

Coping Strategies, Stress Levels of Housewives, and Their Influence on Family Communication

Lidiawati¹, Diah Krisnatuti¹, Defina^{1*}

¹Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, Faculty of Human Ecology, IPB University, Jl. Lingkar Akademik, Kampus IPB Dramaga, Bogor 16680, West Java, Indonesia

*) Corresponding author: defina@apps.ipb.ac.id

Abstract

Family communication is essential for family life. This study aimed to determine the influence of family characteristics, coping strategies, and homemaker stress levels on family communication. The respondents in this study were housewives with children of a minimum age of junior high school. A total of 100 respondents were obtained using volunteer sampling techniques, of which 50 people were domiciled in villages and 50 in cities in the Bogor area. The results indicate that the education of husbands and wives and family income in villages are lower than those in cities. However, the number of children living in cities was more significant than that living in villages. In addition, the number of mothers in villages categorized as high was more significant than in cities. Likewise, regarding stress levels, the average stress level of mothers in villages was lower than that of mothers in cities. The average communication of mothers in villages and cities was higher for conversation-oriented communication than conformity. The results of the regression test showed that stress levels and coping strategies had a significant positive effect on family communication during conversations. In addition, coping strategies significantly positively affected communication orientation conformity. This implies that stress and coping strategies influence family communication. Thus, family conformity orientation communication must continue to improve to reduce maternal stress levels.

Keywords: conformity orientation, conversation orientation, coping strategies family, communication, housewives, stress levels

Abstrak

Komunikasi keluarga menjadi hal penting dalam kehidupan keluarga. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh karakteristik keluarga, strategi koping, tingkat stres pada ibu rumah tangga terhadap komunikasi keluarga. Responden dalam penelitian ini adalah ibu rumah tangga yang memiliki anak dengan minimal usia sekolah menengah pertama. Responden berjumlah 100 orang dengan teknik *voluntary sampling*, yakni 50 orang berdomisili desa dan 50 kota, wilayah Bogor. Hasil analisis deskriptif menunjukkan bahwa pendidikan suami istri dan pendapatan keluarga di desa lebih rendah daripada di kota, namun jumlah anak lebih banyak yang tinggal di kota daripada di desa. Selanjutnya, strategi koping ibu di desa lebih banyak yang berkategori tinggi daripada ibu di kota. Begitu juga halnya dengan tingkat stress, rata-rata tingkat stres ibu di desa lebih rendah daripada ibu di kota. Rata-rata komunikasi ibu, baik di desa maupun di kota lebih tinggi untuk komunikasi orientasi percakapan daripada konformitas. Hasil uji regresi menunjukkan bahwa tingkat stres dan strategi koping berpengaruh signifikan positif terhadap komunikasi keluarga orientasi percakapan. Selain itu, strategi koping berpengaruh signifikan positif dengan komunikasi orientasi konformitas. Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa

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komunikasi orientasi konformitas keluarga harus terus ditingkatkan agar tingkat stres ibu dapat diturunkan.

Kata kunci: ibu rumah tangga, komunikasi keluarga, orientasi percakapan, orientasi konformitas, strategi coping, tingkat stres

Introduction

Family communication is a common issue among households. Poor communication among family members can negatively affect individuals by increasing the risk of bullying among children (Romero-Abrio et al., 2019). Healthy communication is essential for strengthening parent-child relationships. Positive communication benefits children's mental health and personality development, whereas negative communication can lead to various psychological and social problems in both children and parents (Ambhore et al., 2022). Difficult communication with mothers and fathers has also been linked to emotional and behavioral problems (EBP) in adolescents (Lackova Rebicova et al., 2020).

Poor family communication is one of the main contributors of divorce. Among the 13 factors leading to divorce in Indonesia, constant disagreements and arguments remain the most dominant cause, accounting for 251,125 of the 399,921 divorces (62.79%) by 2024 (BPS, 2025). This indicates that more than half of the divorces result from poor communication, which escalates into conflict. The second most common cause was abandonment by a single partner, accounting for 31,265 cases (7.8%). The fact that poor communication is the leading cause of divorce is consistent with the findings reported by the Religious Court Office in Penajam Paser Utara (PPU), East Kalimantan (2025), the Religious Court Agency in Bengkulu Regency, Bengkulu Province (2025), and Aceh (RRI, 2025).

