The Communication Pattern of Single Mother

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Abstract— During the period of January 2017, there are at least 553 divorce cases registered to Bandung Religious Court. Most dominate divorce applicants were proposed by women. The filing of divorce filed by women has become a trend that women today are increasingly daring to file for a divorce. The purpose of this study is to know the effective form of communication pattern by single mothers in a new family form. I interviewed 10 single mothers. The result is the interpersonal communications on all informants are divided into authoritarian, independent, democratic and hypocrisy communication. Democratic communication is the most effective communication form to convince teenagers that they still get the same affection forms both parents.

Keywords— Family, Communication, Single Mother, Divorce,

I. INTRODUCTION

Family is the smallest social group in society. In general, family members consist of father, mother and children based on marriage bonds. Communication in a family is a medium to deliver messages to bond the relationship among family member to get happiness. A sense of mutual love each other is the foundation to get good family communication. Unfortunately, the divorce data in Indonesia is increasing year by year. Bandung city occupies the third highest divorce position in Indonesia. From the data obtained from Bandung Religious Court, 5,890 cases handled by courts in 2016, 70 percent dominated by economic factors or as many as 5,205 cases. In addition, the case of divorce case claimed through number 3,988 and divorce 1,217. While 11 divorce lawsuits go to the religious court of Bandung City were filed with the will of wife. Based on the data of Bandung City Religious Court (Akhmad Jalaludin) revealed that from the number of 5,890 cases, many divorce filed by women to husbands. Meanwhile, during the period of January 2017, there are at least 553 divorce cases decided by Bandung Religious Court. Most dominate divorce applicants were proposed by women. The filing of divorce filed by women has become a trend that women today are increasingly daring to file for a divorce. In interviews with informants, they say that women today must be courageous in deciding their lives and gaining equality in self-actualization. They have enough financial and independence to survive without relying on their husbands. Women in this study felt that gender equality could make their position more appreciated. The essence of respect and want to be respected as a life partner that contributes to each other in the family is the desire of single mothers before deciding on a divorce. However, inequality in the appreciation given by the husband makes them feel to be the subordinate in the family. They are seen to be the objects in marriage rather than being subjects with equal rights. They feel they do not get the equal justice that benefits both sides. Informants say they are always at a subordinate point in the function of marriage, even though their economic level is higher than their counterparts. They are also the ones who support the family economy without getting a reward for their efforts to improve the standard of family life. Similarly, in domestic duties, women feel burdened with doing their own homework without being helped by their spouses. The tendency of the couple from the single mothers (their ex-husband) are to order and ask the wives, rather that work together as the wishes of the single mother. Equity is the primary focus for these informants to get the marriage balance with their partners.

Supratman (2012) said that with the emergence of diverse flow of feminism which grown rapidly, has finally formed a new image. It is the image of a masculine woman. Masculine imagery is adopted through career attainment in the public sphere and dare to show its intellectual identity. Those are women right if they want to align themselves with men. A free competition to occupy the highest patriarchal world is to win the competition. Their struggle has been proved to change the perception and understanding of large society about gender equality. Women are no longer seen as the fulfillment of the gender institutional system anymore. They have been able to sustain themselves in their establishment in all areas of patriarchy. A divorce filed by a wife with the consequence of a ‘divorced’ does not make them sorry. Instead, women feel happier on the basis of divorce decisions that made by them.

