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Submitted: 12/01/2020 - Accepted: 12/02/2020 - Published: 24/04/2020

# From Love to Family Happiness: A Theoretical Model for Javanese Family

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DOI: 10.2478/ejser-2018-0003

## Abstract

This study empirically tested a model involving Marital Commitment, Positive Communication Style, and Family Process as mediators that support the influence of Love to Family Happiness. A total of 201 families consisting of father, mother, and one adolescent representing all the children in the family, participated in this study. Family participants have the characteristics of average numbers of children of 2-3, with spouses married for more than 10 years, with senior high school or college education level, were intact families, spouses were not in the process to divorce, and the whole family lived together. Children participants were junior or senior high school students in Yogyakarta. Participants were asked to fill in several related scales. Family Happiness Scale, Family Process Scale and Scale of Positive Communication Style responded by the three groups of participants, namely Father, Mother, and Children. Love Scale, and Marital Commitment Scale were responded by husbands and wives. To test the model Structural Equation Modeling was applied using LISREL 8.80 program. The result shows the theoretical mediating model of Marital Commitment, Positive Communication Style, and Family Process strengthen the influence of Love on Family Happiness fit with the data. This suggests that (1) marital commitment and positive

communication styles are important personal characteristics for the realization of family happiness, or in other words, love is insufficient for the realization of family happiness; (2) family process has a strong role as a mediator between marital commitment and positive communication style together, on family happiness. Further concluded theoretically that the essence of the realization of family happiness is rukun that includes closeness, bonding, and caring, which manifest in cooperation among family members.

**Keywords:** love, positive communication style, marital commitment, family process, family happiness

## Introduction

Explaining the relationship between love and family happiness is probably a kind of tautology. The tendency of increasing rate of divorce in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and many other countries in the world, however, has raised a question. Why a marriage breaks up when it was started with love? Yet marriages started with ta'aruf (an Islamic arrangement without dating, and needed only 3 months at least to know each other before marriage) are survived and more satisfactory? It seems that love is not an enough factor for maintaining marriage and to assure family happiness. Family happiness is an outcome of family dynamics. Experience in family life, positive or less positive, becomes the basis for family members to assess the happiness of their families.

Family happiness is an important thing because happy conditions make family members have a positive picture of their family, and this can support the achievement of personal happiness of family members. Diener and Biswas-Diener (2010) and Franklin (2010) agree that happiness is a positive experience with life satisfaction when one can develop according to one's potential. When a family is perceived by its members as an environment that supports self-development, each family member has a greater chance of self-actualizing and achieving happiness.

The experience of husbands and wives as family members can be a marital and parental experiences, and for the children it is in the context of relationships with their parents and siblings. It is possible that a nuclear family is part of a larger family living under one roof; therefore, experience in everyday life, with all problems and joyfulness, become the basis of a family member to assess whether happy is the family. Based on the contextual ecological perspective what happens in the family in everyday life affects the perception of family members.

Based on literature reviews the present authors have a question, whether love between spouses has a great effect on the level of family happiness? Are personal characteristics of husband and wife such as marital commitment and communication style have mediating role that support the influence of love on the level of family

happiness? If personal characteristics have a role in a family relationship, does the family process mediate the influence of personal characteristics on the level of family happiness?

The analysis unit explaining the relationship between variables in this study is the family unit involving the father, mother, and a child. These variables are treated as unities, representing the parties concerned. Family Happiness and Family Process are measured through all family members involved. The father, mother, and child assess from their interactions in the family, whether they obtain the fulfillment of their respective psychological needs. The more positive the experiences in the interaction are, the more positive the family processes and conditions perceived. This practice of assessment is more accurate to compare with dyadic or individual unit of assessment on family dynamics. Love, commitment to marriage, and the style of communication are husband's and wife's personal characteristics. The interaction of family members has more qualities when these factors have equality in their qualities; conversely, is when reciprocity is not apparent.