According to Koerner and Anne (2002), family communication can be categorized into two dimensions: conversational and conformity orientation. Conversational orientation is characterized by the intensity, depth, and frequency of family interactions. This reflects the extent to which family members engage in open and honest communication (Anderson et al., 2018). Families with a high conversational orientation share personal feelings and thoughts and maintain frequent, meaningful interactions. In contrast, families with a low conversational orientation communicate less often and discuss issues openly (Keating, 2016).

Conformity orientation refers to the degree to which family communication emphasizes uniformity in values, attitudes, and beliefs (Koerner & Anne, 2002). Families with a high conformity orientation typically avoid conflict, value harmony, and prioritize shared beliefs. Generally, children in such families are more obedient to their parents. Interactions tend to emphasize harmony, conflict avoidance, and interdependence between members (Gabriel et al., 2010). Conformity-oriented communication is characterized by uniform beliefs and the establishment of family rules.

Problems in family communication are often influenced by the challenges mothers face in managing the household, such as stress related to child-rearing. Mothers report experiencing parenting stress and problematic media use by both themselves and their

children (Choi & Hong, 2025). Parenting stress is also associated with anxiety, parental conflict, and harsh disciplinary practices (Carmen et al., 2025). In addition, housewives face various challenges in managing their households, including financial difficulties and food insecurity (Andrews, 2023). They are also responsible for maintaining the household and meeting the needs of the family members (Abeysekera, 2024). These burdens increase stress levels among housewives and affect family communication (Andrews, 2023; Abeysekera, 2024).

To cope with these challenges, housewives often adopt appropriate coping strategies. Coping strategies are adaptive responses to stress (Brown et al., 2020). Muhammad et al. (2019) described coping strategies as responses to crises during family transitions and as forms of adaptation. They classified coping strategies into two types: problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. Problem-focused coping involves addressing stress by tackling its root causes, while emotion-focused coping, as defined by Lazarus and Folkman, involves managing stress by regulating emotional responses to stressors (Algorani & Gupta, 2023).

In addition to coping strategies, communication is another approach to reduce stress. Effective family communication is increasingly important for strengthening resilience and optimizing family mental health (Hendriani, 2020). Communication plays a crucial role in fostering intimacy, openness, and mutual attention among family members while also enabling parents to better understand their children's physical and psychological development (Anindita, 2019).

Family communication in urban areas differs from that in rural areas. This aligns with Nader's (1965) view that the communication patterns between villages and cities vary across countries. Similar differences have also been observed in Indonesia, where family communication in rural and urban contexts shows notable distinctions (Rumata, 2017). Much of the existing research has focused on specific contexts, such as rural families; for example, studies on newlywed families (Hirzi et al., 2022) and intergenerational communication in rural families in Tangerang (Nuriman et al., 2024).

These studies have demonstrated that research on family communication in rural and urban areas has been conducted. However, little attention has been paid to examining the influence of stress and coping strategies on family communication in these contexts. Therefore, this study sought to investigate the impact of family characteristics, coping strategies, and housewives' stress levels on family communication in both rural and urban areas.

Methods

Participants

This study employed a cross-sectional design and was conducted in 2021. The population consisted of housewives in Indonesia with at least one junior high school age. This criterion was applied because children at this stage are at higher risk of exposure to adolescence-related challenges (Thoyibah et al., 2017; Aminah et al., 2023). The sampling technique used was non-probability sampling with voluntary participation, in which data were collected from individuals who willingly completed a questionnaire based on the study criteria. The data were obtained using a self-administered Google Forms platform. To better capture these differences, 100 respondents were recruited

from both rural and urban areas. This study does not require formal approval; participation is voluntary, personal data is kept confidential, and participants may withdraw at any time. The study upholds the principles of voluntariness, privacy, and confidentiality.