Not only for the woman, teenagers from divorce family has been documented in the literature that children of divorce are subject to cognitive, behavioral, and affective problems within the first year of separation/divorce (Anderson, 1994). It is still in Anderson research, the majority of children of all age groups was reported to have significant psychosocial problems following parental divorce, and these problems varied according to the child’s age. Youngest children were whiny, fearful, and aggressive, exhibited regressive behavior, and were possessive. Preschool children did not appear to understand the divorce and blamed themselves for their parents’ separation. School-aged children experienced mixed feelings of sadness, anxiety, and anger. Many of these children had conflicts of divided loyalty and wished that their parents would reconcile.
Seeing the phenomenon of the increasingly changing position of women who switched positions from women who dare to sue the divorce to the religious court, have become the subject of the study. This issue is very useful to be discussed as it will contribute to the development of family communication modeling. Some forms of communication that are applied by single mother are an ideal form of communication to be used by other single mothers.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Chandler (2010) on her research talks about the emerging effort of single parent in pursuing the education. The participants sought graduate degrees as a means to improve the standard of living for themselves and their families. Major areas of challenge for participants during enrollment included financial strain and having access to adequate childcare. Sources of strength included motivation for an improved future and the availability of supports throughout their time as a graduate student. A similar research has been done by Nelson (2009) for her dissertation. This study provided an examination of traditional age, first generation, low income single mothers’ persistence in college from entry to third year at a four-year public institution. In addition, the study examined multiple barriers and strategies concerning student’s employment and residential status, relationships of students with parents, and academic/college preparedness. Cibattari research project (2005) was also examined how social capital affects work-family conflict and how both social capital and work-family conflict affect employment. She analyzes the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, a national sample of non-marital births collected in 1998 – 2000 and 1999 – 2002. Results show that social capital reduces unmarried mothers’ reports of work-family conflict, especially for low-income women. In addition, mothers who report high levels of work-family conflict are less likely to be employed; this pattern holds for women who are not looking for work as well as those who are. However, even at high levels of conflict, low-income women are more likely to be employed. The results suggest that work-family conflict has two consequences for unmarried women: it keeps them out of the labor force and makes it more difficult for women who want to work to maintain employment stability.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

I use descriptive qualitative case study in describing the typical of communication pattern of single mother after the divorce. There are 10 single mothers who are involved in this research. They asked the divorce plea to the court to get the divorce agreement. I gained the informants through purposive sampling with the characteristics below:

1. Single mothers who have been through the divorce for 2 years or more
2. Single mothers with the ‘divorced’ status
3. Single mothers with the productive (25-40 years old)
4. Single mothers who have children in teenagers ages
5. Single mothers with good financially record

6. Well Educated Single mothers

The research object is the communication pattern of single mothers in their daily life. These patterns should be analyzed in a purpose to fulfill the ideal of communication pattern for single mothers. The data technical analysis is observation, in depth interview and observation. After the data obtained, I did four steps triangulation data. I interviewed and did the observation to 10 single mothers for one year occasion. After the interview transcripts and field notes collected, I reduce all data through categorization. In reducing the data, I focus the categorization based on the research question.

IV. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Single mothers in this study have proposed their divorce by their own plea to the religion court. The reasons of having the divorce plea are not primarily due to economic or other general issues (such as the involvement of third party and so on). These ten informants of single mothers submitted their own divorce to get the equality and respect from their ex-husbands. This finding has been a novelty to the fact that the main reason of having the divorce is the lack of self-acceptance from both parties. Although some of the single mothers are remarried for the second time, some single mothers decided not to marry for wanting the freedom to live and raise their children as their own parenting way. They feel free of the insolence and injustice with the first initiator to propose the divorce.

Tong (2009) said that it is women who determine whether the human species continues whether there is life or no life. Women must guard and celebrate this life- giving power, for without it, men will have even less respect and use for women than they have now. So, They are better off alone and feel happier in living their own lives. They dare to face independent life to raise children. Single mothers have the courage to decide their choice of life in achieving happiness. There are 3 life decisions that were taken by the Single mother after the divorce. They remain to be single, re-married or reunited.

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<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Single Mother -&gt; Second Married</th>
<th>Single Mother -&gt; Keep Being Single</th>
<th>Single Mother -&gt; Reunited with Her First Husband</th>
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The form of communication which are performed by single mother and female adolescents in communicating each other, shaped in a variety of forms. There are single mothers who decided not to get married, but being authorities for not allowing the children to meet her father. This type of single mother is still feeling hurt (not willing to reconcile) to her ex-husbands. They already feel able in terms of economic / well established too. There are also single mothers who chose to remarried and live with a second husband. Mostly, their children (adolescent) want to live separated after their mother remarried for the second time. They are less comfortable at home and need more time to adapt with the environment of
new family form with step-father. There are also single mothers who apply form of democratic communication by allowing her ex-husband to meet with their children. All family members (single mother, ex-husband and their children) feel happier. It is because they erase the selfishness feeling and prioritize the psychological development of their children. The communication between single mothers and ex-husband in this communication type formed as friend bond without any feelings of affection again. They are still building post-divorce communications on the basis of responsibility as mothers and fathers of their children who still need the parent’s role. Unfortunately, teenagers say they feel like a ping pong ball. There are times when they are visiting their mother's house, the single mother talks about their father bad behavior. As they come to visit their father, they did talk the bad things either. The last type of single mother is mothers who decided not to get marry. However, their ex-husband remarried to another woman after the divorce. In this condition, children are fonder of their mothers and they shape deeper form of communication between them.