A positive relationship implies cooperation and interdependence (Argyle, 1991; Baxter & Montgomery, 1996; Edwards, 2002; Thibaut & Kelley in Rumble, 2008)). Argyle (1991) illustrates the requirement of two parties in achieving a particular goal. In order for a fertilization it takes the eggs and sperms, which in the natural conception requires two creatures with two different sexes working together for it.

Humans who are social being need other human being to achieve their goals, so humans will always involved in interpersonal relationships. Marriage and family are the contexts requiring cooperation and interdependence. The process to achieve the goals and purposes of making marriage and maintaining family is known as family process.

Family process includes the strategies and behavioral pattern within the family to achieve family's goal (Day, 2010). Functioning family process depends on family members' contribution. Family process itself consists of family structure as systemic organization, and relationships between family members (Andayani, 2000; Dekovic, Janssens, & Van As, 2003; Gorman-Smith, Tolan, Zelli, & Huesmann, 1996; Williams, Ayers, Abbott, Hawkins, & Catalano, 1999).

Psychological studies on satisfactory close relationships suggest a relational-oriented value called communal value (Argyle, 1991; Hegelson in Mosher & Danoff-Burg, 2005). Communal value is the one oriented to relationships and to the wellness of others or spouse (Mosher & Danoff-Burg, 2005). Miller, Caughlin, and Huston (2003) suggest that communal value is a personality disposition known as trait expressiveness, a disposition focuses more on the happiness of others. Spouses give for the welfare and happiness of their partner and family. The happiness and satisfaction of the one who gives lies in the welfare and happiness of the partner. Mutuality leads to spouses' happiness because each one receives without having to

ask, and does not calculate what one will receive for return. According to Javanese culture, this condition is known as "mutually giving and receiving." The communal value in Indonesian society, especially Java, appears in the form of high concern for others; so being helpful, mutually assisting, and being friendly become valuable personal traits.

Stanley, Markman, Peters and Leber (1995) suggest that a value damaging marital relationships is the one oriented in taking rather than giving. This value makes spouses compare what one has contributed for the marriage, and what one gained from it. Imbalance will produce disappointments. Miller et al. (2003) in their study found that the trait expressiveness is positively associated with marital satisfaction, both for husbands and wives. This shows that mutually positive response to each other brings positive feelings, which indicates a pattern of mutual giving and receiving.

Based on theoretical studies above the present authors use the communal orientation described by Clark and Mills (2011) that each party in the family, the father, mother, and the child, gives attention and affection to other family members, and when each party has an equal responsiveness for one another; then, the dynamics in the family becomes more positive.

Family, to the societies with Javanese culture, is a resource for the members' social esteem. Failures in maintaining a family may cause prospective problems for children. Family integration is influenced by the abilities of the family to function as a system. These abilities, according to the Family System Theory (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008), include maintaining functional boundary, positive rules, functioning communication, positive problem solving to maintain equilibrium, and balanced relationships between family members. Good family relations and family functioning as a system would form positive evaluation toward family; and thus, contribute to family happiness. As relationships between family members become more intimate, caring, and respectful, this positive interaction produces positive outcomes in each family member as explained by the Interdependence Theory. Positive feelings towards family members cause the willingness to share and jointly face problems in the family. When a family provides social self-esteem for family members, the family organization is more intact. From the theoretical reviews, the authors proposed the first hypothesis that "Family Process affects Family Happiness Level."

Love includes in it a positive feeling, caring, and a feeling of able to trust the spouse. These three indicators manifest in the form of respect. Respect is an "attitude characterized by a sense of appreciation of others manifested in the form of appreciating the feelings, thoughts, and behavior of others and deigns to be influenced by that person" (Jackson, Esses & Burris in Hendrick & Hendrick, 2006). Respect itself is a positive feeling toward a partner that will manifest in a more positive and caring behavior towards the spouse, and when a person does not mind the partner is influencing, it means there is a belief in the spouse. Hendrick and Hendrick (2006)

mentioned that respect has a relationship with commitment. It can be concluded that love has association with commitment through a concept called respect. It implies that respect is actually an indicator in the concept of love.