Measurement

Coping strategies are defined as cognitive and behavioral efforts that continuously evolve to manage specific external and/or internal demands perceived as taxing or exceeding a person's resources. Coping strategies were measured using the Revised Ways of Coping Questionnaire (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The modified questionnaire consisted of 16 items, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.606. Stress levels were measured using the Perceived Stress ScaleCohen et al. (2007). The modified version consisted of 10 items, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.710.

Family communication was assessed through two dimensions, conversational orientation and conformity, with a total of 19 items. Conversational orientation reflects communication that enables family members to freely express themselves during interactions, as a form of mutual support. Communication is considered important in this orientation, and decisions are typically reached through a family consensus. Families with a high conversational orientation spend significant time interacting, and members share personal activities, thoughts, and feelings. Conversely, conformity orientation, which refers to communication in which parents primarily make decisions and children are expected to comply (Koerner & Anne, 2002). with family communication, was measured using the revised Family Communication Pattern instrument (Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990). The modified version consisted of 19 items, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.884 and 0.648 for conversational orientation and conformity orientation, respectively. All questionnaires used a 4-point Likert scale (ordinal), where 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = often, and 4 = always. Coping strategies, stress levels, and family communication were categorized into three groups: low (<60), moderate (60–80), and high (>80), based on cutoffs established in Putri et al. (2019).

Analysis

The data analysis included descriptive statistics (examining family characteristics, coping strategies, stress levels, and family communication) and inferential statistics (identifying differences and influences). An independent t-test was used to assess the differences, and multiple linear regression was applied to test the influences. The data were processed using SPSS 25 and Microsoft Excel 2013.

Findings

Family Characteristics

More than half of the wives and husbands were middle-aged and nearly half had a high school diploma. More than one-third had been married for over 18 years and nearly half had two children. Nearly half had a high school diploma, and more than a

third of husbands worked as private sector employees. The differences in education levels between husbands and wives in rural and urban areas were significant (Table 1).

Table 1. Characteristics of rural and urban respondents

Family Characteristics	Rural		Urban		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Housewife's Age (years)						
Young Adult (18-40)	10	20	23	30	33	33
Middle Adult (41- 60)	40	80	27	70	67	67
Mean ± SD	44.06±5.31		45.46±6.41		44.76 ± 5.90	
Mother's Education Level (years)						
Not Completed Elementary School	1	2	1	2	2	2
Elementary School	8	16	1	2	9	9
Junior high school	9	18	2	4	11	11
High School	21	42	26	52	47	47
D1/D2/D3	7	14	7	14	14	14
D4/bachelor's degree	3	6	11	22	14	14
S-2/master's degree	1	2	2	4	3	3
Mean ± SD	11.04 ± 3.54		13.06 ± 3.04		12.05± 3.43	
Husband's Age (years)						
Young Adult (18-40)	8	16	12	24	20	20
Middle Adult (41-60))	42	84	33	66	75	75
Late adulthood (>60)	0	0	5	10	5	5
Mean ± SD	48.08 ± 5.74		49.36 ± 7.54		48.72 ± 6.70	
Father's Education Level (years)						
Not Completed Elementary School	1	2	1	2	2	2
Elementary School	6	12	1	2	7	7
Junior high school	6	12	1	2	7	7
High School	22	44	23	46	45	45
D1/D2/D3	5	10	6	12	11	11
D4/ bachelor's degree	0	0	0	0	0	0
S-2/master's degree	6	12	4	8	10	10
S-3/doctoral degree	0	0	1	2	1	1
Mean ± SD	12.02 ± 3.88		13.64 ± 3.32		12.83 ± 3.68	
Husband's Occupation						
Retired	4	8	3	6	7	7
Civil Servant	7	14	3	6	10	10
Teacher	3	6	1	2	4	4
Police/Military	1	2	0	0	1	1
Employee	10	20	27	54	37	37
Self-Employed	19	38	13	26	32	32
Laborer	3	6	3	6	6	6
Professional Employee	2	4	1	2	2	2
Other	1	2	0	0	1	1
Husband's additional work						
No	43	86	47	94	90	90
Yes	7	14	3	6	10	10
Number of children (persons)						
1	4	8	1	2	5	5
2	20	40	23	46	43	43
3	17	34	15	30	32	32
>3	9	18	11	22	20	20
Mean ± SD	2.62 ± 0.87		2.72 ± 0.83		2.67 ± 0.85	

