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Communication between Husbands and Wives as Agriculture workers for Decision Making in Families

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Damayanti Wardyaningrum

Program Studi Ilmu Komunikasi FISIP Universitas Al Azhar Indonesia
Kompleks Masjid Agung Al Azhar Jl. Sisingamangaraja Kebayoran Baru Jakarta Selatan
Telp (021) 724 4456 email : damayanti@uai.ac.id

Abstract :

This research intends for picturing of the communication between husband and wife especially for those who work in agricultural sector. The object of the research is aiming the couple located in Kabupaten Kampar , Riau, North Sumatera. The husbands work as rubber farmers and the wives work as rice farmers.

The theory use in this research is Settles's Model of Family Decision Making in macro perspective. Settle's concept consist of some elements like social conditions, family relationship and individual stress. Furthermore the decision making in the family determines by some factors like awareness, roles, social structure, resources, skills, personality and norms.

The methode use is kualitatif descriptive with depth interview to fourteen couples as unit of analysis for gathering data. In additions the author did some interview to the informal leader for confirmation.

The result of the study show that some factor are dominant to determine the husband and wife communication in family decision making. From the first factor is awariness, which the author found that both husband and wives has good awariness for all of the activity in decision making . For the second factor since the husband and wives each has some roles in their activity, this role gives them some alternatives in making decision. In the social structure as the third factor, most husband and wives make some decisons in consensus way. The last factor that determine the family decision making is resources. The resources are quality and quantity time in communication besides the ability in ghatering income, and spouse support.

Keywords : family communication, decions making

Background

In running the family both husband and wife are partner that should work together. There are some decisions that they have to decide whether in routine activity or in certain conditions. In decision making process there are some ways of forms could be chosen by them. Some decisions were dominated by the husband or the wife. Other couples chose the autonomous area, while others prefer not to divide the responsibility or sometime exchange their role in their decision making process.

According to the survey, communication is the highest problem (ninety percent) in family problem especially for couples, while the other significant problem is sex (Davidson & Moore, 1992:222). Most of the topics of couple communications are financial, children, work activity or career, daily activity, extended family, housing maintenance, and others. The kind of job of the couple will also determine the communication quality, time for communication and the kind of decision making that they do.

According to the theory of the family regarding the couple communications, Devitto (2001: 359) determine four kinds of communication patterns in the family. Those are The Equality Pattern, The Balanced Split Pattern, The Unbalanced Split Pattern dan Monopoly Pattern. Those pattern would influence the communication in couples decision making.

Another concept related to the Settles's Model of Family Decision Making (Segrin & Flora: 2005, from BH Settles: 1999) is the theory for the family communications in macro perspective. Settle's concept consist of some elements like social conditions, family relationship and individual stress. Furthermore the decision making in the family determine by some factors like awareness, roles, social structure, resources, skill, personality and norms.

In Indonesia there are some kind of job for supporting the family financial matter. For example in Pasar Beringharjo Yogyakarta, some of the batik seller are housewife while the husband has less financial support to the family finance. In Lembang West Java, most of the dairy farmer are cooperated by the couple in every family. (Wardyaningrum : 2010). While in another area the couple works in the same fields of agriculture area. Those kind of work implicated to the couple relationship regarding time for communication, what kind of

topic that they usually talk, how the relationships of couple were going on, and how the couple make decision for the family support.

In this research, the object of the study is couple that works in agricultural area. The location is in Kabupaten Kampar, Riau North Sumatera. In this area most of wives works in padi tree field while the husbands work in latecs field. They work almost in a year and depend on the environment situation.

For those, the author defines the purpose of the research as follow :

1. To understand how is the couple communication regarding to their works activity in the agriculture area.
2. To define some kind of factors that determine couples works in agriculture area in decion making for the family support.

Theoritical Framework

Family Communication

² Each family has the capacity to design and develop its own communication code. This based on the experience of individual members and the family experience. Most of the family members develop their communication skill within the family context, learning both the general cultural language and the specific familial communication code.