That love has a relationship with commitment is in line with Kelley's opinion. Kelley (in Fehr, 2003), on the basis of interdependence theory, mentions that the relationship between love and commitment is caused by the overlapping of concepts, even though some aspects in each concept is not interrelated. So, people can survive to marry even without love as in the cases of arranged marriages, or to marry with love yet without clear commitments to the marriage or the family.

Love decreases psychological distance between spouses. Ben-Ari and Lavee (2007) mentioned that closeness in relationship with a partner is a pleasant experience. Positive and pleasant experiences cause spouses tend to survive in the relationships they form.

Commitment is a husband and a wife personal variable that plays an important role in marital sustainability and becomes a predictor of marital quality (Clement & Swensen, 2000; Fenell, 1993; Stanley, 2005). Commitment relates to better communication and more constructive behavior in difficult times. As stated by Stanley and Markman (1992) personal dedication causes a person to care more about his or her partner and will get positive things in return.

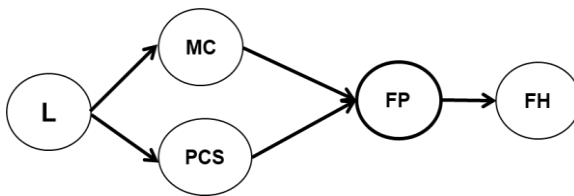
Care for the spouse, and the tendency to survive in marriage cause a person more focus on his/her family. Rusbult et al. (in Alexander, 2008) suggests that a strong commitment causes caring behavior in romantic relationships. When a marriage relationship is gratifying it is likely the spouses use positive strategies in solving problems and lowers stress in the relationship (Noller, Feeney, Bonnell, & Callan, 1994). Schaap, Buunk, and Kerkstra (in Alexander, 2008) suggest that satisfaction in husband-wife relationships has relation with the tendency to accept each other views on, and ideas in, solving problems. This supports the behavior of husband and wife in processing problems in the family and in relation to children. From this review the authors proposed the second hypothesis that "Marital Commitment has a mediating role in the relationship between Love and Family Process."

As cited before, the concept of love is consisting positive feelings, feelings of closeness, caring, and trust in the spouse. In addition, Hendrick and Hendrick (2006) found that respect relates with the spouse's communication style. Love brings about the nature of being kind, gentle, sensitive to other people's feelings, caring for others, helpful, and warmth, those described by trait expressiveness. Trait expressiveness brings someone to choose a more positive communication style to their partner. Positive and caring feelings make spouses do not want to hurt their partner.

Positive communication styles include positive sharing, listening, and responding as well as supporting closeness (Olson, DeFrain, & Skogrand, 2011). Parental positive styles will extend to the children. Husband-and-wife's style of communication has a

great influence on family members' perception of social distance between each family member. This style has an influence on the aspect of family relationships in the family process. These findings lead the authors to propose the third hypothesis that "Positive Communication Style has a mediating role in the relationship between Love and Family Processes."

From those three hypotheses above, the main hypothesis of this research is that "the theoretical model of the mediating role of Marital Commitment, Positive Communication Style, and Family Process in the relationship between Love and Family Happiness fit with the data." The model is illustrated by the figure 1 below.



**Figure 1. Model explaining family happiness with three mediator variables**

L: Love; MC: Marital Commitment; PCS: Positive Communication Style; FP: Family Process; FH: Family Happiness

## Method

### Participants

A total of 201 families with average 2-3 numbers of children, married parents for more than 10 years and high school or college educations participated in the study. Children participants at the time of the study were studying in junior or senior High School in Yogyakarta. The three family members lived together, with middle economic status, and parents were not in the process to divorce.

### Measurement

All participants responded to Family Happiness and Family Process scales. The Family Happiness Scale consisted of 6 items around perception towards family climate and support for feeling worthy. The responses were available in 1-5 scale indicating the agreement with the item. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the scale were .942 (father, n=168); .921 (mother, n=177); and .923 (child, n=192). Confirmatory Factor Analyses indicated  $\chi^2 = 179.48$ ;  $df = 111$ ;  $p < .01$ ;  $RMSEA =$

.056.

