

# Communication Strategy of the Marriage Advisory, Guidance and Preservation Agency (BP4) in Preventing Divorce

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**Abstract**—Marital divorce, once a trending topic in the of Bandung, made some people concerned including the Marriage Advisory, Development and Preservation Agency (BP4). This research is entitled BP4 Communication Strategy in Preventing Divorce (a Case Study on BP4 Communication Strategy in Preventing Divorce (a Case Study on BP4 Communication strategy of The Bandung Municipality Ministry of Religion in Preventing Divorce in the New Normal Era). The study aims to analyze BP4 communication strategies in preventing divorce in the new normal era, the obstacles and solutions in preventing divorce in the new normal era, with a case study methodology accompanied by data collection techniques through documentation, observation, in-depth interviews with 13 BP4 counselors, religious leaders, informants who represent reality. The results of the BP4 communication strategy research in preventing divorce in the new normal era were carried out formal and informal consultations; the durations of the consultation was about 2 hours. The material is delivered according to the guidelines, by telephone, video call, meeting with health protocols. The internal barriers are related to the competence of human resources. Meanwhile, external barriers are in the form of education, age, positions, ethnicity culture. Other obstacles are less played by BP4. The solutions that carried out by the counselor education, repetition of marriage advice, and returning the couple's initial intention to marry.

**Keywords**—BP4 communication strategy, BP4 strategy, BP4 communications

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has entered its second year since the incident at the end of 2019, although it is difficult to predict when it will end. This has a tremendous impact on

human life, all segments of life era exposed to the impact of the CoVID-19 disaster, including the family realm.

The patterns that bind the family begin to shift into the transaction space based on relations of power and profit. Warmth, togetherness that should be a family bond, has now turned into a competitive tension because each other is fighting for influence to form a reality that is more beneficial to one another [1]. During the COVID 19 pandemic, there was a surge in divorce. Data on divorce during the COVID 19 pandemic has been recorded especially in West Java as many as 7, 800, for various reasons, and 80 percent of divorces occur due to economic factors [1].

“80 percent of divorce cases are dominated by economic problems in the couple's household. The data is 7.800 cases from the beginning of the pandemic until November 2020, “ said Uni Odded in the Merdeka village, Bandung city Thursday (11/26/2020) [2].

This phenomenon makes the officers of the Marriage Advisory, Development and Preservation Agency (BP-4), especially the city of Bandung, have to work extra in providing guidance, advice on peace so as not to divorce. There are various phenomena that are complained of and there are also various strategies that must be carried out in an effort to prevent divorce, this is done before the couples suing for divorce go to the Religious Courts (PA). The husband and wife are referred to the office of the Marriage Advisory, Development and Preservation Agency (BP-4) first. One member of BP-4 in his interview said:

”Our efforts from BP-4 in preventing divorce 40 percent were successfully reconciled, 30 percent divorced and 30

percent because of each other's egoism (living together in disharmony) in this case we often communicate with couples who care for each other's egos" [3].

As many as 40 percent of marital problems can be resolved, meaning preservation, marriages can be saved from the high rate of divorce. The remaining 30 percent of divorces have no tolerance or gap to reconcile, and the remaining 30 percent of their household lives are not harmonious, because they are based on their own selfishness.

Research on BP4 has been widely researched. Marriage Development and Preservation (BP4) is very varied, such as Maqbul. stated how the process of implementing the BP4 extension for the communication strategy of Functional Islamic religious instructors in providing guidance to pre-wedding participants [4], Dedi Nasrudin The ability of the extension workers to provide guidance greatly influences, formal education, training and intensity of meetings on the instructor's competence [5], Oos M. Anwas [6].

The role of Islamic religious instructors is very important because they are agents of change in society [6]. Ilham, extension workers still find many obstacles in conveying messages due to several factors such as mastery of persuasive communication and negotiation [7]. Yeni Sri Utami, evaluation of BP4 Counselor Communication Strategy in Preventing Divorce [8].

## II. METHODS

In accordance with the problems and research objectives, the method used is a case study, namely a qualitative approach. Researchers want to explore what information can finally be learned or drawn from a case, both singular and plural cases [9]. In this case, the meaning of the case at an institution under the Bandung municipal ministry of religion can be explored, researchers sort and choose so that it deserves to be appointed as a research theme.