Table 1. Characteristics of rural and urban respondents (Continue)

Family Characteristics	Rural		Urban		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Length of marriage (years)						
12-15	7	14	9	18	16	16
16-18	4	8	6	12	10	10
>18	39	78	35	70	74	74
Mean ± SD	22.9 ± 5.60		23.1 ± 6.66		23.0 ± 6.13	
Family income per month (IDR)						
<2.756.345	19	38	10	20	29	29
>2.75.345	31	62	40	80	71	71

Coping Strategies

The coping strategies used by mothers in the urban areas differed from those in the rural areas (0.896). More than half of the mothers in rural areas had coping strategies categorized as high, whereas more than half of the mothers in urban areas were categorized as medium. The average coping strategy scores of mothers in rural areas were also higher than those of mothers in urban areas (Table 2).

When categorized by dimension, the average score for emotion-focused coping strategies was 82.93 for rural mothers and 79.33 for urban mothers. Conversely, the average score for problem-focused coping strategies was lower among rural mothers (61.46) than among urban mothers (63.33). However, the results of the independent-sample t-test did not show a statistically significant difference.

Overall, based on the average coping strategy index, housewives in rural areas tended to rely more on emotion-focused coping strategies, whereas urban housewives showed a slightly higher use of problem-focused coping strategies.

Table 2. Distribution of housewives based on category, statistical data on coping strategies and place of residence

Category	Rural		Urban		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Low	3	6	1	2	4	4
Moderate	19	38	26	52	45	45
High	28	56	23	46	51	51
Min-max	50.00 – 100.00		55.56– 100.00		50.00 – 100.00	
Mean ± SD	80.66 ± 13.61		80.33 ± 11.67		80.50 ± 12.62	
P-value	0.896					

Dimensions of Coping Strategies

Based on these dimensions, the average scores for emotion-focused and problem-focused coping strategies differed between rural and urban mothers. However, these differences were not statistically significant. In general, the average score for emotion-focused coping strategies was higher, with rural mothers scoring 82.93 (Table 3).

Furthermore, this study found that both rural and urban mothers primarily relied on emotion-focused strategies, particularly drawing closer to God. Field observations supported this finding, as the respondents reported consistently engaging in worship and prayer when encountering difficulties or life events.

Meanwhile, differential analysis of problem-focused coping strategies showed no significant differences between rural and urban mothers. Nonetheless, urban mothers had a slightly higher average score (63.33) than rural mothers did. Overall, both groups tended to plan actions and solutions before addressing these problems.

Table 3. Statistical performance of coping strategy dimension indices by residence

Coping Strategies	Rural			Urban			<i>p</i> -value
	Min	Max	Mean	Min	Max	Mean	
Emotional Focus	40	100	82.93	53.33	100	79.33	0.184
Problem Focus	20	100	61.46	33.33	100	63.33	0.605
Coping Strategies	46.67	96.67	72.20	50	100	71.33	0.717

Note: *significant at $p<0.1$; **significant at $p<0.05$; ***significant at $p<0.1$

Stress Levels

The results of the difference test showed no statistically significant differences in stress levels between mothers living in rural and urban areas. Nevertheless, the average values presented in Table 4 indicate a slight variation, with more than half of the housewives in both rural and urban areas experiencing moderate stress. The average stress index for rural housewives was 34.40, compared to 37.40 for urban housewives. Overall, the findings suggest that financial difficulties are the most frequently reported source of stress among housewives in both rural and urban areas.

Table 4. Distribution of housewives by stress level category and place of residence

Category	Rural		Urban		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Low	22	44	22	44	44	44
Moderate	28	56	27	54	55	55
High	0	0	1	2	1	1
Min-max	0.00 – 56.6		6.67 – 76.67		0.00 – 76.67	
Mean \pm SD	34.40 ± 13.44		37.40 ± 15.15		35.90 ± 14.33	
<i>P</i> -value			0.298			

Note: *significant at $p<0.1$; **significant at $p<0.05$; ***significant at $p<0.1$

Family Communication

More than half of the housewives in rural areas and half of those in urban areas reported high levels of conversation-oriented family communication. The average score for this dimension was 78.81 in rural areas and 75.25 in urban areas (Table 5). These findings suggest that both rural and urban housewives commonly provide advice to their children, encouraging them to be more cautious and consider situations from both positive and negative perspectives. However, the t-test results indicated no statistically significant differences in conversation-oriented family communication between the two groups.

