

RESEARCH ARTICLE

SELF-CONCEPT AND WIFE'S ASSERTIVENESS IN DEALING MARITAL CONFLICTS**Wiwik Juwarini Prihastiwi**

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^[1] Universitas Muhammadiyah Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to determine the role of self-concept, education level, and employment status on women's assertiveness in dealing with marital conflict. The subjects of this study were 101 wives taken using a multistage random sampling technique. The data in this study were taken with a scale arranged based on the Likert model. Hypothesis testing used correlation analysis and t-test. Product moment correlation analysis showed that there was a significant relationship between self-concept and assertiveness and there was a significant relationship between education and assertiveness. The results of other analyses, namely partial correlation analysis, showed that there was a significant relationship between education level and assertiveness by controlling for self-concept ($r_{1.y.2} = 0.242$; $p = 0.015$). The results of the partial correlation analysis showed a significant relationship between self-concept and assertiveness by controlling for education level ($r_{2.y.1} = 0.312$; $p = 0.002$). The results of the t-test showed no difference in wife's assertiveness in terms of employment status ($p > 0.01$). The contribution of the self-concept variable (8.187%) to assertiveness was higher than education level. (6.870).

Keywords: *Self-Concept, Assertiveness, Marital Conflict, Education Level, Employment Status*

INTRODUCTION

In marriage, husband and wife certainly long for happiness and to last a lifetime but happiness does not come by itself because marriage is the union of a man and a woman who have different backgrounds. The differences are in terms of education, personality, upbringing background and culture.

These differences often result in conflicts between husband and wife. The conflicts that occur are often accompanied by violence and wives are often victims. The National Commission on Violence Against Women reported cases of violence against women reported during 2024 around 17,622 nationally (<https://kekerasan.kempppa.go.id/ringkasan>). Specifically for domestic violence cases in the city

of Surabaya in 2024 there were 63 reports of domestic violence cases and the category of domestic violence cases dominated compared to other cases of violence (Liputan6.com, Surabaya). But there are still many cases of domestic violence that are not reported because domestic violence cases are like the tip of the iceberg.

Despite the desire for a romantic and harmonious relationship, conflict in a marriage relationship always occurs. Both partners do things that upset each other, and conflict arises. Marital conflict can be described as a struggle, clash, dispute, disagreement, or quarrel between husband and wife, and sometimes with other household members, over opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals (Tasew & Getahu, 2021). In fact, conflict in marriage can foster self-maturity for

both the wife and husband as long as the conflict is resolved constructively (Lamdis and Lamdis, 1973). Freud (Feis and Feist, 2009) stated that the ability to resolve conflict will strengthen the ego. As stated by Baccocchi and Crohan (Hysi, 2016) that conflict management is one of the most important determinants of relationship well-being.

However, it is not uncommon for husband and wife conflicts to not be resolved, resulting in mental health disorders such as stress, depression, eating disorders, and alcohol consumption (Tasew & Getahu, 2021). Marital conflict not only impacts the couple but also impacts the development of the child. Rafiq and Rafiq (2016) said that Marital conflicts negatively influence all areas of a child's development, which include physical, emotional, psychological, social, behavioral, cognitive development, etc.

Conflict in husband and wife relationships can be handled destructively or constructively. Hocker and Wilmot (in Hysi, 2016) stated that destructive conflict management is characterized by increasing manipulation, threats and coercion (overt expressions of conflict), avoidance, revenge, inflexibility and rigidity, dominant and subordination competitive patterns, and belittling in the form of verbal and nonverbal communication. Furthermore, Hocker and Wilmot (Hysi 2014) describe it as constructive, characterized by flexibility, intense interaction for mutual protection, increased self-esteem and cooperation.

In marriage, interpersonal communication is very important, and good communication can minimize the occurrence of conflict. One of the important social skills in interpersonal communication is assertiveness (Mofrad & Mehrabi, 2015). Assertiveness involves expressing ideas, feelings, and boundaries appropriately, honestly and clearly, by respecting the rights of others, maintaining positive influence on the recipient, and considering the potential consequences of disclosure. This includes positive and negative expressions and seeking to achieve personal or instrumental goals (Mofrad & Mehrabi, 2015; Pfafman, 2017). Lazarus (Prakash & Devi, 2015) identified four abilities in individuals who can behave assertively,

namely the ability to communicate openly about their own desires and needs. The second is the ability to say no to something that is deemed unsuitable. The third is the ability to openly communicate both positive and negative feelings. The last aspect of assertiveness is the ability to initiate, manage, and conclude conversations among friends and others.