Qualitative research used by researchers is expected to produce a picture of the object under study as a whole, produce descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior, in accordance with the opinion Nasution, that qualitative methods are essentially observing people. in their environment, interacting with them, trying to understand their language and interpretation [10].

Meanwhile, the data sources are BP4 members, religious figures and informants who are considered representative. In this case the researcher got 13 informants to be used as data sources so that the words and actions of the informants were observed and interviewed as the main data source. The main data sources are recorded through written notes and through audio recording, as well as taking photos. Recording through interviews and participatory observation is the combined result of seeing, listening and asking questions. The researcher also conducted participatory observations and in-depth interviews with informants to answer research questions that had been

prepared for BP4 members, then held a Focus Group Discussion (FGD), the inputs for research materials.

While the results of data analysis obtained from field data were analyzed through three activity lines, namely data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions or verification from Miles and Huberman [11].

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The description above is the result of field research through online and offline, due to the Covid 19 pandemic situation. The author managed to interview 13 informants in depth. In the discussion, the author uses a literature review to analyze the reality in the field clearly

### A. *Communication Strategy Carried out by BP4 Officers*

BP4's strategy in preventing divorced couples in the newnormal era is to implement its task strategy. BP4 (Marriage Development and Preservation Advisory Agency) is inseparable from the goals and functions of BP4 itself, namely in accordance with the Articles of Association (AD) and the Household Budget (ART), namely: advanced, independent, happy. Prosperous. Material and spiritual" [12].

likewise, in addition to referring to AD and ART (functions and objectives of BP4), the officers were provided with the book "Building the Sakinah Family". Meanwhile, the duties of BP4 are to provide information and guidance to those who are interested in the issue of Marriage, Divorce, Divorce, and Referral (NTPCR). Take measures to reduce the number of divorces. Provide moral assistance in resolving marital difficulties and domestic relations in general. Advisory coaching both formally and informally, with prior agreement according to the agreement. Deliberations were held by both parties, informative and suggestive strategies were carried out by BP4 officers when dealing with problematic couples.

There are two determining factors that must be owned by a communicator (BP4) as a marriage advisor in order to carry out communication, namely source credibility (trust in communicators), and source attractiveness (communicators' attractiveness). Communicators must have credibility. Source credibility is the level of trust that a recipient gives to a source. According to Effendy states that expertise is the impression formed by the communication about the ability of the communicator in relation to the topic being discussed [13].

Meanwhile, Effendy trust in communicators is determined by their expertise. Communicators who score highly on expertise are considered intelligent, capable, skilled, knowledgeable, experienced or well-trained. Trust is the communicator's impression of the communicator related to his character whether judged to be honest, sincere, moral, fair, polite and ethical. Trust will increase the power of changing attitudes and behavior [13].

To gain maximum trust, the communicator (BP4) must have expertise, know the truth and be objective, as well as what must be done by marriage extension workers (BP4) as

communicators who always communicate with communicants (people who are having problems in their household) to be effective.

*B. Obstacles Encountered in Helping Couples not to Divorce in the New Normal Era*

Tests in life always exist at all times, including difficulties when BP4 officers face a pandemic situation, which is a challenge when a problematic couple wants to submit/register the problem, which at normal times can meet face-to-face, and this is something that is not effective or not. limited by social distancing, (social restrictions), PSPB. PSBB is regulated in Minister of Health Regulation Number 9 of 2021 concerning Guidelines for Large-Scale Social Restrictions in the Context of Accelerating Covid-19 [14]. This is an obstacle because of the limited time for face-to-face consultations, etc.

The reduced time for face-to-face meetings between the BP4 Counselor and a husband and wife who are having problems due to the pandemic situation, are becoming increasingly limited in time, unable to express opinions freely and feelings that become problems in their lives. Under normal circumstances, consultations are usually carried out in a relaxed manner, but with the pandemic, it is limited by telephone, WhatsApp (WA), and even occasionally via video calls. This can be done by BP4 counselors in serving clients with problems in their families as an effort or as a strategy in serving the community.

