in the learning process and their life experiences.

Ivy and Backlund in (Sumartono, 2012) defines gender communication as communication “about” and “between” men and women. “About” refers to how each sex is discussed, referred to, or described, both verbally and nonverbally. “Between” refers to members of each sex communicating interpersonally. Gender communication is closely related to culture, which consists of belief systems, values, and behaviors that form a particular ideology or social system.

In women, communication aims to form relational relationships with others. While the purpose of men communicating is to build individuality. Feminine speech patterns are to build relationships. Feminine characteristics are equality, supportive, responsive, personal, tentative. While masculine speech patterns, the purpose is to achieve independence, the characteristics are to transmit knowledge, there is no personal approach, abstract, direct, less responsive (Sumartono, 2012). This shows that there are different communication patterns between men and women. According to Devito in Heri Budianto in (Nuraida & Zaki, 2017), There are 4 interaction patterns where communication plays an important role in them. Based on this pattern, the differences in communication patterns between men and women in the family can be analyzed.

First, Equality Pattern. Family communication patterns with this pattern show that the role of each family member is the same and has the same opportunity for communication. This means that in the family there is equality in terms of communication and decision making. There are no leaders and followers, opinion givers or seekers. Each family member is free to voice their opinions, because everyone is considered equal and has the same abilities. The equality in question is in

communication transactions and the role of each family member and their authority. This is what causes everyone in the family to have the same credibility because each other openly accepts opinions, ideas and beliefs. The communication that occurs is carried out directly, honestly, openly, and free from the power lines that are seen in other interpersonal relationships. This communication pattern also shows that there is a reciprocal relationship that is fair. Because the most important thing in this relationship is if each family member gets equality.

Second, Balance Split Pattern. This communication pattern explains that although each family member has equality in communication and authority, there are differences because they have different powers. This means that each person is seen as an expert or decision maker in a different field. However, no family member feels disadvantaged by this difference in power. For example, in a conventional family, the husband is considered responsible for working and earning a living for the family, and the wife is responsible for looking after the children and cooking. Considering different skills, roles are divided based on gender but this can still be changed.

Third, Unbalanced Split Pattern. Families with this communication pattern focus on one person who has authority. Authority is given because the person is considered superior or has advantages over other family members. This superiority is seen from aspects of knowledge, intelligence, wisdom, or higher income. In this case, one person is more in control of the relationship because he is given the power to make decisions on behalf of the rest of the family. While other lower family members compensate by handing over decision-making to the higher person, submitting to the person, allowing the dominant person to win arguments and make decisions on their own.

Fourth, Monopoly Pattern. This communication pattern shows that one person is seen as the holder of power. This one person is more about giving orders than communicating. He has full rights to make decisions so he rarely or never asks or asks for opinions from other people. The power holder orders others what they can and cannot do. So other family members ask permission, ask for opinions, and make decisions based on that person's decisions.

Gender Communication Patterns of Broken Home Families

Gender communication in broken home families has unique and complex dynamics. Parental conflict that results in disharmony and divorce can affect the way family members communicate based on their gender roles. Yulianti in the results of her literature review study stated that the condition of a broken home family has a significant influence on the communication patterns that occur in the family. Broken home families experience difficulties or changes in communication patterns from the previous to the communication patterns after becoming a divorced family. (Yulianti et al., 2023)

This situation can also trigger confusion for children of divorce in understanding ideal gender roles, especially if one parent is more dominant or if healthy communication is not well established. Healthy communication is demonstrated by openness, mutual respect, and honesty in expressing something. Some children become more withdrawn and avoid open communication, especially if they feel the family environment is not supportive. On the other hand, there are also those who are more vocal in expressing their feelings as a form of self-defense mechanism.

Based on the research results, it was found that based on 7 informants who had been interviewed, the dominant communication pattern applied by brokenhome families in Pampangan Hamlet, A'bulosibatang Village, Marusu District was a balanced split pattern. Where communication within the family is divided equally, but family members tend to side with one parent. Children still have good communication relationships with both parents, but are closer to one of them. This is due to daily parenting factors or emotional factors after separation that are built based on who the child lives with after the parents' divorce. In this context, the openness and closeness of both male and female children to one of the parents who live together after the divorce are equal and have no differences. RN, 21 year old woman and ML, 21 year old man who chose to live with his mother after the divorce, said that he still has good relationships and communication with both parents, but emotionally and comfortably conveying personal matters, he is more open to his mother. Likewise, EM, an 18 year old man who lives with his father, still maintains a good relationship and communication with his mother even though they are no longer living together. However, EM is more open and comfortable telling his father various things.

