

# Mindfulness and Assertive Communication Effect Towards Husbands and Wives Marital Satisfaction

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## Abstract

Marital satisfaction is a condition that needs to be pursued by a married couple. Every married couple wants their marital life to be happy, which can be assumed to fulfill physical and psychological needs. This study aims to examine the effect of mindfulness and style of assertive communication on marital satisfaction. This research is a quantitative study with a sample of 218 couples with a marriage age of 10-30 years. Hypothesis testing is carried out by regression test, showing the results that mindfulness and assertive communication style influence marriage satisfaction of married couples. Mindful regression test and communication style show that mindfulness influences the communication style of husband and wife. The implications of the results of this study, that mindfulness and communication style are important factors to increase marital satisfaction. Research results can be a reference for premarital couples counseling and marriage or marriage counseling.

Keywords: Mindfulness, Assertive Communication, Marital Satisfaction

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## 1. Introduction

Seeing the divorce rate in Indonesia which shows a significant increase every year, it is very concerning, as quoted from the Republika media that data from the Director General of the Religious Courts of the Supreme Court, in the 2014-2016 period divorce in Indonesia has an increasing trend. From 344,237 divorces in 2014, it rose to 365,633 divorces in 2016. The average divorce rate is up three percent per year. To overcome the high divorce rate, the Ministry of Religion has launched a pre-marital guidance program, which was only implemented in September 2017, in order to build a sakinah family (Amin, 2018). The high divorce rate can also affect the family, society and country. According to Tucker & O'Grady, in Burks & Small (2008) that the divorce rate above 50% of the total population is not ideal for individuals, families, communities, and also the economy. The reasons for divorce in Indonesia are caused by prolonged disputes, which have an impact on disharmony in the household, the presence of a third party, a husband or wife leaving obligations, physical and mental disabilities, morals, underage marriage, and legal factors. Other reasons of divorce triggered by poor communication, immaturity, lack of mutual understanding, it is said that 40 percent of couples divorce due to these factors. (<http://badilag.net>).

The data above indicates that it is necessary and important to have real efforts to save the building of the marital relationship between husband and wife. This is because every couple who decides to build a marriage relationship expects that the relationship that is built will last until the end of life that separates them. As stated by Kustini and Rosidah (2016) that marriage is defined as an outer and inner bond between a man and a woman to live together. This bond is even mentioned in the holy book Al-Quran with the sentence *mitsaqan ghalizha* or a very strong agreement (Surah An-Nisa 4:21). Meanwhile, from the Christian view, marriage is a

place where a man will leave his father and mother and join his wife, and they will become one flesh (Gen. 2:24). The union of marriage with husband and wife is the smallest cell of the Church, two people becoming one who loves God (Daugherty 1991). To regulate marriage, the State of Indonesia enacted the Republic of Indonesia Marriage Law No. 1 of 1974 which explains that marriage is an inner and outer bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife with the aim of forming a happy and eternal family (household) based on God Almighty. One. This means that the State also cares and needs to regulate a harmonious family life.

The explanation above is related to the definition of marriage, indicating that marriage is a bond between a man and a woman, who want to form a happy harmonious relationship, *sakinah Mawardah*. The embodiment of happiness shows a feeling of pleasure, joy, which also means satisfaction in the relationship. Bradbury, Fincham, Beach, and Gottman, (in, Pinsof, and Lebow, 2005) explain that research on marriage is to obtain important information related to relationship stability, and as a consideration of interventions in building marital satisfaction. Crawford (2002), explains marital satisfaction is a subjective evaluation of the quality of a relationship. Pinsof & Lebow, (2005) say that marital satisfaction is an individual's subjective attitude related to feelings and affects the quality of couple interactions in marriage.