In the book *Interpersonal Communication*, Ratna quotes from Joseph A. Devito's opinion about the characteristics of effective communication, namely [15]:

- **Openness** The willingness to respond with pleasure to information received in dealing with interpersonal relationships. The quality of openness refers to three aspects of interpersonal communication. *First*, effective interpersonal communicators must be open to their communicants. This does not mean that people should immediately disclose all their resumes. *The second* aspect refers to the willingness of the communicator to react honestly to the incoming stimulus. *The third* aspect concerns the ownership of feelings and thoughts in which the communicator recognizes that the feelings and thoughts expressed are his or her own and is responsible for them. b. **Empathy**. Empathy is a person's ability to know what another person is experiencing at a certain moment, from the other person's point of view, through the other person's eyes. In contrast to sympathy, which means feeling for others. Empathic people are able to understand the motivations and experiences of others, their feelings and attitudes, and their hopes and desires for the future so that they can communicate empathy, both verbally and non-verbally.
- **Support (supportiveness)** An open situation to support effective communication. Effective interpersonal relationships are relationships that have a supportive attitude. Individuals show a supportive attitude by being

descriptive rather than evaluative, spontaneous not strategic.

- **Positive Sense (positiveness)** A person must have positive feelings towards himself, encourage others to be more active in participating, and create a communication situation conducive to effective interaction.
- **Equality** Interpersonal communication will be more effective if the atmosphere is equal. That is, there is a tacit acknowledgment that both parties value, are useful, and have something important to contribute. Equality asks us to give unconditional positive regard to other individuals.

Equality is the attitude of treating others horizontally and democratically. The existence of an attitude that is not patronizing in communicating will provide an equal position between the two communicants. This similarity means that each party must be willing to be a speaker and a listener. Not only willing to express feelings, but also willing to listen carefully to the expressions of other people's feelings. A communicant is expected to have the same characteristics as the communicator/source. The similarity of attitude between the two will create effective communication. If the BP4 instructor and his client have the attitude that they both want to be a speaker or are both listeners, then the communication will go well.

As for the obstacles encountered by the Bandung City BP4 counselors in serving, fostering and helping so as not to get divorced, that is, almost all of them said "when the lawyer comes with one of the clients". The officers explained that it is undeniable that there are more divorces during the Covid 19 pandemic, apart from the accumulation of previous problems, it is estimated that couples who have problems when filing for divorce either from the male side or from the female side through the Religious Courts by bringing lawyers usually difficult to mediate. In this case, the existence of the BP4 institution is not functioning properly. Over time, there are still many people who do not know the identity of the BP4 institution well. This means that the identity of the BP4 institution that has been around for a long time is still not well known by the wider community. This was revealed in in-depth interviews with several informants, most of the community did not know about BP4. While BP4 has been around for a long time. The identity of BP4 is not yet known to the public. Identity is the identity of an institution.

Identity has an important role in building a better institution. Here we need a public relations who can bridge the institution with the community. As according to Edward L. Berney, in his book *Public Relations*, University of Oklahoma Press, Public relations has three main functions, namely:

- Providing information to the public
- Provide persuasion to change people's attitudes and actions directly; and

- Strive to integrate the attitudes and actions of an agency/institution in accordance with the attitudes and actions of the community or vice versa [16].

Regarding the image of the Ministry of Religion, if it is not published, some people view the Ministry of Religion with one eye or cynicism. The public needs to know and must understand the duties and functions of the Ministry of Religion. "The Duties and Functions of the Ministry of Religion are like an apostolic task because they carry a mission of religion, understanding, practice of religious teachings, religious and religious education, worship and governance procedures." Correct information will provide guidance, direction and services and not confuse the community/people. In this case the role of Public Relations is the most important thing in the Ministry of Religion, it is necessary to build opinions, because opinions will develop into images, so that the image of the Ministry of Religion will be good. Likewise, all forms of activities concerning the interests of institutions and the people can be aligned, including BP4 will be known and understood by the wider community.

Another obstacle is regarding morality in the family. Morals in the household are not carried out properly. A husband and wife filed for divorce because one of the morals of the couple could not be fulfilled properly. One of the cases, lack of family togetherness, communication between husband and wife is not communicative, so affection is reduced, between each party looking for an outlet with people who are not their rights. Like, having an affair to do things that are forbidden. If we understand and study the morals in the family and husband and wife, it has been explained at length in the Qur'an as a guide to the life of a Muslim.

Morals are the most basic thing in a household life. Morals towards family according to (Zainudin:11) in the LSIPK book stated that morality towards family is defined as behavior related to family as known and understood, family relations ties in Islamic teachings are regulated by Allah swt. In the form of the kinship and marriage system in Islam [17].