**The Family Process Scale.** Two aspects measured were (a) family members' involvement with each other, including the relationships of husband and wife as the central subsystem within the family, and parent-child relationships both concerning conflict and support; and (b) the functioning of family organization reflected by clearness of family rules and problem solution process as perceived by the family

members. The response was 1-5 scale to reveal the tendency in the family. Different reliability coefficients of the scale found for different group of participants. It were 7 items with the Cronbach's alpha .837 for fathers (n=172); 8 items with the alpha .841 for mothers (n=176); and 6 items with the alpha .705 for children (n=187). The differences of item selected reflected the differences in perceiving matters in family contexts. The Confirmatory Factor Analysis resulted in 5 items for fathers, and 4 items for mothers and children respondents. Second-order analysis resulted in the scale reliability (CR) above .70 and validity (VE) .50 indicating that the scale was valid ( $\chi^2=104.29$ ; db= 58;  $p<.01$ ; RMSEA= .063).

**Marital Commitment Scale.** This scale was responded by the husband and wife, consisting items indicating personal dedication and constraint commitments. The response showed the tendencies in marriage, in 1-5 scale. Four items validated for husbands with Cronbach's alpha .856 (n=173), and six items for wives with the Cronbach's alpha .829 (n=178). First-order analysis resulted in four items for both groups. Second-order analysis resulted in CR above .70 and VE higher than .50. This showed that the scale fit to the data ( $\chi^2= 16,55$ ; db= 10;  $p>0,05$ ; RMSEA= 0,027).

**Positive Communication Style Scale.** This scale was a self-report scale, with semantic-differential format. The scale included aspects of listening, responding, and sharing, and consisted of eight items. The Cronbach's alphas for this scale were .893 for husbands ( n=164), and .879 for wives (n=171). First and second-order confirmatory factor analysis maintain six items for husbands' self report, 5 items for wives' self report. The Confirmatory Factor Analysis aimed to examine fathers' and mothers' self report to compare with the spouse's and children's perception toward fathers' and mothers' style of communication. Second-order confirmatory analysis for fathers' style of communication scale resulted in fitness with the

data ( $\chi^2= 146.92$ ; db= 98;  $p<.05$ ; RMSEA= .050). Fitness found in mothers' style of communication scale ( $\chi^2= 79.31$ ; db= 61;  $p>.05$ ; RMSEA= .039).

**Love Scale.** Four adjectives to represent love to one's spouse were closeness feelings, care, trust, and respect. Scale tryout eliminated the item "trust" from the scale for husbands. The Cronbach's alpha for the husbands' love scale, with three items left was .917 (n=172). Yet, the love scale for wives did not eliminate any item, and the resulting Cronbach's alpha was .938 (n=179). The Confirmatory Factor Analysis resulted in CR above .70 and VE= .50 ( $\chi^2= 11.57$ ; db= 9;  $p > .05$ ; RMSEA= .036).

## Results and Discussion

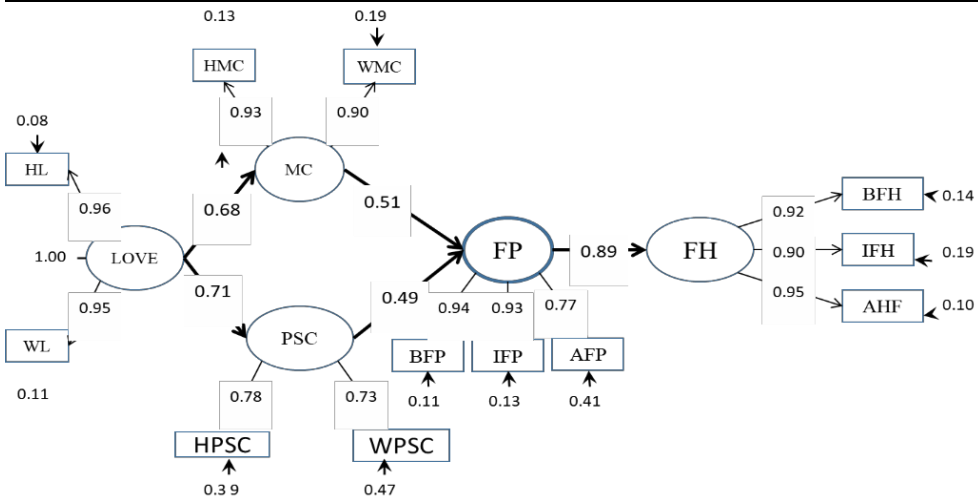
Structural modeling test with the LISREL 8.80, executed several times to acquire the appropriate model. Ultimately the data of Positive Communication Styles perceived by spouses and children were excluded from the process of testing. The results showed that the theoretical model, of the mediating roles of Marital Commitment,