Single Mother and Female Teenager Communication Style

Single mother communication with female teenagers runs intensively. They communicate more in the form of mutual emotional communication due to the sex similarity. Female teenagers get positive feedback in the presence of single mothers who listen attentively to the outpouring of teenagers stories. Listening which are done by single mothers can be interpreted as an activity that manifested in the process of sending back to the speaker about our thoughts, meaning of the contents and feelings of the speaker. The interview with single mother (first informant) told that the interpersonal communication shaped by the pleasure of both parties. They can chat freely every day. Single mother melted the stiff atmosphere by asking the condition first to the children. The chat topics are friends, school, to teenage romance problems. The place they chatted was spent in the dining room, so the interpersonal communication will not be too formal. The dining table full with food and beverages is placed where every chat started easily. While they do the chatting, they can enjoy the available food. When the atmosphere is created comfortable and relaxed, the communication message will be easy to be delivered by single mothers. They can dig each other problems and share information together.

1"We chat every day. The chat topics are about school, event competitions, extra lessons, we chat all stuff. I’m the one who invited my children first to have a chat, I listen to their stories. Dining table is the most favorite place to chat while having food."  

"(Ngobrol memang setiap hari. Yang diomongin tentang kuliah, Lomba, ekskul, semuanya diomongin. Saya ngajak ngobrol anak-anak duluan, dengerin cerita mereka. Di mejja maka paling sering ngobrol sambil makan sambil curhat)".

This democratic communication formed by single mother will always open good conversational question. The single mothers question mostly starts with ‘how’. The role of single mother in the chat is as a listener, though sometimes they come to provide solutions through the thought of a wise mother. Single mother communication and female teenager build strong emotional relationship to look for the problem solving. Their communication uses a lot of affective rather than cognitive. But, it becomes a strong bond between single mothers and their female teenagers. Based on the interview session, single mother will continue to think of the solution of family problems. They have to combine their roles as a mother and a father in one occasion. Once they face the problem, the single mother need to use their masculine thought to get the solutions.

"I shall speak to the children, if there’s little things to be discussed, just tell me…we’ll figure out the way together. I like to say to the kids, pray me always with a good health so our food canteen will have a lot of customers."

"Ada apa apa hal kecil ajah pasti diomongin…saya suka bilang ke anak-anak, doain ibu warungnya supaya rame terus. Ibu sehat terus juga.."

The effectiveness of interpersonal communication to second informants occurs when their female teenager see their mothers cry instantly. Crying for women is an expression of sadness over the pain. Single mother cried because of the injustice from their husband. This second informant has a long desire to divorce. After their children grow into female teenager, this single mother was daring to ask for a divorce. Single mother communicate her feeling openly by the willingness of expressing her distress. Moreover, their children finally agreed by the divorce decision because they have known the truth of her mother tortured feelings.

"I've cried in burst because I cannot hold this tortured feeling, the children are deliberately see me crying. We finally hugged each other and cried for a long time in my room together at night. I express my willing to have divorce to the children, I said to the children…please I can not take this any longer.."

"Saya pernah nangis saking enggak kuat nahan perasaan yang sakit banget, anak-anak enggak sengaja lihat. Kita akhirnya pelukan sambil nangis lama di kamar saya berduaan malem-malem. Saya utariin mau cerai ke anak-anak, saya bilang gini sambil nangis..tolongan mama, mama uda enggga kuat lagi....".

In the second informant case, she still stays with her ex-husband until the court has legalized their divorce letter. But, they avoid each other's conversations and stares during the divorce process. After the letter of divorce issued by the religious court, the second informant left the house. She asked her daughter to come live together with her. Due to the conscious nature of women's feelings to support each other, their dyadic communication always works well. Her daughter followed the second informant as the women's feelings to find the comfort.

