

## **STRONGER TOGETHER”: HOW MARRIED COUPLE STRATEGY TO WORK TOGETHER BRINGS IMPACT TO THE SATISFACTION OF RELATIONSHIP**

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*Submitted: July 2022, Revised: December 2022, Accepted: February 2023*

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of this research is to find the influence of dyadic coping on the relationship satisfaction of married couples. The research method that's been used for this research is quantitative non-experiment with non-probability sampling technique with 150 married couples as respondents or 300 respondents in total. The theory that's been used for this research is the relationship satisfaction, in a definition is an evaluation of interpersonal towards a feeling of positivity one of the partners in a romantic relationship And also the dyadic coping theory which is defined as a strategy that couples did together as teamwork to deal with or cope with stressful life events. Based on the result of the research, had been found a conclusion that any individual whether they're from the husbands or wives group of respondents, both of the group tend to practice positive dyadic coping more rather than negative dyadic coping. The research also shows that both of the husbands and wives group of respondents tend to practice emotionally focused coping on their dyadic coping strategy. Whereas on the husband's group, their relationship satisfaction is much higher if there's a lot of intimacy in their marriage. And for the wives group, the relationship satisfaction will increase if the marriage is filled with love. The interesting part that's been discovered from this research is that both of the group whether from the husbands and wives who practice negative dyadic coping or the group of husbands and wives who practice positive dyadic coping, the husband's sides are the sides who always have higher relationship satisfaction compared to the wives sides.*

**Keywords:** *Married couples, stressful life events, dyadic coping, relationship satisfaction*

### **1. PREFACE**

Marriage Law Number 1 of 1974 Chapter 1 Article 1 explains that marriage is an outer and inner bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife to form a happy family. Based on the marriage law, the purpose of marriage is to form a peaceful family [1], a prosperous one [2], and happy [3], [4].

But achieving happiness in marriage is not an easy thing to achieve. Sometimes what is expected by each individual in a marital relationship does not match the reality of living a married life [5]. Based on the initial interviews that the researchers conducted with several pairs of husband and wife respondents, can be summarized that unfulfilled expectations gave them deep disappointment because couples tend to see marriage as a happy ending but the reality is not in line with expectation.

By the narrative given by the subject, it can be seen that individual expectations for marriage that are not fulfilled properly can affect one's relationship satisfaction. Relationship satisfaction itself is defined as an interpersonal evaluation of positive feelings for one party of the partner and the partner's interest in the romantic relationship. Broadly speaking,

relationship satisfaction is a person's evaluation of the romantic relationship they have. This includes one's expectations or desire for love, support, and security from their partner [6].

Also based on the initial interviews that have been conducted with the same several pairs of husband and wife, can be summarized (1) that the ability of husband and wife to work together in problem-solving can affect the relationship satisfaction felt by one or both parties in a marriage, (2) shows that how individuals choose to behave when facing a problem, affects their partner's attitude and relationship satisfaction. The ability of couples to work together or develop strategies in dealing with pressures in life and problems that exist between two parties in a marriage can also be called dyadic coping [7].

Dyadic coping itself is further divided into several other aspects, positive dyadic coping and negative dyadic coping. The Systemic Transactional Model (STM) developed by Bodenmann [8] is the first theory that considers stress and coping as part of a social process rooted in close relationships between individuals. Through STM, Bodenmann also conveys how the dyadic coping aspect chosen by the partner (positive or negative) can determine the relationship satisfaction that will be felt by the individuals involved in the relationship [9].

Through many variations of the phenomenon that have been explained, the researcher wants to find out whether couples who have implemented positive dyadic coping strategies in dealing with stressful life situations affect relationship satisfaction in their marriages? Do couples who apply positive dyadic coping have a higher relationship satisfaction than couples who do negative dyadic coping?