Positive Communication Style, and Family Process in the relationship between Love and Family Happiness, was fit with the data. Table 1. shows the model fitness test.

The result of structural equation testing shows that the theoretical model of the mediating role of Marital Commitment, Positive Communication Style, and Family Process is in accordance with the data. The hypothesis, which states "the theoretical model of the mediating role of Marital Commitment, Positive Communication Style, and Family Process in the relationship between Love and Family Happiness fit with the data," is **accepted**. The Figure 2 below presents the results of the structural testing.

**Table 1: Summary of model fitness test (N = 201)**

Size of Goodness of Fit Test	Value	Fit
Chi-Square (df = 49)	107.40	
The value of p	0.00	> 0.05
RMSEA	0.077	<0.08
GFI	0.87	≤ 1
AGFI	0.80	≤ 1
NFI	0.69	≤ 1
NNFI (TLI)	0.72	≤ 1



**Figure 2. Standardized solution path diagram**



H: Husbands; W: Wives; B: Fathers; I: Mothers; A: Children

MC: Marital Commitment; PSC: Positive Communication Style; FP: Family Process; FH: Family Happiness

The results of the structural equation analysis showed in Table 2, indicate that the relationship between Love and Family Happiness becomes larger because of the mediation of the direct effect of Love on Marital Commitment and Positive Communication Style, Marital Commitment and Positive Communication Style on Family Process, and Family Process on Family Happiness.

**Table 2: Results of structural equation modeling analysis**

	Between variables	Path coefficient (standardized)	Standard Error	T- value	R2
1.	Love to Marital Commitment	.68	.52	8.21	.47
2.	Love to Positive Communication Style	.71	.49	9.35	.51
3.	Marital Commitment to Family Process	.51	.25	5.96	.26
4.	Positive Communication Style to Family Process	.49	.25	6.15	.24
5.	Marital Commitment and Positive Communication Style to Family Process		.07		.75
6.	Family Process to Family Happiness	.89	.21	18.62	.79

The magnitudes of the direct and indirect effects of variables on Family Process and Family Happiness are summarized in Table 3 below. Table 3 shows that the direct and indirect effects of Love on Family Process have significant differences. The indirect effect is greater than the direct effect, i.e., 68% compared to 49%; meanwhile, the indirect effect of Love on spouses on Family Happiness is greater than the direct effect, i.e., 62% compared to 39%. The greatest effect on the Family Happiness comes precisely from the Marital Commitment and Positive Communication Style indirectly, which is 88%.

**Table 3: Summary of direct and indirect effects of exogenous variables on endogenous variables**

	Exogenous Variable	Endogenous Variable	Effects	
			Direct	Indirect
1.	Love	Marital Commitment	47%	
		Positive Communication Style	51%	
		Family Process	49%	68%
		Family Happiness	39%	62%
2.	Marital Commitment and Positive Communication Style	Family Process	75%	- 88%
		Family Happiness	-	
3.	Family Process	Family Happiness	79%	

The overall results above indicate that the hypothesis of the mediating role model of Marital Commitment, Positive Communication Style and Family Process is accepted.