The explanation above explains that one of the reasons for studying marital problems is knowledge in conducting interventions. According to marital satisfaction researchers, become something important and necessary in building marital relations between husband and wife, so as to achieve harmonious relations, which are expected to improve the quality of relationships, and happiness. Olson (2010), said that marital satisfaction has an impact on the longevity of a marital relationship. Rumondor (2013), in his research also says that marital satisfaction is important to study with the rise of divorce that is happening at this time. This shows that marital dissatisfaction is associated with higher divorce rates.

As for some studies suggest that marital satisfaction is influenced by factors which include patterns of communication and problem solving, (Tiayan, Fung and Helena 2011). Other research argues that marital satisfaction is influenced by how couples resolve conflicts, communication skills and love (Harley and Wilard 2010). Research conducted by Burpee and Langer (2005) shows that mindfulness has an effect on marital satisfaction. Smith (2015) explains the results of his research on mindfulness and marital satisfaction that directly mindfulness does not affect relationship satisfaction, but indirectly through well-being, mindfulness affects marital satisfaction.

Referring to the results of the research and the factors that have been stated above, the researcher assumes that communication style is very possible to influence marital satisfaction, because communication style shows the way a person interacts, where the way of communication will affect the perception of the recipient of the message, be positive or negative. As stated by Gottman (1993) that couples who have positive interactions have stronger marital stability. Hargie and Dickson (2005) that humans have a deep communication need to improve quality is satisfactory. Segrin also added (in Hargie and Dickson 2005) that communication skills have an impact on the resilience of a relationship, while poor communication skills have an impact on the inability to deal with crises and stress in social relationships. Gottman (in Wiliam, Sawyer & Wahstron 2006) suggests that communication in marriage depends on the type of partner, which is very emotional and expressive. Olson, Olson, Sigg and Larson in Olson (2010) said issues related to partner communication, among others, related to communication styles. According to Sigg, & Larson, (2010) that there are three styles of interpersonal communication, namely assertive communication style, passive communication style, and aggressive communication style.

The definition of assertiveness is a skill that includes four components, namely the ability to refuse requests, able to express in terms of asking for help, or help, able to express positive or negative feelings, able to start and end a conversation (Lazarus in Hargie and Dickson 2005, 2011).

In addition, mindfulness or one's awareness will affect the individual's perspective in responding to every experience of his life. As stated by Weliangan (2015) that husband and wife who tend to have high mindfulness will be more open in seeing differences between partners, have the ability to show attention to their partners, have better adjustments in various situations, and are open to various opinions. pair, which can

be accepted as input. Ie, Ngnoumen and Langer (2014) explain that mindfulness is a universal human capacity, which is an internal characteristic. Current context orientation, openness to new things, and sensitivity to differences. Mindfulness is self-awareness of everyday experiences that allows openness and flexibility, being able to accept new experiences and different points of view (Compton 2005).

Based on the background described previously that the high divorce rate is very concerning, so that various efforts have been made to overcome these problems, such as the existence of a marriage law, family resilience law, pre-marital counseling, marriage, and studies conducted to provide input on various parties. The difference in the results of the research stated above, that mindfulness can have a direct and indirect effect, is also to the knowledge of the researcher that there is still a lack of research on the topic of marital satisfaction that is associated with mindfulness and assertive communication styles. So based on this, researchers are interested in studying marital satisfaction in terms of mindful and assertive communication styles. So the formulation of the problem in this study "Is marital satisfaction influenced by mindfulness and assertive communication style?" The purpose of the study was to empirically examine the marital satisfaction of married couples: in terms of mindful and communication style. Based on this, the research hypothesis is that:

- (1) Satisfaction of husband and wife marriage is influenced by mindfulness and assertive communication style.
- (2) Mindfulness has an effect on husband and wife marital satisfaction
- (3) Assertive communication affects the marital satisfaction of husband and wife
- (4) Mindfulness has an effect on assertive communication in husbands and wives.