Related to assertiveness, there are gender role stereotypes where patrilineal cultural practices are still strong. In patrilineal culture, it is conceptualized that men have dominant, strong, competitive, rational characteristics while women are passive, dependent, sensitive to the feelings of others, understanding and good followers (Thubauville & Gabbert, 2014). Furthermore, Symonds (Pfafman, 2017) stated that since childhood, women are not taught to be assertive and express their feelings. A similar opinion was expressed by Bresnahan (in Berg et al., 2021), which shows the results of a study on assertiveness that men are more assertive than women. An alternative approach in highlighting assertiveness in situational factors, especially in the socio-cultural context, especially collectivist culture, assertiveness is considered by the recipient as an expression that violates cultural norms and in relational terms will be considered aggressive. This is because assertiveness is a Western concept where self-expression including assertiveness is highly encouraged and valued (Furnham in Pfafman, 2017).

Pfafman (2017) stated that assertiveness is closely related to self-esteem, self-concept, self-confidence and anxiety. This study focuses more on the role of self-concept. Rogers (in Feist and Feist, 2009) stated that self-concept is phenomenological in nature where in a person's phenomenal world, the aspect that plays an important role is the self, namely the self as observed, perceived and experienced. Burn (1993) stated that self-concept is a personal, dynamic and evaluative self-image that each person develops in transactions with the psychological environment. Mishra (2016) stated that self-concept has three components, namely perceptual related to physical self-concept, conceptual related to psychological conception and

attitude related to a person's perception of themselves.

The role of the environment is very important in the formation of self-concept. Baron and Byrne (2006) stated that self-concept is formed through interaction with the environment. Bronfenbrenner (2005) stated that socio-cultural experience, and self-concept cannot be separated .

Besides self-concept, education level also has an influence on assertive behavior. According to Rathus and Nevid (1995), a key factor influencing assertiveness is education, with higher education levels leading to broader thinking and greater openness, which in turn promotes assertive behavior.

However, the reality in Indonesian society is that there is an awareness of equal rights between men and women. Women's struggle to not only play a domestic role but many women have played strategic positions in society. One form of women's efforts to align roles is to work outside the home. However, there are various reasons why women (wives) work. In addition to economic reasons, work is used for actualization, to get satisfaction. Hoffman (Hentschel, 2019) put forward several advantages of women having a career, namely being able to improve the standard of living, improve the way of thinking, openness in thinking, increase self-confidence and self-esteem, and be able to develop abilities and creativity.

Based on the description above, there is an assumption that there is a relationship between self-concept, education level and work status of the wife with the wife's assertiveness in dealing with marital conflict.

METHODS

Research Design

This research design uses a quantitative approach, namely research that measures variables and carries out calculations using statistics (Neuman, 2011). The variables involved in this research are independent variables: self-concept, education level and employment status. Dependent variables are assertiveness.

Measurement

The data of these variables will be obtained through measurements using a Likert scale with a moving scale score from 1 to 4. the assertiveness variable is measured using The Assertiveness Inventory developed by Alberti and Emmons (2017) which consists of 35 items. The self-concept variable is measured using the Five-Factor Self-Concept Questionnaire (García and Musitu, 2009) assesses five specific dimensions, namely academic, social, emotional, family, and physical, which consist of 30 item.

Participants

The subjects of this study were women with the status of wives who were in the city of Surabaya as many as 101 people with the lowest level of education being elementary school and the highest being a bachelor's degree in the city of Surabaya. The sampling of the study was carried out using the multistage random sampling technique. When viewed from the work status, it can be seen in the table below.

Table 1. Employment status

No	Status	Total
1	Employed	45
2	Not Working	56

Table 2. Education Level

No	Education Level	N
1	Elementary School	5
2	Junior High School	9
3	High School	52
4	Diploma	13
5	Bachelor	22

RESULT

In order to find out the relationship between self-concept and assertiveness and the relationship between self-concept and assertiveness, an analysis was conducted using product moment correlation. Table 3 shows the results of the analysis that there is a correlation between education level and wife's assertiveness in dealing marital conflict. In addition, there is also a correlation between self-concept and wife's assertiveness in dealing marital conflict.

Table 3. Product Moment Correlation

No	Statistic	Koefisien Korelasi	Signifinkasi
1	r_{1-y}	0.290	$p = 0.004^{**}$
2	r_{2-y}	0.312	$p = 0.002^{**}$

Description: 1 = Education level. 2 = self-concept

The results of the partial correlation analysis where one of the independent variables is controlled, the results obtained are as shown in the table below.