The results show that marital commitment, along with positive communication style, and family process, support the realization of family happiness preceded by the marriage of two people who love each other. The results emphasize that love is not the only personal characteristic determines whether a family is happy. Marital commitment and positive communication styles, in marriage studies, are referred as relationship personality (Schneewind & Gerhard, 2002), marital characteristics (Rosen-Grandon, Myers, & Hattie, 2004), partner interaction variables (Clement, Stanley & Markman, 2004), and marriage processes variable (Bradbury, Fincham, & Beach, 2000) have important roles. These two variables in this mediating study have a greater indirect effect on family happiness (88%) than love (62%). The effect of the both variables simultaneously on the family process (75%) is greater than the direct and indirect effect of love (49% and 68%). This suggests that marital commitment and positive communication styles have strong roles in the model of family happiness.

Love, or positive feelings towards the spouse, is believed to be the basis of the beginning of the establishment of a relationship. Love in the study of Rosen-Grandon et al. (2004) has an important role as a mediator between interaction in marriage and marital satisfaction. This suggests that love for spouses is an important variable for a continuation of marriage, and the family. The direct effect of love on marital commitment and positive communication style, which constitute 47% and 51% respectively, however, should not be ignored. These results confirmed that love itself has just a moderate role. Thus, eliminating love from the model under study, for example as happen in arranged marriages; will not change the opportunity in achieving positive family processes and family happiness when strong marital

commitments and communication styles are likely to be positive. Love itself would grow with familiarity to one another, and it accords with a Javanese quote believed by the people that witing tresna jalaran saka kulina.

Marital commitment, as suggested by Sheras and Koch-Sheras (2008) is an important factor to note. Marital commitment and feeling as unity becomes fundamental for two people to remain united. The marital commitment and feeling united plays a role in the endurance of husband and wife in facing family problems. Commitment to married spouses contains components of personal dedication and constraint commitment. Both support spouses to stay in marriage. The pressures and challenges to marriage that stem from discontent and conflicts are not grounds for divorce. In some societies the compulsion becomes great because of the negative social stigma on divorce. Yet personal dedication based on love can support partner optimism when there is a problem in marriage. With both components of the commitment the husband and wife keep their sense of unity as the core subsystem of a family.

Whenever spouses have commitments and feel united and have positive communication styles, these will support the family atmosphere and processes. Theory of family communication believes that family processes get better when family members are more open and can talk about sensitive issues (Berger & Paul, 2008). Together, positive feelings, marital commitment, and positive communication styles manifest in care of one another.

Commitment to marriage is an important factor for Javanese society because marriage, as stated by Broderick (1984), is a customary arrangement for adults, that for Javanese people unmarried adult becomes parental concern. Since one of parent's duties is to marry off their children, whether male or female; therefore, parents perceived themselves not yet accomplished their duties when there are unmarried adult children in the family, and they feel it is their responsibility to find partners for the children to marry.

Some marriages today begin because of premarital pregnancy. The importance of hiding the disgrace from the society by marrying off the pregnant girl; however, is not necessarily followed by satisfying marriage. The young couple are not ready to focus on the family; instead, they focus mostly on their own self. This is a problematic to the family development life cycle. According to Duvall's (1962) list of family development stages, this couple is not yet ready to enter the phase of having children (stage 2, the child bearing family stage), and they jump over the first stage (marriage without children), which supposed to be the adjustment stage. The adjustment stage includes adjustments with the in-laws, and the extended families of both sides. In the Javanese society, a marriage between children means "family marriage," that is, bringing two families of origin together to become a larger extended family. Adjustment with the in-laws is a process that drains enough of emotions and thoughts. If the relationship is positive, then, the couples get support, otherwise, the couples get pressures and stress. Other challenges for married couples today, come from the life style brought

about by modernization and the millennium era. Couples are more focused on making money for the family's economic survival, or to fulfill more modern lifestyle, or more focused on social-oriented lifestyle; for instance, in the usage of social medias, and less focus on the marriage and family. In some cases, self-actualization and success in the public sphere are more important rather than the family psychological well-being. In fact, the reasons behind marital dissolution in Yogyakarta cases, primarily are husbands leaving the family, infidelity, and unsolved disagreements (tribunejogja.com). Commitment becomes an important factor for the Javanese couples today in maintaining marriage and family.