To realize happiness in the family. In Islam there is a set of legal norms that regulate the rights and obligations of each family member.

Morals towards relatives and close friends include:

- Build a sense of love and affection in the family;
- mutual fulfillment of obligations;
- devotion to parents;
- educating children with love;
- maintain the friendship and continue the friendship built by the parents who have died [17].

Morals towards family are the most basic things in human life, including family life, the author here will only explain what has to do with husband and wife morals. After marriage, husband and wife start a new chapter of life, with religious

knowledge, fostering a household will always be an unlimited string of worship. How a husband and wife behave towards their husbands and morality towards the family is the most basic thing in human life, including in family life, the author here will only explain what has to do with husband and wife morals. After marriage, husband and wife start a new chapter of life, with religious knowledge, fostering a household will always be an unlimited string of worship. How a husband and wife behave towards their husband and how the husband behaves towards his wife, all will be acts of worship.

To realize a good attitude is morality to the couple needs to know the rights and obligations of husband and wife, so that each individual will be aware and sincerely perform all his obligations as a couple before asking for his rights. Rights cannot be fulfilled if no one fulfills the obligations in the Qur'an Allah says which means:

"... And women have rights in proportion to their obligations in a just manner, but husbands have a degree of superiority over their wives. And Allah is Mighty, Wise." (QS. Al-Baqoroh [2]: 228)

In the household, several guidelines are needed: first, joint rights of husband and wife; holding mutual trust, building love and affection, mutual respect; second, the wife's rights over her husband: being a leader for his wife, providing for his wife well, educating his wife to be religious, educating his wife with manners, the husband is prohibited from revealing his wife's secrets; third, the husband's rights over his wife: obeying the husband, maintaining the good name of the husband, leaving the house with the permission of the husband [17].

As the hadith of the Prophet, said: "Indeed I was sent only to perfect morals". The Messenger of Allah was sent to the world nothing but to raise human dignity. Noble morals, because in the pre-Islamic era, humans were present in ignorance, in darkness. Until Islam came as a bearer of light in the darkness. In a family, of course, as husband and wife, we must keep reminding each other so that the household continues to run on the right track. Open, honest will foster mutual trust and get to know each other more about their partner. If not, the disease of the heart that comes without knowing alights anyone who is negligent. Including married couples. Lately, it is widespread that one husband and wife likes a partner who is not his own husband or wife.

Incidents of infidelity and divorce are very unexpected in the lives of husbands and wives, infidelity is a sin, while divorce is a lawful act but is hated by Allah SWT. We certainly don't want to be hated by Him. However, the reality that comes to consult with BP4 is mostly infidelity. This cannot be tolerated if the affair has gone further than "having a husband and wife relationship". Usually the husband or wife cannot accept the fact.

The word of Allah in the Quran which means:

"Talāk (which can be referred) twice, after that it can be reconciled again in a ma'ruf way or divorce in a good way. It is not lawful for you to take back something from what you have

given them, unless they are afraid that they will not be able to carry out Allah's laws, they are the wrongdoers" (al Baqoroh: 229).

Another obstacle regarding the economy in the household is a trend during the pandemic, which results in many divorces. The weak economic condition of the community demands a way out. Due to the unfavorable economic conditions of the community, it can have a negative impact on the survival of the community, one of which is the increasing divorce rate for married couples in line with research conducted by Sanjaya, Edward, that divorce among families in society The divorced Metro city is dominated by economic factors [18].

Barriers encountered in communicating husband and wife in order to create family harmonization are: Emotions, Fear, Anxiety. These three elements affect attitudes when communicating with partners who are motivated by different situations and conditions (different customs) [19], including temperamental. Domestic violence can also be in the form of physical violence and psychological violence, sexual violence and neglect of the household. These forms of violence are prohibited by law and can also be used as grounds for divorce [20]. Another thing that triggers a divorce is the lack of mutual respect, selfishness, the lack of a strong intention to maintain the marriage from both parties.