## 2. Research methods

The method used in this study is a quantitative method. Collecting data in this study, using a questionnaire given directly to the respondent. Respondents in this study amounted to 218 husband and wife with a marriage age of 5-30 years. The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of mindfulness and assertive communication style on marital satisfaction of married couples. The marital satisfaction scale used in this study is the Rogge and Funk scale (2007), while the mindfulness scale uses the mindfulness scale from Langer and Modoveanu (2002) which consists of four dimensions, namely novelty producing, novelty seeking, novelty engagement, and flexibility. Meanwhile, the assertive communication scale is based on the assertive communication component of Hargie (2011). The marital satisfaction scale item in this study consisted of 32 items, and from the results of the item discrimination power test, two items failed, with item discrimination power moving from 0.307 – 0.830 and item reliability with Alfa Cronbah 0.934. For the mindfulness scale item of 20 items, one item is declared invalid, with item discrimination power moving from 0.305-0.641, and Alfa Cronbah reliability 0.868. As for the assertive communication scale item of 14 items, four items were declared void, with item discrimination power ranging from 0.305 – 0.641 and reliability with Alfa Cronbah of 0.854.

## 3. Results and Discussion

Table: 1 Regression Test Results

Variabe	R Square	Sig.	Decision
Marital satisfaction - Mindfulness and Assertive Communication	0.360	.000	Hypothesis 1 Accepted

Mindfulness - Marriage satisfaction	0.337	.000	Hypothesis 1 Accepted
Assertive communication - Marital satisfaction	0.231	.000	Hypothesis 1 Accepted
Mindfulness - Assertive communication	0.387	.000	Hypothesis 1 Accepted

Based on table 1 above, the results of hypothesis testing with regression test show, firstly that marital satisfaction is influenced by mindfulness and assertive communication style with an R square value of 0.360 and a significance value of 0.000  $p < 0.001$ . Second, mindfulness has an effect on marital satisfaction of married couples with an R square value of 0.337 and a significance value of 0.000  $p < 0.001$ . Third, assertive communication affects the marital satisfaction of married couples with an R square of 0.231 and a significance value of 0.000  $p < 0.001$ . The fourth mindfulness affects the assertive communication style of married couples with an R square of 0.387 and a significance value of 0.000  $p < 0.001$ .

Table 2: Number of respondents husband and wife

Husband's respondent	Respondent wife	Percentage
109		50%
	109	50%

Table 2 above shows that the number of respondents in this study was 109 husbands and 109 wives

Table 3: Number of respondents based on age of marriage

Marriage Age	Number of Respondents	Percentage
10 – 15 Tahun	53	48.62%
15 – 20 Tahun	16	14.67%
20 – 25 Tahun	12	11.09%
25 – 30 Tahun	28	25.68%
<b>Total</b>	<b>109 couple</b>	

Table 3 shows that the marriage age of the couples in this study varied from the marriage age of 10 to 30 years, with details of 10-15 years having a percentage of 48.62%, marriage age 15-20 years having a percentage of 14.67%, marriage age 20-25 years has a percentage of 11.09%, marriage age 25-30 years has a percentage of 25.68%

Table 4: Number of husband and wife respondents based on education

Husband's Respondent	Respondent Wife	Education	Percentage
3 people	-	Junior high school	2.75 %
41 people	-	Senior High School	37.61%
13 people	-	3-year diploma	11.92%
44 people	-	Bachelor	40.36%
8 people	-	Postgraduate	7.33%
	4 people	Junior high school	3.66 %
	56 people	Senior High School	51.33%
	14 people	3-year diploma	12.84%
	25 people	Bachelor	22.93%
	10 people	Postgraduate	9.17%

Table 4 shows the percentage based on education of husband and wife respondents. For husband respondents with details of husband respondents with junior high school education totaling 3 people with a percentage (2.75%), husband respondents with SLA education totaling 41 respondents, with a percentage of (37.61%), husband respondents with D3 education, as many as 13 respondents with a percentage of (11.92%), while husband respondents with undergraduate education amounted to 44 respondents with a percentage of (40.36%) and husband respondents with postgraduate education amounted to 8 respondents with a percentage of (7.33%).