When someone come ⁵ into contact with other families, they may not notice how their communication differ from that families in which they lived. ⁵ Ways of relating, making decision, sharing feelings, and handling conflict may vary slightly or greatly from other experience. Those the study of family communications is not exclusively as communication study but related to another study such sociology, psychology, culture and other discipline.

In addition, there are some theories for explaining the fact of family interaction and communication . But ¹ it is important to relize that no theory offers the one and only

explanation for a fact pattern. There are often multiple explanation for why family interaction function as they do.

Below are some of the definition or concept regarding the family communication.

Galvin and Brommel (1986:8)

*“... . exploring family as an interaction system, concentrating on the mutual influence between communication and family development :
1) how communication pattern affect family relationship 2) how those relationship affect communication.*

Another definition from Noller and Fitzpatrick (DeVito, 2001:353) regarding family communication :

“an organized, relational transaction group, usually occupying a common living space over an extended time period, and possessing a confluence of interpersonal images that evolve through the exchange of meaning over time”

The theory from Palo Alto groups describes that every member of the family would interpret his role and his relationship and understand that the family is as a system. (Miller, 2005:204-205. The research of this group achievement is to indicate some kind of paradox and interaction that determine some relationship in one family system. The concept from Palo Alto group could be related to the concept from Yerby which gives some argumentation to the dialectical approach for the study of the family system. This approach focuses to the stability and change, individual and system, family and culture in one concept.

Another concept of family communication is Circumplex model of family function (Littlejohn, 2009 : 383), written by David Olson and friends. This models are showing the relationship between family communications and the function of the family. The discussion focuses on the family function in cohesion and adaptation, from the strength relationship to the chaotic situation. The moderate situation between those area is optimum while the extreme position is bad. For these reasons the ability in communication is strongly needed. Some of them are the ability to talk, the ability to active listening and empathy, the ability to talk to her self and build relationship with other.

Family communication is also depended on the kind of the family type according to Anne Fitzpatrick (Morison dan Wardhany 2009:184). She developed some research and theory of family relationship which describe the family type and each of the forms of their communication. There are four family type : consensual family, protective family, pluralistic family, and laissez-faire family.

In consensual family the member tends to build some consensus to aim their goal. In protective family most of the member has less opportunity to share their opinion. They were controlled by the one of the senior member (usually by the parents or elder child). While in pluralistic family each the member of the family has the equal opportunity to give their opinion. They have high quality time in communication. For laissez-faire family they have minimum control for each member, they tend not to share their opinion each other or for the family goal.

Related to the communication in family Davidson & Moore (1992 : 222) stated that ineffective communication is the most problem. The communications would become effective if spouse were in the equal position.

Communication in Family Decision Making

One of the family interaction in an ongoing family process is family's decision making. This is influenced by the past and sure to influence future decision. One way to measure a family's cohesion involves observing its decision making process. Decision making involves vital communication skills and relates directly to power. Decision making relates to power to the degree that one of family member can predict and/or influence the outcome he or she desires.

In covering factor for family communication in decision making this research use Settle's (1999) Model of Family Decision Making. (Flora & Segrin, 2005: 86). These models considers processes that operate to expand or limit a family's degree of choice or, using the model's term, their area of choices. Settle's model take macrolevel perspective, describing the social, familial, environmental, and individual forces that effect family decisions. The type of choice and degree of choice a family has regarding any given decision are affected by the

following factors : awareness, roles, social structure, resources, skills, personality, norms and other constraint. In the model these factors form a boundary around the area of choice.

¹ The first factor, *awareness*, refers to the degree to which the family is aware of the decision and options related to the decisions. It also compasses the family's perception of the decision. At one extreme, families may not be aware of decision, or if they may not perceive many options.