Single Mother and Male Teenager Communication Style

The communication between single mother and single mother (third informant) with male adolescent in interpersonal communication encourages the process of self-disclosure to be more connected. Single mother communicate firmly. The
firm has strengthened the emotional bond. The third informants cannot often hold back her tears when telling her feelings before the divorce. This honest statement inspires the mother's instinct to always hug her son anytime. Nonverbal communication through touching message has raised male teenager empathy to protect his mother over their father's bad treatment. This single mother becomes part of interpersonal communication that has placed empathy on the communication event.

"I was left without a living by my husband, so I propose the divorce. I reassure the children that even though they don’t have father’s role, I still love them and responsible for their life. I cried, and my son hug me tightly and he cried as well."

"Saya ditinggal lama tanpa diberi naftah, jadi saya yang ngajui cerai. Saya kuartin anak-anak, meski engga punya bapa lagi, kan masih ada saya yang sayang dan mau tanggung jawab ama mereka. Saya nangis, terus anak lelaki saya meluk saya erat dan dia nangis juga."

The third informant continues to support her children successfully by being grateful. She gives an example of pointing directly toward the homeless people who are lying on the side of the road. Her motivations words are described in detail to remind their lucky existence. The words like being grateful of enjoying healthy food, having school fees, and owning a home. Motivational approach gives the spirit for their children to realize their mother's wishes.

"..especially when the fasting month, we break the fast at the street food stall.. I pointed my finger to a man who sleep on the streets.. I spoke to them, you are my sons."

Don’t you guys give up to the situation. There are many children who have more miserable father than us. They sleep in cardboard boxes on the streets and cannot enjoy the life. We can eat well, afford to pay for school, sleep on the mattress. You should never be sad because you are my boys."

"...terutama waktu bulan puasa kemaren kita buka di jalan.. Saya nunjuk ke orang yang tidur di jalanan.. Saya ngomong ke mereka, kalian anak-anak masa jangan pernah nyerah sama keadaan, di luar sana masih banyak yang anak-anaknya punya bapa lebih sengsara dari kita, tidur pake kardus di jalanan... engga bisa nikmatin hidup."

Kita enak masih bisa makan enak, sekolah, tidur di kasur. Kalian jangan pernah sedih ya anak-anak mamah."

Fourth informant has become the initiator of communicator to melt the communication between her male teenagers. She communicated through patience. She patiently listened to the anger of their sons who blamed fourth informant and her husband for the state of the divorce. Informant 4 is very silent. She rarely speaks unimportantly very often. For some time, this form of silent communication makes the children realize their selfishness. The fourth informant was relieved when she could get the children to start listening to the reason for divorce after a few minutes of silent communication.

"I was very quiet at home after the divorce with the children father. The kids blamed me of the divorce, but I never respond it. I just let them stand until they are content to blame me as the reason of splitting. For a long time they think why I keep silent, then in one moment they finally ask me. I ask them when is their free time to listen to my story without being paused by their anger, then they give me the spare time. I give a long explanation if their father do not want to commit to our marriage again, their father has another woman."

"Saya sangat banyak dian di rumah setelah bercerai dengan bapak anak-anak, mereka nerakin salah saya jadi adanya cerai, saya engga respon. Saya diamkan saja sampai mereka puas bicara. Lama-lama mereka mikir saya diam terus, gentian mereka nanya kok bunda diem aja. Saya nanya mereka kapan kalian mau denger bunda bebas bicara tanpa dijeda, lalu mereka kasih waktu. Disitu saya ngasih penjelasan panjang lebar kalo ke bapa ada engga ada arepan lagi soalnya, bapa punya wacana lain."

The patience of fourth informant's to find suitable time to dampen the emotions of children in order to speak from heart to heart with children addressed with nonverbal communication. The fourth informant rub male teenager backs after allowing the fourth informant to speak without emotional state. She also gives a discourse on how a man should be in a family. According to her, a father role is to protect the family, while children and wife should be protected. Reinforcement communicated by single mothers and male teenagers have refreshed the rigidity of relationships to make self-disclosure easier. Communication exchange becomes more balanced because each party has the same interests.