The percentage is based on the education of wife respondents, with details of wife respondents with junior high school education amounting to 4 respondents with a percentage (3.66%), while wife respondents with SLA education totaling 56 respondents, with a percentage of (51.33%), while the number of wife respondents with D3 education totaling 14 respondents with a percentage of (12.84%), wife respondents with an undergraduate education totaling 25 respondents with a percentage of (22.93%) and wife respondents with postgraduate education totaling 10 respondents with a percentage of (9.17%).

## Discussion

Based on the results of the hypothesis test that has been stated above, which shows that the first hypothesis in this study is accepted, namely that the marital satisfaction of husband and wife is influenced by mindfulness and assertive communication style with R square 0.360 with a significance value of 0.000,  $P < 0.001$ . This result means that mindfulness and assertive communication style have a significant effect of 36% on marital satisfaction. These results indicate that the respondents of this study, namely husband and wife, have awareness or mindfulness, such as being able to see differences, being able to adapt and be aware of the time and various moments in carrying out activities, so that they can build relationships that lead to feelings of happiness, fun and satisfaction in doing activities. connection. Mindful allows partners to communicate assertively. Alberti and Emmons (2017) argue that assertive communication provides equality in communication. Barnes, Brown, Krusemark, Rogge and Campbell (2007) suggest that mindfulness increases well-being in romantic relationships. Seyed and Zadeh (2015) in their research results suggest that mindfulness is correlated with marital satisfaction. Vashappilly and Reyes (2016) suggest that partner communication has a role in building and maintaining a happy and satisfying marital relationship. Tan,

Jarnecke, and South (2017) examine the impulsivity of communication patterns and marital satisfaction. The results showed that impulsivity influenced the perception of communication patterns and marital satisfaction. Impulsivity is associated with low relationship satisfaction and impulsiveness is negatively related to constructive communication patterns and positively related to destructive communication patterns. These results also show that mindfulness and assertive communication style are predictors or factors that affect marital satisfaction.

The second hypothesis, which states that mindfulness affects the marital satisfaction of married couples, is accepted. This result can be seen from the R square value of 0.337, and the significance is  $0.000 p < 0.001$ . This result means that mindfulness has a significant effect on marital satisfaction by 33.7%. This study shows that research respondents have awareness or mindfulness, where with awareness the partner will tend to pay attention, be able to accept differences of opinion, be able to adjust to a partner, so that it affects marital satisfaction. Forster (2017) suggests that mindfulness is related to the quality of romantic relationships, mediated by life satisfaction. Langer and Moldoveanu (2002) argue that mindfulness is an active cognitive process that shows the presence of caution and attention in various behaviors carried out such as an open perspective to new things, related to the current context, and not focusing on the way of thinking. tend to be rigid or mindless. Research conducted by Zamir, Gerwitz and Zhang (2017) to look at mindfulness and marital quality and gender differences, in military couples who were involved in wars in Iraq or Afghanistan. The results showed that couples who scored high on mindfulness correlated with high marital quality. Added that the results of this study, there is no gender difference in mindfulness and quality of marriage.

The third hypothesis, which states that assertive communication affects marital satisfaction, is accepted. This result can be seen that the R Square is 0.231, with  $P < 0.001$ . These results indicate that assertive communication has a significant effect on marital satisfaction by 23.3%. These results indicate that the respondents in this study were able to communicate assertively, such as being able to express opinions to their partners, what they wanted or expected, what they did not want, but by respecting the other person or partner in this study, so that it had an effect on marital satisfaction. The results of this study are in line with the research of David and Stafford (2013) who in their study of 342 heterosexual couples suggested that religiosity and communication together affect marital satisfaction in couples of different religions than those of the same faith. Chi, Fang, Epstein, Lam and Li (2013) suggest that communication patterns significantly affect the marital satisfaction of couples. This research was conducted on 297 respondents in the northern mainland of China, with a structural model test on the similarity of relationship standards, communication patterns and marital satisfaction. In general, the standard similarity relationships, communication patterns and marital satisfaction. In general, the similarity of relationship standards has an indirect effect on marital satisfaction through communication patterns. Punyanunt and Carter (2004), in their study of 100 couples who were dating and married. The results show that nonverbal and verbal communication affect relationship satisfaction of dating and married couples, but dating couples have more influence than married couples. While the support for supportive communication is higher in married couples. This is because married couples tend to be able to express their feelings.