### **Dyadic coping and relationship satisfaction process in married couples**

The Systemic Transactional Model (STM) developed by Bodenmann [7], provides a simulation related to the process of how dyadic coping influences married couples' relationship satisfaction. Partner A communicates the stress he feels to partner B, then partner B responds negatively (negative dyadic coping). This response affects the views and feelings of partner A negatively and will affect the relationship satisfaction he has with partner B. In the same case, partner A communicates the stress he experiences to partner B but on the contrary, partner B responds positively (positive dyadic coping), then the relationship satisfaction felt by partner A can be different, satisfaction with the relationship with partner B is very likely to increase. Based on the simulation above, it can be seen how the dyadic coping strategy chosen by the partner can have an impact on their relationship satisfaction.

### **Previous research on dyadic coping and relationship satisfaction**

The following are some previous studies that state the relationship or influence of dyadic coping on partner relationship satisfaction. Research conducted by Holzapfel et al [10] found that there was a significant effect between positive dyadic coping on partner relationship satisfaction and no significant effect was found between negative dyadic coping on relationship satisfaction. Another study conducted by Gonzaga [11] showed that the dyadic coping strategy carried out by both husband and wife was satisfying and by the expectations of both, resulting in increased relationship satisfaction as well.

A study conducted by Rusu et al [12] tried to find out how the relationship between various forms of positive dyadic coping with relationship satisfaction. The results show that all forms of positive dyadic coping increase relationship satisfaction in partners. But at the same time, partner relationship satisfaction also depends on the time the stress of the individual

experiences. Based on the studies that have been described above, it shows that relationship satisfaction in partners is often associated with the ability of their dyadic coping strategies.

The form of dyadic coping (positive or negative) that is chosen by the individual determines the relationship satisfaction felt for each partner in a relationship so that researchers feel there is an urgency to involve the two forms of dyadic coping for further research, considering how to solve the problem chosen by the individual in their marriages can change the views of individuals and partners on their relationships [7].

### **Our contribution**

This paper presents the review on how the influence of dyadic coping performed by married couples on their relationship satisfaction. The review was conducted based on the systemic transactional model developed by Bodenmann [7]. We wanted to see the difference in relationship satisfaction when the partner performed positive dyadic coping and when the partner performed negative dyadic coping. Furthermore, we also reviewed differences in dyadic coping strategies and relationship satisfaction between husband and wife groups.

### **Paper structure**

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 contains a theoretical introduction to the variables used. in section 3, can be found participants and measurement of the research. In section 4, there are quantitative results from the research that has been conducted. Furthermore, in section 5 there is a discussion regarding the results obtained from the research. and lastly, in section 6 there are conclusions of the paper.

### **Relationship satisfaction**

Relationship satisfaction is defined as an interpersonal evaluation of positive feelings for one of the parties of the partner and the partner's interest in the romantic relationship being undertaken [6]. Broadly speaking, relationship satisfaction is a person's evaluation of the romantic relationships they have. This includes one's expectations or desire for love, support, and security from their partner [13].

Several things affect the relationship satisfaction of married couples called VSA (Vulnerability Stress Adaption) [14], [15]. (1) Enduring Vulnerabilities, where couples need to unite the differences, (2) internal & external stress (3) adaptive process, romantic relationships are a common component and part of the human experience. Therefore, many impacts can occur due to a decrease or increase in a person's relationship satisfaction [11].

The following are the possible effects of decreasing or increasing one's relationship satisfaction in a relationship: (1) prosocial (attitude to help others to generate positive feelings), the increase of one's relationship satisfaction can improve one's ability of prosocial, (2) Communication, Good relationship satisfaction affects the quality of communication owned by married couples [16]. (3) self-disclosure, the individual's process of telling others about his intimate feelings, behaviors, and life experiences [17], (4) Affection, Positive relationship satisfaction in individuals will result in closer affection in relationships. (5) sense of security, Couples who carry out equity or fair process are reported to have better commitment, openness, and have confidence in the certainty of their relationship [12].