In broken homes, both boys and girls have good and harmonious communication relationships with both parents, even though one of them is no longer living in the same house. However, limited communication is still felt due to the loss of certain figures in their daily lives. The dynamics of communication felt are more complex in interactions compared to communication that occurs in intact families. This condition affects the communication applied by one parent to the child who lives with him, in socializing gender roles to the child. Children who live with their mothers tend to grow up to be more expressive and less assertive. Likewise, boys have difficulty understanding the masculine role that can be seen from the figure of a father. This is felt by MP, ML, RN, NA who have long lived their daily lives and have minimal interaction with their father figure. As for EM who claims to live with her father, the communication pattern felt is direct communication and is less emotionally expressive.

This is possible because the feminine aspect is more elaborated by girls and boys with the presence of the mother. Where children see and experience more expressions of femininity, such as gentleness, empathy, and emotional openness. While the masculine aspect is not forged optimally due to the absence of a father figure as an example. As for EM, who lives with her father, shows a more optimal development of masculine values, but finds it difficult to elaborate feminine traits due to the absence of a mother figure in her daily communication or interactions. Sachiko Murata through the concept of Yin and Yang suggests that feminine and masculine traits are possessed by every human being, both male and female (Murata, 1991). Julia Kristeva asserts that when a child enters the symbolic order, the child can identify with either the mother or the father. Depending on the choice made, the child can become more or less “feminine” or “masculine.” (Tong, 2010). Femininity is shown through a gentle, caring, shy and patient attitude, while masculinity is shown through a brave, independent, assertive and competitive attitude.

Refer to standpoint theory, Wood (2001) stated, the issue of masculinity and femininity is a reflection of communication, both verbal and non-verbal. Language plays a role in forming perceptions and mutual agreements about the roles of women and men that are in accordance with cultural values and perspectives. Language verbally forms the concept of women, men, and the relationship between men and women. Verbal language forms human perception in interpreting

something. Where non-verbal symbols do not mean themselves, but are interpreted verbally by individuals or groups. The verbal meaning will be the representation of a symbol (Sulistiyo et al., 2016)

These attitudes of femininity and masculinity are basically owned by both men and women. However, in reality, the social and cultural construction of society has given an attachment of femininity to the figure of women and masculinity to the figure of men. Internalization of masculine and feminine values through gender communication during the socialization process in parenting patterns in the family. In the next phase, this socialization is carried out by peers, schools and the wider community environment. Simone De'beauvoir said that women are born "to be" women, which means someone with the female sex under cultural coercion is attached to a feminine gender identity (Arivia, 2003). These traits are socialized over a long period of time and passed on to the next generation. Judith Butler puts forward this through her theory of Performance as a feminist communication theory. In her work entitled *Gender Trouble* (1990), Butler (in Jagger, 2008: 20) argues that gender is a kind of imposed cultural product, driven by heterosexuality, and thus, it is performative.

Performative is defined as the process of forming a person's subjectivity from the results of a long process. Namely, the existence of citation and iterability. This means that citation, mention, and application are repeated and continue continuously. This gender performativity is also very dependent on the subject at that time, and the subject is also very much influenced by the discourse (situation, condition, era, conflict, dynamics) at that time (Mufidah, 2024). Differences in gender communication experienced in broken homes are seen in the way fathers and mothers convey their messages. Fathers who tend to be more assertive and authoritative may have difficulty expressing emotions verbally, while mothers use more emotional and affective communication. If this communication is not balanced, children can experience confusion in understanding healthy emotional expressions.

Another interesting thing that was found was the communication that took place between mothers and sons and daughters, and between fathers and sons and daughters, there was a process of mutual respect, mutual listening and both positioning themselves as subjects in the interaction

process. This was stated by the seven research informants who said that they were given the freedom to express their opinions, had the space to make decisions on every action that would be taken, and felt heard. In relation to this, Tannen stated effective communication between each other of different genders, where there was a process of mutual respect, mutual listening to each other, mutual tolerance, no superior-inferior, no one felt the most right or wrong, no more claims of "high power-low power" views (Harahap & Adeni, 2021).

In broken homes, parents not only need to maintain good communication with their children, but also strive for intense and equal interaction in exploring communication that touches on both masculine and feminine aspects. This helps children to realize both feminine and masculine aspects in themselves, and to understand gender roles in a balanced way in building healthy interpersonal relationships in the future, namely a relationship that prioritizes open, equal, honest, constructive, and mutually respectful communication.

CONCLUSION

Gender communication patterns in brokenhome families in Pampangan hamlet, A'bulosibatang village, Marusu sub-district show a balanced split pattern. Where communication within the family is divided equally. Each child is given the freedom to establish good communication with both parents, but family members tend to side with one parent, namely the parent who lives with them after the divorce. Children who are raised by mothers tend to experience more emotional and open communication, while children who are raised by fathers more often experience instructional, limited, and less expressive communication. This is influenced by social and cultural constructs regarding gender attributes attached to the figures of mothers and fathers. So that a mother only elaborates the feminine aspect more in communicating with her children, both girls and boys. Likewise, a father who is more dominant in actualizing the masculine aspect in interacting with children, thus influencing the development of the children who live with him.

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