¹ The second factor in the models involve *roles*. Individual who participate in a variety of roles are likely to have had diverse life experience, introducing them to different types of people, skills, groups and interests. Experience with multiple roles expnds the area of choices. Related to this, Galvin and Brommel (1986 : 159) stated that the role function carried out in a family affect the decision-making pcess. These rples vary greatly from family to family, so each family's decion making

¹ With regard to *social structure*, most families hope for mobility in order to expand their area of choice. Settle (1999) explains that social structure of contemporary society offers many individuals and families flexible opportunity for geographic mobility, educational and vocational mobility, and even class mobility.

¹ *Resources* and *skills* are two other factors that affect the area of choice. Important resources include time, energy, money, material goods, expert advice, and social or physical support. Skills including communication skills, trade skills, or academic skills are important in part because they open many resources to families. Relevance to this factor another concept from Littlejohn (2002:40) explain that the family as an open system interact with their environment. They take in and let out matter and energy, having inputs and outputs. For examples, parents must adjust constantly to their children's relationship outside the family and deal with influence from friends, teachers, and television.

Furthermore, according to the resources Galvin and Brommel (1986 : 159) show that if money or other shared resources is scare, decision making can become a competitor process for the limited resources. Another elemen is time. Time is one important aspect of

composition in the model of negotiation. Each family has only so much time to spend and decision, and member compete for the available time.

¹ *Personality*, including “a person’s predispositions, inclinations, and sense of the self is useful for identifying choices that a person will be comfortable in examining. As Settles further describes, a personal phobia limits options regarding specific decisions, such as participation in the community.

Norms, or expectations of appropriate behavior, impact the area of choice as well. Legal and social norms influences the choices parents have for nurturing and disciplining children or the choices couples have for dissolving a marriage. ¹ Finally, Settles explains that “at any one time there may be events that participate decision- making or that limit individuals and their families from assuming control over their life course”. ¹ In the model, Settles terms of these events “other constraints”.

Method

This study used a qualitative exploratory approach, using in depth interviews. Prospectives informant were gathered from thirteen couples of farmers. ⁴ All in-depth interviews were conducted face to face by the researcher and were audio taped for later transcription. The interview lasted an average of 1-2 hours in their home or in the field. Some of the farmers give their time in the rest time during their work or at night after they finished their works.

The interview questions covered factors related to the couple communication in decision making in the like ¹ awareness, roles, social structure, resources, skills, personality and norms from Settles’s Model of Family Decision Making. The reseacher also wanted to know how is the couple communication regarding to their works activity in the agriculture area. Furthermore the reseacher define some kind of factors that determine couples in decision making for the family support.

⁴ The audio data were compared with field notes to highlight aspectss that had specials relevance aspect of the informant, which researcher perceived, based on emphases made

during interviews. In addition, the data from informant were compared with interview from formal and informal leader like Camat and Ulama (head of Moslem community). Transcriptions based from in-depth interviews were examined, grouped by the identifying key themes. Then researcher interpretate the data with relevance theory to have macro analysis.

Results and discussion

The location of the research is in Kecamatan Bangkinang, Kabupaten Kampar Riau province in Sumatera. It has potential natural resources dominant from plantation such as rubber plantation (425 ha) and oil palm (305 ha). The area consist of 1.907 ha for plantation while 515 ha for residence. In human resources it has 18.972 man and 18.595 woman, with 7.889 family. 97% are Moslem religion. The age of citizen 38% (7.309) are in productive age (16-40) with dominant education background is elementary school.

All the informan are more than 10 years married couples. They has 2-3 children in elementary and yunior high school. Most of the couples lived with their extended family. The husbands work as rubber farmer while the wives works in rice field. Beside as farmer some of them have the partime job as teacher or trader. To follow is the result of the interview with the researcher analysis/

First, Settle's (1999) Model of Family Decision Making assume that from *awareness* factor, this refers to the degree to which husband and wife are aware of most decision and options that they did. The result shows that most husband and wife has good awareness regarding their decision. Related with the family's decision making each husband and wife have to decide so many kind of daily activity. Here each of them has autonomous area to make some decion but there are some decision that they have to discuss eith their spouse.