### **Dyadic coping**

According to Bodenmann [7], dyadic coping is a strategy that couples do together in dealing with stressful life events. Every married couple indeed has a different type of dyadic coping

strategy that they choose to do while dealing with stressful life events. Several things affect it. Based on The Systemic Transactional Model (STM) developed by Bodenmann [7], the following are categorized as factors that affect dyadic coping, (1) source of stress The stress faced by a partner can come from a variety of sources. Stress can come from the wife's side, the husband's side comes from both or the source of stress comes from internal or external factors. Different sources of stress determine what kind of dyadic coping strategy the partner will take [9]. (2) Involvement of husband and wife, Involvement directly or indirectly in dealing with pressures in life by the husband, wife, or both is one of the factors that influence dyadic coping strategy by partners. (3) Resources of married couples, the dyadic coping process also carried out by the partner, is determined by what resources the partner has. (4) Goal orientation of married couples, (5) what kind of motivation and goals that married couples have also determined what kind of dyadic coping strategy that they choose. (6) Time concept, The dyadic coping process can also be influenced by the time factor when stress hits one or both parties [9].

Based on The Systemic Transactional Model (STM) developed by Bodenmann [7], dyadic coping is divided into 2 forms, (a) positive dyadic coping and (b) negative dyadic coping. Positive dyadic coping is then further divided into 3 types; (a) emotion-focused coping (EFC), (b) problem-focused coping (PFC), and (c) delegated dyadic coping. Negative dyadic coping is also further divided into 3 types, which are; (a) hostile dyadic coping, (b) ambivalent dyadic coping, and (c) superficial dyadic coping [9].

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

The characteristics of the subjects that will be used as samples of the research to be carried out are as follows. (a) Heterosexual couples who have been married for at least 1 year, (b) are over 20 years old, and (c) are willing to participate voluntarily. Participants who will be the sample amounted to 150 married couples or 300 respondents in total. the percentage between female and male subjects is the same at the percentage rate of 50%. This is because this study takes a complete husband and wife as one respondent.

### Measures

Relationship satisfaction was measured using The Perceived Relationship Quality Components Inventory (PRQC). PRQC consists of 18 items which are divided into 6 dimensions, which are, relationship satisfaction 3 items, commitment, 3 items, intimacy 3 items, trust 3 items, passion 3 items, and love 3 items. Based on the results of the reliability test on the relationship satisfaction construct using Cronbach's Alpha, the reliability coefficient was 0.978, which means that the relationship satisfaction construct is in the very reliable category [18].

Dyadic coping was measured using the Dyadic Coping Inventory (DCI) developed by [8]. Consisting of 34 statements that are divided into (a) positive dyadic coping dimensions which, are (a) problem-focused coping and (b) emotion-focused coping. (b) Delegated dyadic coping is a coping strategy when one of the partners takes over the task of their partner to ease the burden on their partner, (c) negative dyadic and (d) joint dyadic coping is a situation where both partners feel stressed and try to work together to overcome stress. Based on the results of the reliability test using Cronbach's alpha, the reliability coefficient of 0.911 was obtained on the dyadic coping construct, which means that the dyadic coping construct is included in the reliable category [9].

### 3. RESULTS

#### The effect of dyadic coping on couples relationship satisfaction

**Table 1**

*Dyadic coping on husband's relationship satisfaction*

| Model | R      | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. The error of the Estimate |
|-------|--------|----------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1     | 0.853a | 0.728    | 0.727             | 0.745529                       |

As shown in Table 1 an R-value or correlation of  $r = 0.853$ , significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). And also there is a coefficient of determination is 0.728, which implies that dyadic coping on the relationship satisfaction of participants from the husband's side has an effect of 72.8%.

Researchers also conducted SEM data processing to find out which dimensions played the most role in each construct. Based on the SEM data processing, the highest value in the dyadic coping construct was found in the EFC dimension with a loading factor of 0.99 and the relationship satisfaction construct the highest value was obtained on the intimacy dimension with a loading factor of 0.95.

It can be concluded that, in the husband's dyadic coping strategy, the dimension of emotion-focused coping or coping that focuses on emotion regulation have the most role in the husband's dyadic coping strategy. While on the husband's relationship satisfaction, the dimension of intimacy plays the most role in increasing relationship satisfaction. Or it can also be interpreted, the husband's relationship satisfaction can increase if it is dominated by higher intimacy with his partner.