Another thing is the existence of underage marriage, in this case the preparation of a child or teenager has not been fully maximized, both in mental, psychological, and even material preparation. When marriage is carried out at an early age, adolescents do not have enough knowledge about marriage, family and do not know how to manage conflict well. So that it will cause quarrels in the family and make the marriage less harmonious, even divorce occurs, in line with Surmiati Ali's research, the phenomenon of marriage at a young age will have an impact on family life and the quality of Indonesian human resources [21]. The age of young marriage is directly proportional to the high divorce rate because married couples who are teenagers are not ready to build a home life. Psychologically, they are not mature enough to think, they even tend to be unstable and emotional when problems and fights occur in the household which eventually lead to divorce [21].

### *C. The Solution is to Help Couples not Get Divorced in the New Normal Era*

The solution that has been carried out by premarital counseling/counselors or better known as premarital guidance is a pattern of guidance that is shown to help, understand and respond to the concept of marriage and religious family life as a reference in preparing for the marriage they expect.

In premarital counseling to create a *sakinah mawaddah warahmah* family, the KUA instructor or KUA officer is given the mandate to provide premarital guidance to the bride and groom [22].

Since 2018, premarital counseling or guidance has changed its name to marriage guidance (*bimwin*). But the meaning and

purpose remains the same. This *Bimwin* is absolute and must be followed by the head of the Director General of Guidance No. 881 and 373 of 2017, to be precise, operational guidelines No. 881 and *juknis* 373 as a legal umbrella that recommends every bride and groom to do *bimwin* [23]. What distinguishes *bimwin* from premarital counseling is the method used. If premarital counseling only uses the lecture method, then marriage guidance adds to it by learning, question and answer and games that require the bride and groom to play an active role in the forum.

In the implementation of *bimwin* divided into two categories, namely independent and face-to-face. For independent *bimwin*, the bride and groom receive an invitation to conduct *bimwin* organized by the KUA with a maximum number of fifteen couples. If there are less than fifteen pairs, the *bimwin* will be combined with other KUAs but remain in one district. Then the second alternative is face-to-face guidance and the KUA officer gives an invitation to the bride and groom. The only thing that distinguishes it is that there is no benchmark for how many couples and it is carried out at the KUA when the prospective bride and groom register for marriage.

The Marriage Guidance Program is carried out for two days with sixteen hours of lessons and with six materials that must be followed, namely: a strong marriage, managing marital dynamics, meeting family needs, quality generation, and managing conflict. As for prospective couples at an early age, the material is added with the procedural dispensation of marriage and other knowledge about early marriage.

In a research that the author once said, one of the most important things for them in marriage is how to communicate and how to communicate parenting. So in the opinion of the author that parenting communication skills are urgent to be given [24]. The cost of marriage guidance is not burdened with the bride and groom. The task of the participants is only to prepare to be able to come when the pre-wedding guidance is scheduled

Marriage guidance is one of the mandates of the President of the Republic of Indonesia. This program is held to minimize the divorce rate, understand the rights and obligations of husband and wife, and realize the development of quality human life. In its implementation, the participants will be given the *Sakinah Family Foundation* book as an independent reading for the bride and groom at no charge.

These are the efforts that have been made by counselors in an effort to provide solutions so that marriages are lasting, well-maintained all the time.

## IV. CONCLUSION

After conducting research in the field, it can be concluded as follows:

The communication strategy carried out by BP4 officers in helping couples not to divorce in the new normal era has been carried out by interviewing counseling, formal and informal

advocacy through face-to-face with the covid 19 health protocol, through mass media such as WA, video calls with advice duration of approx. one hour to two and a half hours, some even up to three hours. Of the cases that go to the BP4 institution, it is estimated that around 60 percent can be resolved peacefully.

There are several obstacles both internally and externally. Internal barriers concern the individual competence of BP4 HR counselors, and external barriers are in the form of barriers in education, age, position, ethnicity and culture, lack of time for consultation, morals in the family, in helping troubled couples, these are obstacles for both the officer and the client. alone. In addition to these obstacles, there is a policy that BP4 as a partner is not optimized, so there are many divorces during the pandemic, in addition to their accumulated problems before the pandemic.

The solution is to help couples not get divorced in the new normal era. The officers provide education, provide repetition of marriage advice as contained in the Bandung City BP4 reference book on "The Foundation of the Sakinah Family", and return to the initial intention of marrying, according to their advice to troubled married couples. To improve the quality of marriage according to Islamic teachings, continuous and consistent marriage guidance and advice is needed in order to realize a sakinah mawaddah warahmah family.

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