"Instead of getting angry with the kids who blame me for this divorce, I was just listening to them. I am often crying in the room alone, or crying while praying. It's really hurt me. I search for positive runaway to do Qur'an recital, night praying, do the Sunnah fasting Monday and Thursday. Alhamdulillah it turns out my endeavor to bring the positive results, children accept my decision to divorce, they even give more attention to me"


The interpersonal communication of fifth informant is precisely by giving a full trust to their children. After the divorce, the male teenager of fifth informant became a frequent hooker in school and an active smoker. In the beginning, the fifth informant did not believe the report about her son who likes to play truant from his school. She still trusts her son without any suspicious thought. Her children always go to school every morning and come home at noon. However, some neighbors keep reporting that the children

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4 Informant Interview

5 Informant Interview

6 Informant Interview
didn’t go to school. He played to his friend house to have smokes together. Once again, she denied that her son could not smoke and play truant after her son confess by his own.

"I get the information about my play truant son on his final report at second grade. His teacher said that my son often skipped the classes. I do not believe, I do not know why I do not believe my son did the play truant. Some neighbors have also been reported about my son who smoked with his friends. I talked about my neighbor's report and his school teacher; I said I don’t believe every single words they said about my son. I believe he’s a good boy. Suddenly, he surprised me with his confession, he cried and apologized to me, whether what people said are true. He asked me, why I should be so much trust to him, well its definitely because I love him more than anything. Since his confession, he we are so much closer each other until now."

"Saya dapart informasi tentang anak saya sering bolos waktu pembagian rapat dia di kelas 2 sma. Wali kelasnya bilang anak saya sering bolos. Saya engga percaya, engga tau kenapa saya engga percaya saja anak saya suka bolos begitu. Ada tetangga juga pernah sampain ke saya, lihat dia ngerokok. Saya ajak ngobrol diantang laporan wali kelas dengan tetangga, ya saya bilang merkea itu salah, saya percaya dia anak yang baik. Kesanak kaget saya, dia nangis minta maaf kalo yang dikatain sama orang-orang beneran. Dia bilang kenapa ibu segitu percayany masa anaknya. Ya karena saya sayang dia. Uda jadi kita lebih deket sering curhat seudah persitiwa itu ampe sekarang."\(^7\)

The message management (trust) communicated by the single mother (fifth informant) to her son has resulted in positive interaction. Her son becomes honest and can manage the conversation with good interaction. Honesty in interacting makes the fifth informant son becomes more obedient to his mother's wishes. Her son did not want to waste her mother's confidence anymore. The fifth informant understands her son’s bad behavior is the form of seeking the attention of her. Fifth informant realized the time she spent she had been working had reduced the time they communicated at home. Now, the son of fifth informant has begun to accept her mother's busyness. It is because she works with the orientation of fulfilling the needs of her son and as a responsible single mother.

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\(^7\) Informant Interview
When they propose their plea to the court, they must have a good reason to grant their divorce request. They appear the emerging reasons such as economy, third parties, and so forth. But the main reason of the divorced is their desires to get the happiness. But some informants do have financial problems when deciding to divorce. They said that they house hold needs are not provided by their husbands. It appears the meaning if single mother courage is to find ultimate happiness on the divorce decision. They rise up and become independent to support themselves and the teenagers. The rest single mothers are successful career women who want the equality and self-acceptance of all their accomplishments. They do not want to be underestimated after the struggle they have done for the sake of the family. The absence of an attitude of appreciation for the sincerity of women's position in the family made them seek true happiness, not a fake happiness.

The success of informant communicating interpersonally with their teenagers comes from single mother democratic communication form. She can play two roles at once. The first role is as a loving mother and father role as a protector. The adaptation of their single mother’s self-communication (self-way, the psychological term) gives a mirror to the children that single mothers can be the right role model of the problem at hand. The role of a single mother in communicating her view of the divorce reason come through various forms of communication, there are authorities, independent, democratic and hypocrite. Out of four forms of communication, the democratic communication form is the most ideal form of communication that can be applied by the singles to their teenagers. Democratic communication is a form of communication where single mother put herself closer to the teenagers with the purpose of explaining the life changes that they will be experienced in the future. Single mother explains openly and democratically about their mother’s new status as a divorced lady in the public assessment. With good communication, the informants managed to get their children to accept the divorce. The process of acceptance by informants to their teenagers does take a long time. It is not easy for them to face the dilemma of parental divorce. Single mother as a significant other continues to provide affection; good sample, spirit and motivation as the main role model for teenagers in facing the divorce.

References