This research succeeds in proving the mediating role of marital commitment and positive communication style, both of which are personal variables of husband and wife, and the family process, which is the relational variable in the relationship between love and family happiness. This means that personal factors are important in building a happy family. Choosing a partner cannot ignore the positive feelings one has toward the prospective partner, but positive feelings themselves are not enough because of commitment to marriage, as well as positive communication style have important roles. Snyder, Cozzi, and Mangrum (in Liddle, Santisteban, Levant, & Bray, 2002) have the idea that every individual in a marriage or family unit will mutually influence, and being influenced by, other members of the unit as well as by a wider social system. This thinking is in line with Family System Theory (Rothbaum, Rosen, Ujiie, & Uchida, 2002) and Interdependence Theory (Olson, DeFrain, & Skogrand, 2011), spouses need one another and give positive influence to each other so that personal factors can be optimally developed. The relationship of mutual interplay between a husband and his wife and between parents- children colored by personal characteristics of husband and wife as the core of a family. Family process, which basically is family functioning, is characterized by the style of interaction between both husband and wife, and both with their children.

The moderate role of love to marital commitment and positive communication styles indicates the presence of other variables predicted to have much stronger influence on these two variables. Marital commitment and positive communication styles together, have strong roles in the realization of family happiness; then, factors influencing both variables should be identified and considered.

Religiosity is a factor supporting family happiness, as mentioned by Stinnet and DeFrain (in Olson et al., 2011), particularly on the level of processes within the family. On personal level, Burdette, Ellison, Sherkat and Gore (2007) found that infidelity is negatively correlated with religiosity. Brown, Orbuch, and Bauermeister (2008) found association between religiosity and marital stability. Lambert and Dollahite (2008) found that participants who are Christian, Judaism, and Islam assert that religion helps them to commit to their marriage. It can be assumed that marital commitment is, while being influenced by love, influenced by the belief that marriage is a religious institution that should be cared for as a sacred institution.

Style of communication, whether positive or negative, is influenced by the quality of the relationship itself (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006). When a relationship is perceived painful, or does not meet spouses expectations, the tendency of spouses to use aggressive communications becomes greater. Thus, attributing style of communication as a personal or relational characteristic should be reconsidered.

Positive style of communication, for the Javanese people particularly from Yogyakarta, reflects politeness, which is important in the Javanese culture. Politeness manifests in the usage of the appropriate level of language. The usage of language reflects one's dignity (Poedjosoedarmo, 1979), and the Javanese language contains mannerism. There are three levels of Javanese language, the ngoko is the daily language between peers, and it reflects equality and closeness. The kromo madya is spoken when speaking to higher level persons such as older people, or strangers, to show politeness and respect. The highest level is kromo inggil, is spoken to highly respectable persons such as parents, grandparents, significant persons in the society. The usage of the levels of the language is based on harmony, for good communication reflects humbleness, empathy, in context, and wisdom. The level chosen reflects the level of politeness about to whom, about what, and in what context one is communicating with (Ngadiman, 2011).

The higher levels of Javanese language, because they contain gentle words, are suggested to be used in disagreements since using higher level language will prevent hurting others' feeling. With this rule of language level usage in communicating, people need to choose the right words, not as straightforwardly as the Western speech model. In the Javanese mannerism, there is a sense (or feeling) of hesitation (sungkan) controlling a person in expressing one's opinions, which prevents the person to speak sloppily and hurting others feelings, or raising conflicts (Ngadiman, 2011).

Positive communication style becomes important for Javanese people because, in the authors' observations to distressed families, there is a tendency to use ways that make communication not clear. For example is the use of sanepo or figurative expression, satire, or sarcasm and sometimes cursing, or grumbling. Furthermore, Andayani (2002) noted the rarity of praise or appreciation, those needed in communication with the family. Javanese people today, as Ngadiman (2011) has observed, have weakened attitude particularly in using of the proper language in interpersonal relationships. This weakening reflect less humbleness, empathy, in context, and wisdom. This will explain the importance of positive communication style in close relationships.