In terms of the conformity-oriented communication dimension, nearly half of the rural housewives and half of the urban housewives reported moderate levels. The average score was 69.85 in rural areas and 71.85 in urban areas. These findings indicate that both rural and urban housewives most frequently emphasized the importance of teaching children not to argue with their parents, as such behavior is regarded as inappropriate. Similar to conversation-oriented communication, the results of the difference test revealed no significant differences in conformity-oriented family communication between rural and urban housewives.

Table 5. Distribution of housewives by family communication category and place of residence

Category	Rural		Urban		Total					
	n	%	n	%	n	%				
Dimensions of Conversation										
Low	9	18	8	16	17	17				
Moderate	15	30	17	34	32	32				
High	26	52	25	50	51	51				
Min-max	22.22-100.00		22.22-100.00		22.22-100.00					
Mean \pm SD	78.37 \pm 19.57		75.25 \pm 18.59		76.81 \pm 19.05					
P-value	0.417									
Dimension of Conformity										
Low	15	30	11	22	26	26				
Moderate	21	42	25	50	46	46				
High	14	28	14	28	28	28				
Min-max	37.04-96.30		44.44-100.00		37.04-100.00					
Mean \pm SD	69.85 \pm 13.97		71.85 \pm 11.78		70.85 \pm 12.90					
P-value	0.441									

Note: *significant at $p<0.1$; **significant at $p<0.05$; ***significant at $p<0.01$

The Influence of Family Characteristics, Coping Strategies, Stress Levels on Family Communication Conversation Orientation

The results of multiple linear regression analysis showed that the model had an Adjusted R^2 value of 0.277 (Table 6). This indicates that 27.7% of the variance in conversation-oriented family communication was explained by independent variables, while the remaining 72.3% was influenced by other factors not examined in this study, such as culture, communication context, and discussion topics.

Coping strategies ($\beta = 0.468$, $p = 0.002$) had a significant positive effect, whereas stress levels ($\beta = -0.444$, $p = 0.001$) had a significant negative effect on conversation-oriented family communication. Specifically, a one-point increase in coping strategy scores increased conversation-oriented family communication by 0.468, whereas a one-point increase in stress levels decreased it by 0.444. In other words, greater coping strategies were associated with a nearly 50% increase in conversation-oriented communication, whereas higher stress levels were associated with a nearly 50% decrease.

The Influence of Family Characteristics, Coping Strategies, Stress Levels, and Conformity-Oriented Communication

Multiple linear regression analysis for conformity-oriented family communication produced an Adjusted R² value of 0.187 (Table 6). This means that 18.7% of the variance was explained by the independent variables, whereas 81.3% was influenced by other factors not examined, such as culture, communication timing, and discussion topics.

The results indicated that coping strategies ($\beta = 0.373$, $p < 0.001$) had a significant positive effect, whereas stress levels ($\beta = -0.206$, $p = 0.023$) had a significant negative effect on conformity-oriented family communication. This suggests that a one-point increase in coping strategy scores increases conformity-oriented family communication by 0.373, whereas a one-point increase in stress levels reduces it by 0.206.

Table 6. The effect of family characteristics, coping strategies, and stress levels on conversation- and conformity-oriented communication