**Table 2**

*Dyadic coping on wife's relationship satisfaction*

| Model | R      | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. The error of the Estimate |
|-------|--------|----------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1     | 0.806a | 0.650    | 0.674             | 0.606216                       |

As shown in Table 2 there is an R-value or correlation of 0.806 and it is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). The value of the coefficient of determination is 0.650 which implies that the effect of dyadic coping on the relationship satisfaction of participants from the wife's side is 0.65%.

Researchers also conducted SEM data processing to find out which dimensions played the most role in each construct. Based on the SEM data processing, the highest value in the dyadic coping construct was found in the EFC dimension with a loading factor of 0.97 and the relationship satisfaction construct the highest value was obtained in the love dimension with a loading factor of 0.94.

It can be concluded that, in the wife's dyadic coping strategy, the emotion-focused coping dimension or coping that focuses on emotion regulation play the most role in the wife's dyadic coping strategy. While in the construct of wife satisfaction relationship, the dimension of love plays the most role in increasing relationship satisfaction. Or it can also be interpreted, the wife's relationship satisfaction can increase if it is dominated by a higher feeling of love with her partner.

### The effect of positive dyadic coping on husband’s relationship satisfaction

**Table 3**

*Positive dyadic coping on husband’s relationship satisfaction*

| Model | R      | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. The error of the Estimate |
|-------|--------|----------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1     | 0.945a | 0.893    | 0.892             | 467.878                        |

As shown in Table 3, there is an R-value or correlation of 0.945 and is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). It can also be seen that the coefficient of determination is 0.893 which implies that the effect of positive dyadic coping on the relationship satisfaction of participants from the husband's side is 89.3%.

### The effect of negative dyadic coping on husbands’ relationship satisfaction

**Table 4**

*Negative dyadic coping on husbands’ relationship satisfaction*

| Model | R      | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. The error of the Estimate |
|-------|--------|----------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1     | 0.623a | 0.389    | 0.385             | 1.118.408                      |

As shown in Table 4 there is an R-value or correlation of 0.623 which is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). It can also be seen that the coefficient of determination is 0.389 which implies that the effect of negative dyadic coping on the relationship satisfaction of participants from the husband's side is 38.9%.

Based on the magnitude of the contribution to the positive or negative dyadic coping relationship on relationship satisfaction, it can be concluded that husbands who do positive dyadic coping or husbands who can work together with their partners in dealing with stressful situations have higher relationship satisfaction compared to husbands who use negative dyadic coping strategies in dealing with stressful situations in her marriage.

### The effect of positive dyadic coping on wife’s relationship satisfaction

**Table 5**

*Positive dyadic coping on wife’s relationship satisfaction*

| Model | R      | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. The error of the Estimate |
|-------|--------|----------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1     | 0.875a | 0.766    | 0.764             | 495.483                        |

As shown in Table 5 it can be seen that there is an R-value or correlation of 0.875 and it is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). The coefficient of determination is 0.766 which implies that the positive effect of dyadic coping on the relationship satisfaction of participants from the wife's side is 76.6%.

### The effect of negative dyadic coping on wife’s relationship satisfaction

**Table 6**

*Negative dyadic coping on wife’s relationship satisfaction*

| Model | R      | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. The error of the Estimate |
|-------|--------|----------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1     | 0.566a | 0.320    | 0.315             | 844.623                        |

As shown in Table 6 there is an R-value or correlation of 0.566 and it is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). It can also be seen that the coefficient of determination is 0.320 which implies that the effect of negative dyadic coping on the relationship satisfaction of participants from the wife's side is 32%.

Based on the magnitude of the contribution to the relationship between positive dyadic coping or negative dyadic coping on relationship satisfaction, it can be concluded that wives who practice positive dyadic coping or wives who can work together with their partners in dealing with stressful situations have higher relationship satisfaction compared to wives who use negative dyadic coping strategies in dealing with stressful situations in her marriage.

A more in-depth discussion is carried out regarding the relationship satisfaction of husband and wife who both have positive dyadic coping. On the husband's side who did a positive dyadic coping strategy had a contribution value of 89.3% while on the wife's side who also did a positive dyadic coping strategy had a contribution value of 76.6%. So it can be concluded that in the husband and wife group who both carry out positive dyadic coping strategies in dealing with stressful situations, the husband's side has higher relationship satisfaction compared to the wife's side.