The discussions on commitment and positive style of communication above show the importance of these personal variables for the Javanese family.

Love, marital commitment, and positive communication style are three personal variables involving care. Caring husband and wife bring the family into more pleasant,

comfortable, and supporting atmosphere. Care is not only about providing support and feeling of comfort. Care is about a vision of the future as well. Spouses' vision of the future leads to clearer direction of family structure and organization. The structure and organization of the family determine the behaviors of family members (Crane, So, Larson, & Hafen, Jr., 2005). Thus, family serves to organize, direct, and to discipline its members to function well and bring positive influences for the family and the wider social environment in the future. Care seems to be an important factor fundamental in close relationships especially family. Care is the core concern in processes where interdependence characterized interpersonal relationships. With care, family dynamics become more positive. This process contributes greatly to the perception of family members for the family happiness.

Family processes is the core of the family. The process itself manifests as mutual interactions among family members in providing one another fulfillment of psychological needs, and how the family members continue to keep the family intact and functioning optimally (Day, 2010). The functioning and supporting family processes give positive impressions and proud feelings about the family, and family members can develop personal goals toward maturity and meaningfulness.

Finally, the authors conclude that, on the bases of the mediating model of family happiness, family happiness is associated with closeness, bonding, and care. These three components give family members the sense of security, and the meaning of cooperation, those which previously affected by commitment. The authors emphasize that cooperation should be underlined, beside the positive affection and commitments, which it means that each spouse has contribution to the realization of family happiness. Love, when perceived has great contribution for the overall process towards family happiness, it is the spouses' duty to work together to make this positive feeling everlasting.

Closeness, bonding, and care, that represent the main basis of the realization of family happiness, are illustrations of the importance of the establishment of relationships in human life. Olson et al. (2011) describe that man does not live in the empty space, and stay connected with the important people around. Family members develop into meaningful persons because they received positive support from the family, and be able to develop positive relationships within the community. It is inevitable that every person, as well as families, experiencing pressures from social environments. A happy family, however, has greater durability because of the presence of mutual support among family members, and the family itself is firm as an institution, so the family can overcome pressures and even get strengthened. This is a condition in Javanese term called rukun (Koentjaraningrat, 1985; Andayani-Koentjoro, 1995). Rukun or harmony, for Javanese people today, is manifested as the attitude of not to sharpen diversities or differences. Yet rukun remains the underlying philosophy of a more positive relationship within the family.

The application of family-analysis unit makes the research possible to utilize the structural equation modeling analysis. The authors can obtain an overall picture, that takes into account the perception of each member of the family. This finding can describe at least some dynamics in the family as a whole, not just the family according to the child, the father, or the mother alone. The authors conclude that, on the bases of the overall picture of a family dynamics, despite the importance of personal characteristics, noteworthy are the characteristics associated with the relationships in the realization of family happiness

### **Conclusion**

This study has confirmed the theoretical model positioning Marital Commitment, Positive Communication Style, and Family Process as mediators in the relationship between Love and Family Happiness for Javanese family. Such model probably is relevant for other cultures since the purpose of family establishment is happiness, and family happiness itself is achieved through family members' harmonious relationship, characterized by closeness, bonding, care, and cooperation. Loving each other in a marriage is not an assurance for family happiness. Love is just a relationship starter that it needs maintenance to last for long. It needs other personal attributes, particularly marital commitment and positive communication style, to go along with it for a family to function well. Better functioning leads to family happiness.

### **Note**

\* The article is a part of Dissertation entitled "Peran Cinta terhadap Pasangan, Komitmen Perkawinan, Gaya Berkomunikasi Positif, dan Proses Keluarga pada Kebahagiaan Keluarga: Sebuah Uji Model Teoretik (2014), with updated references.

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### **Acknowledgement**

Budi Andayani would like to thank Prof. Dr. Soetarlinah Sukadji from Universitas Indonesia Jakarta, and Prof. Drs. Koentjoro, MBS, Ph.D. from Universitas Gadjah Mada Yogyakarta for such huge academic, and social supports.

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