Variable	Unstandardized coefficient (B)	Standardized coefficient (β)	Sig
Family communication conversation orientation			
Constanta	54.949		0.012
Family characteristics			
Wife's age (years)	-0.049	-0.015	0.933
Wife's education level (years)	-0.404	-0.073	0.566
Husband's age (years)	-0.123	-0.045	0.794
Husband's education level (years)	-0.190	-0.037	0.753
Duration of marriage (years)	0.707	0.227	0.129
Number of children (children)	-1.510	-0.053	0.550
Family income (IDR) (0=<average, 1=>average)	5.875	0.141	0.121
Coping strategies	0.468	0.292	0.002***
Stress levels	0.287	0.216	0.001***
Adjusted R ²	0.277		
F	5.212		
Sig	0.000 ^b		
Conformity-oriented family communication			
Constanta	67.946		0.000
Family Characteristics			
Wife's Age (years)	-0.558	-0.255	0.187
Wife's Education Level (years)	0.080	0.021	0.873
Husband's Age (years)	0.048	0.026	0.887
Husband's Education Level (years)	0.077	0.022	0.859
Duration of Marriage (years)	0.315	0.150	0.343
Number of Children (children)	-2.491	-0.130	0.171
Family Income (IDR) (0=<average, 1=>average)	-2.569	-0.091	0.342
Coping Strategy	0.373	0.343	0.001***
Stress Level	-0.206	-0.229	0.023***
Adjusted R ²		0.187	
F		5.212	
Sig		0.000 ^b	

Note: *significant at $p < 0.1$; **significant at $p < 0.05$; ***significant at $p < 0.01$

Discussion

Most mothers and husbands in both rural and urban areas were middle-aged. The average lengths of education was 12.83 years for husbands and 12.05 years for mothers. The results of the difference test indicated that the average education levels of husbands and wives in urban areas were higher than those in rural areas. This finding is consistent with those of the

Zhai et al. (2020) who reported that educational attainment tended to be higher in urban settings than in rural settings. The relatively low level of education in rural areas can be attributed to poverty, which often compels children to work to support their parents, as well as the prevailing social stigma that education does not guarantee future successes (Ladaria et al., 2020). In addition, some communities still perceive formal education as an unimportant financial burden (Agustina & Salam, 2019). This belief stems from the belief that sending children for formal education increases unemployment and wastes money. Respondents' husbands' occupations varied, with the largest proportion being employed (urban) and self-employed (rural). Only a few had additional jobs and rural areas had the highest proportion of husbands with additional jobs. This is consistent with Dong (2018) the finding that in rural areas, the primary source of income for most people is farming, whereas in urban areas, the primary sources are trade, restaurants, hotels, manufacturing, finance, and social services. Rural households' livelihood strategies include resource engineering, dual-income patterns, and spatial engineering (Sembiring & Dharmawan, 2014).

On average, the families had two children, most of whom were above 18 years of age, indicating that many had completed high school. Most households reported incomes above the national average monthly wage reported by Statistics Indonesia (BPS, 2020), which was IDR 2,756,345. A greater proportion of urban families earned above-average income than rural families. Based on the national poverty line of IDR 437,902 per capita per month (BPS 2020), none of the respondent families were classified as poor.

Mothers' coping strategies were categorized as high. In terms of problem-focused coping, mothers reported planning, organizing, and selecting the best solutions by considering potential risks. With respect to emotion-focused coping, mothers tended to engage in self-reflection, strengthen their relationships with God, and seek support from close family members. These findings are consistent with Methasari and Krisnatuti (2018) who reported that women often seek strength through worship, and Çaksen (2025) who highlighted that parents' faith in God enables them to feel stronger and more resilient in facing difficulties. Other influencing factors may include family resources such as education, prior experience, and social support (Raharja et al., 2020).

The stress levels of mothers in this study were generally classified as moderate. Although stressful conditions can cause frustration, mothers remain grateful as long as their family needs are met. This finding suggests that mothers adapt to challenging circumstances, which is consistent with the findings of Ou et al. (2022). Donald et al. (2016) and Brown et al. (2020) emphasized that mothers employ coping strategies to mitigate stress. Housewives in particular are often confronted with demands stemming from environmental changes or sudden stressful events that challenge their ability to

cope, highlighting the need for effective coping mechanisms. Therefore, family support is essential in helping mothers manage stress (Yunisah et al., 2022). In addition, stress levels are also influenced by the husband's age, indicating that older husbands and longer marriages can contribute to increased boredom in household routines, which can lead to negative emotions and stress (Brown et al, 2020). Overall, this study found no significant influence of family characteristics on family communication, whether conversation-oriented or conformity-oriented. This contrasts the findings of, Berlianti et al. (2016) who reported that socioeconomic characteristics and gender influence family communication. Families with lower economic status are often more preoccupied with work to fulfill their basic needs. Gender also plays a role, as communication tends to be more open with mothers than with fathers (Zhang et al., 2021).