Table 4. Partial Correlation

No	Statistic	Koefisien Korelasi	Signifinkasi
1	r_{1y-2}	0.242	$p = 0.015^{**}$
2	r_{2y-1}	0.268	$p = 0.007^{**}$

Description: 1 = Education level. 2 = self-concept

Table 4 shows the results showing that the level of education is very significantly correlated with the wife's assertiveness by controlling the self-concept, likewise the self-concept is very significantly correlated with assertiveness in facing marital conflict by controlling the level of education. The contribution of each variable of the level of education to assertiveness is 6.870% and the effective contribution of self-concept to the wife's assertiveness in facing conflict with her husband is 8.187% and self-concept makes a greater contribution than the level of education (table 5).

Table 5. Effective contribution weight variable

No	Effective contribution weight variable (%)
1	Education Level 6.870%
2	Self-concept 8.187%

In addition to the results of the analysis above, the results of the t-test analysis were obtained - differences in wife's assertiveness based on work status as seen in the table below.

Table 6. t-Test

No	Variabel	Mean	Signikansi
1	A1	92.255	
2	A2	94.426	
3	A1-A2	1.502	
4		p	0.132

*Working (A1), Not working (A2)

Based on table 6 above, it can be concluded that there is no difference in the assertiveness of wives in dealing marital conflicts between those who work and those who do not work.

DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis show that there is a correlation between self-concept and wife's assertiveness in dealing marital conflict and the direction of a positive relationship so that it is interpreted that the more positive the self-concept, the more assertive the wife is in dealing with conflict with her husband. Conflict can have negative or positive consequences, depending on how the conflict is handled and which conflict resolution approach is adopted. This discusses the importance of obtaining constructive and positive results, and emphasizes the concept of conflict resolution strategies. The desired conflict resolution is conflict resolution based on compromise, which focuses on strategies related to

resolving disputes and disputes that occur between the parties involved in this context of conflict between husband and wife (Şahin et al., 2009).

One strategy for resolving interpersonal conflict is negotiation in which both parties face each other (Crawford et al., 2002). This negotiation focuses on the results of the communication process and is influenced by many factors, such as culture, situation, personality (Şahin et al., 2009). On the other hand, when conflict arises, it is important to be open, share attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge, and avoid fear and defensive behavior, so that constructive solutions can be obtained. This is where assertive communication is needed.

Assertive behavior is the ability to communicate honestly and show expressions according to our feelings, thoughts, and needs (Korem et al., 2012; Pasquale et al., 2021). Assertiveness or assertive behavior is an interpersonal behavior that involves aspects of honesty and aspects of openness of mind and feelings. In other literature, assertiveness means the skill of enforcing rational individual rights in ways that help ensure that others cannot ignore that individual's rights (Amodeo et al., 2011; Parto, 2011).

People with positive self-concepts exhibit more self-disclosure behaviors during the conflict resolution process. Individuals with high self-esteem are more active and ambitious in expressing their thoughts (Baumeister et al., 2003). In addition, individuals with positive self-concepts are reported to be more self-disclosure-oriented, more comfortable with self-concept issues, and have better quality personal relationships (Şahin, Basim, and Çetin, 2009). These individuals are also reported to be more popular, compromising, demanding, talkative, and active, while individuals with negative self-concepts are more withdrawn and withdrawn (Hay et al., 1998).

The findings in this study indicate that education level influences women's assertive behavior in facing marital conflicts. This is in accordance with the opinion of Rathus and Nevid. (1995) and the results of Margareta's research (2015) showed that the higher the level of education, the broader the individual's way of thinking, so that they are more open in communicating.

The results of this study also show no difference in assertiveness between working and non-working women. This unprovenness is assumed because the majority of women in this study have the status of working women, not career women. Working women are different from career women. Career women are those who work, but they also pursue or maintain a position or social status (self-actualization) and tend to put family second. While women work only to make ends meet or their energy is needed in one field. For example, teachers, medical personnel, tailors, cooks, caregivers, and so on (Rissdy, 2007). Such characteristics do not significantly impact self-image and self-confidence, which can affect assertiveness. Another assumption that leads to uncertainty is that assertive behavior is more strongly influenced by individual factors and cultural factors, so it is estimated that there is a mediator variable that intervenes between these two variables.

CONCLUSION

The result of this research shows that personality factor, especially self-concept, influences wife's assertiveness when facing problems. Apart from self-concept, educational factor also influences the wife's assertiveness in dealing with marital conflict.

DECLARATION OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST

“Wiwik Juwarini Prihastiwi does not work for consult, own shares in, or receive funding from any company or organization that would benefit from this manuscript, and has disclosed no affiliations other than those noted above.”

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