The fourth hypothesis in this study which states that mindfulness affects assertive communication is accepted. This result is obtained from the R square value of 0.384, and a significance value of  $0.000 P < 0.001$ . These results mean that mindfulness has a significant effect on the assertive communication style of the respondents in this study by 38.4%. These results indicate that respondents in this study tend to have full awareness in communicating, so that they are consciously able to express opinions firmly but not hurt their partners. Such as being able to express positive or negative things, what they want or expect in a husband and wife relationship, by respecting their partner. Mindfulness has an effect on assertive communication style, because people who are aware become clearer in their thinking, so they tend to be able to accept differences, are able to respect others, and with that awareness affects the way or style of communication which in this

study is characterized by an assertive communication style. . The same opinion was expressed by Hudson, Garland and Farb (2011) who in their research on students who took communication and mindfulness training and those who did not attend mindfulness training, the results showed that students who had high mindfulness scores could reduce negative reactions in communicating. Jones and Hansen (2014) suggest that mindfulness affects social skills, communication and reassessment. These findings explain that people who are mindful, are able to describe or describe internal and external stimuli, and are able to process verbal information effectively, both in receiving and sending messages. In addition, it is said that mindfulness training is correlated with a person's ability to process their own emotions in front of others, and mindful people are also positive in assessing or having positive perceptions and few in making communication errors.

#### **4. Conclusions and Implications**

Based on the results of hypothesis testing and discussion above, it can be concluded that this research hypothesis is accepted. That in general the marital satisfaction of husband and wife is influenced by mindfulness and assertive communication style. Meanwhile, from the regression test for each variable, it was concluded that mindfulness had an effect on marital satisfaction of husband and wife. Assertive communication affects the marital satisfaction of husband and wife. Mindfulness has an effect on assertive communication in husband and wife. These results have important implications for husband and wife, where the couple's marital satisfaction needs to be built and pursued by the husband or wife themselves, in order to create a harmonious and happy family, and important factors that predict marital satisfaction are having awareness or mindfulness and an assertive communication style. in building relationships. Another implication is that the results of this study can be used as a reference for marriage counselors in providing counseling and intervention to premarital and married couples.

The limitation of this study is that the researcher has not developed a model test simultaneously on the variables of mindfulness, assertive communication and marital satisfaction. In addition, the limitations of this study, in terms of the researchers not conducting experimental tests, so that the results obtained are more accurate regarding the success of mindfulness and assertive communication on husband and wife marital satisfaction.

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#### **5. Suggestion**

The results of this study are expected to be a reference for various parties, namely firstly for married couples, in order to be able to build a harmonious household by being able to positively evaluate various experiences experienced in married life, this is because relationship satisfaction depends on each couple or individual. who live that life. In addition, train yourself to be more sensitive to your partner with mindfulness, which means being able to be aware of various activities in various moments you feel, with awareness you are expected to be able to control yourself and be aware of the behavior you are doing, so you will be able to pay attention, be aware of differences, able to adjust to a partner. Also, to build a harmonious married life, it is recommended to use an assertive communication style, because with assertive communication couples get the rights they should get, because they are able to express both positive and negative opinions, but by respecting their partners, so that there is equality in the relationship.

For further researchers who are interested in marital topics, it is recommended to be able to develop this research by model testing, and experimental research with assertiveness and mindfulness training to increase marital satisfaction.

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