Conversation-oriented family communication among housewives was categorized as moderate. This is reflected in mothers providing advice to their children, reminding them to think before acting, maintaining an open attitude toward their children, and encouraging their children to freely share experiences and feelings. This finding is consistent with Anindita (2019) the finding that mothers with open communication styles foster openness in their children.

Similarly, conformity-oriented family communication among housewives was moderate. This is characterized by parents being the final decision-makers, children being prohibited from disputing their parents, and children expected to obey parental authority. These findings are in line with Puspitawati and Kusumawati (2018) those that emphasized that an ideal family should maintain hierarchy and uphold family values. However, when children feel uncomfortable, they tend to withdraw from their communication. This is supported by Malihah dan Alfiasari (2018) the finding that nearly half of parent-adolescent communication was categorized as low, often due to adolescents' lack of trust in their parents and the perception that their parents' words were judgmental or insulting.

The regression analysis showed that conversation-oriented family communication had a significant positive effect on coping strategies and stress levels. When faced with difficulties or household problems, housewives rely on coping strategies, one of which is family communication. This aligns with, Wang et al. (2015) who stated that within families, children maintain connections to express their problems and feelings of loneliness, both directly and through information and communication technologies (ICT), such as gadgets. When families encounter challenges, increased communication is required to discuss and find solutions.

Conformity-oriented family communication also showed a significantly positive relationship with coping strategies. In this type of communication, parents act as the ultimate decision-makers and establish family rules. In problem-solving processes, families may exchange opinions, ideas, and roles, yet the final decision remains with the parents and all members are expected to comply. This is consistent with

Koerner dan Fitzpatrick (2002) who explained that parents emphasize equality within the family while simultaneously enforcing the rules that children are expected to obey. Patrick et al. (2020) further noted that when mothers experience stress, communication within the family often becomes ineffective. Nevertheless, strong family support enhances bonds between members, thereby facilitating communication.

These findings are consistent with Zuhara et al. (2017) those of and, Randall and Bodenmann (2017) who argued that stress can be reduced through coping strategies such as communication, support, and mutual attention among family members. Similarly, Al-Gamal et al. (2018) it has been reported that effective communication can alleviate high levels of perceived stress. This may be because communication enables family members to connect with each other and coordinate different perspectives to reach a consensus in problem-solving. Such processes operate through two dimensions of the family communication theory: conversation orientation and conformity orientation (Ramadhana et al., 2019).

A limitation of this study is that the respondents were not evenly distributed across Indonesia, which limits the generalizability of the findings. In addition, data collection through online questionnaires with a limited number of items completed by housewives may have introduced potential bias in data entry.

Conclusions and Recommendation

Conclusion

This study found that the education level of husbands and wives in rural areas was lower than that in urban areas, while household income in urban areas was higher than in rural areas. Occupational patterns also differed, with most rural husbands working as entrepreneurs, and most urban husbands working as employees. Most families had incomes above the average worker wage reported by Statistics Indonesia (BPS, 2020), with an average of two children per family and an average marriage duration of 18 years. Differences were also observed in stress levels and coping strategies, where mothers in rural areas reported lower stress levels, but demonstrated stronger coping strategies than those in urban areas. Family communication tended to be more conversation-oriented than conformity-oriented in both settings. Regression analysis further revealed that stress levels and coping strategies had a significant positive effect on conversation-oriented family communication, while coping strategies significantly influenced conformity-oriented communication.

Recommendation

These findings highlight The importance of coping strategies and stress management in shaping family communication. Families are encouraged to maintain open communication and provide mutual support to strengthen resilience when facing household challenges. When stress levels exceed individual coping capacities, professional assistance from counselors or psychiatrists should be sought with the support of family members. Furthermore, stakeholders, including policymakers and community organizations, are recommended to provide training and empowerment programs that can help housewives effectively manage stress and improve coping strategies, thereby fostering healthier family communication patterns.

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