The same thing can also be discussed when researchers look at the results of groups of respondents who carry out negative dyadic coping strategies. On the husband's side who did a negative dyadic coping strategy had a contribution value of 38.9% while on the wife's side it had a contribution value of 32%. So it can be concluded that in the husband and wife group who both carry out negative dyadic coping strategies in dealing with stressful situations, the husband remains who has higher relationship satisfaction compared to the wife.

The purpose of this research is to see how the influence of dyadic coping on the satisfaction of a married couple's relationship. This study also wanted to examine how the different effects of dyadic coping on relationship satisfaction between husband and wife respondents. Furthermore, this study also wanted to find out how positive and negative dyadic coping influences relationship satisfaction from both husband and wife respondents. The results show that both positive and negative dyadic coping strategies influence husband and wife relationship satisfaction.

### **Dyadic coping and relationship satisfaction on husband and wife**

Based on the results of research conducted, there is an effect of dyadic coping on husband relationship satisfaction. Furthermore, based on SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) data processing, it was found that in the dyadic coping construct, the emotion-focused coping (EFC) dimension became the dimension that played the most role in the husband's dyadic coping strategy. While in the construct of relationship satisfaction, the most important dimension is intimacy.

It can be concluded that, in the husband's dyadic coping strategy, they tend to focus on emotion-focused coping or coping that focuses on emotion regulation in dealing with stressful life events. Meanwhile, in a husband's relationship satisfaction, the dimension of intimacy plays the most role in increasing relationship satisfaction. Or it can also be interpreted, husband's relationship satisfaction can increase if it is dominated by higher intimacy in his marriage.

Furthermore, based on SEM data processing, it was found that in the dyadic coping construct, emotion-focused coping (EFC) was the dimension that played the most role in the wife's dyadic coping strategy. While in the construct of relationship satisfaction, the most important dimension is love. It can be concluded that, in the wife's dyadic coping strategy, the emotion-focused coping dimension or coping that focuses on emotion regulation play the most role in the wife's dyadic coping strategy on dealing with stress. Meanwhile, in wife relationship satisfaction, the dimension of love plays the most role in increasing relationship satisfaction. Or it can also be interpreted, the satisfaction of the wife's relationship can increase if the marriage relationship is dominated by a feeling of love.

#### **Positive and negative dyadic coping effects on relationship satisfaction of husband and wife**

In this study, it was also found that husbands who performed positive dyadic coping strategies or husbands who can work together with their partners in dealing with stressful situations have higher relationship satisfaction compared to husbands who use negative dyadic coping strategies in dealing with stressful situations in their marriage.

Based on the respondent's wife, it can be seen that wives who do positive dyadic coping or wives who can work together with their partners in dealing with stressful situations have higher relationship satisfaction compared to wives who use negative dyadic coping strategies in dealing with stressful situations in their marriage. This is in line with other studies that have been conducted previously by Rusu, Nussbeck et al (2020) which tried to find out how the relationship between various forms of positive dyadic coping with relationship satisfaction. The results show that all forms of positive dyadic coping increase relationship satisfaction in partners.

#### **4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

In summary, based on the results of the research that has been done, there is a significant influence between the dyadic coping strategies carried out by the couple on the relationship satisfaction of husband and wife. Dyadic coping strategies are divided into two, positive and negative. Based on the results of the study, it has been proven that individuals from both husband and wife who do positive dyadic coping have higher relationship satisfaction compared to individuals who do negative dyadic coping in their marriage.

Furthermore, it was found that respondents from both husband and wife groups tend to use EFC dyadic coping strategies or focus on emotional regulation abilities and provide emotional support to partners when facing a problem in marriage. And it was found that relationship satisfaction in the husband's group tends to increase if the level of intimacy dominates the marriage. Meanwhile, in the wives group, it was found that relationship satisfaction will increase if the marriage is dominated and filled with feelings of love.

#### **Acknowledgement**

We as the authors of this study would like to show gratitude and appreciation for the previous research that has been done and the resulting theoretical study that helped the research process and also addressed towards all parties that involved in this research for their support and given the opportunity.

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