In addition, formal and informal leader stated that the husband and wife in this area did their job as a farmer from along time ago. This afford from their parents and still continue in traditional way. Each of them realize what they should do with their work, household, nuclear family, extended family and with their social enviroentment. For the time being, there is no case

in divorcing, extreme family conflict and others in accordance with the husband and wife relationship.

Second, factor in the models involve *roles*. The researcher discovered that few area were husband-dominant, wife-dominant, but they make joint decision were in almost household fulfillment. Both husbands and wives show their roles like as family member with some obligations, farmer, some of them with their partime job, and member of group society. Each roles would affected to form of their decision making.

Since each husband and wife has their own roles in their work area this roles gives difference experience and introducing them to different types of people. Though each works in agriculture area, but husband as rubber farmer and wife as paddy farmer has different experience and skill, also their group and interest.

To follow are answer of the husband regarding their role :

“ As rubber farmer we have some obligation to the land owner, besides we have to support our wifes work in the field. We manage our time for work and for the family, included our extended family (they lived with their parenst). In our farmer group we arrange some meeting for coordination and find the best solution whenever our friend has problem in their works ”

Another answer from the wife described below :

“ I have to manage my time, for working in the field in the morning and in the afternoon, caring my family and do some social activity with mother group. We organized woman activity accordance to social welfare and health ”

These kind of relationship would gives greater chance for husband and wife to have multiple experiences. This would affect to decision making process. They would have some alternatives. For example when they are as a member of farmer group they could learn how to solve the problem with the group that has difference process with the form of family decion making. They learn to make decision with some alternative, selecting the best alternatives, then implementing the solution.

Third, regarding with *social structure*, most wife and husband had some activity that expand their area of choices. Besides they have the primary job, their partime job and position in the social environment expand their area of choice. Some of the wife has the position as partime teacher in elementary and yunior school or as farmer group leader that consist of fifteen to fifty member in each group. During interview researcher gained more complete explanation from wives regarding their multiple activity. This point related to the following finding that there are two wives that has an opportunity to continue their education in college degree. While researcher found that several husband has the position as formal leader in their residence.

One of the wife informan said regarding her activity as leader in farmer group:

“ as leader in farmer group for two years I had fifteen to thirty groups members. We discuss our problem in farming, sharing information in farming technique, and collecting money for providing urea. The meeting was held once in week, after sholat isya in one of farmer house ”

Another wife informan explain her activity as partime teacher :

“ I go to school just two days in a week. Since we don't have to work in field everyday, I still have enough time to gain additional income. Besides working as teacher is honoured job in our society, I have an opportunity to learn more ”

Two of wives informant explain their activity in continuing their study in

college :

“we go to college in Pakanbaru on Friday, and back to home on Sunday evening. It take almost one and a half hour to Pakanbaru. Our study will take four years and now we are in the first year. It's hard for us and we has big effort, but we believe that our future will better by this effort ”

This fact could ¹ explains that social structure of contemporary society offers many individuals and families flexible opportunity for geographic mobility, educational and vocational mobility, and even class mobility. In this research we found that wives are more enthusiastic in gaining some opportunity in their social life. But it seems that husbands give their support to their wives' actualization, though it would create some implication to their social structure.

¹ Four, resources and skills are two other factors that affect the area of choice. Important resources in this research included time, income, education, job, and asset ownership.

The results indicate that each husband and wife have contribution and power to the family income since they work in different areas. Another implication of their job is that they have few times to talk with the family; they almost have an effective time only at night.

One of the husbands said about their time for communication with the family:

"... .. practically we only have an effective time to talk at night. We talk about our daily activity, about our child and another family needs... .. We go to field in the morning. While I go to the rubber farm almost three kilometers from here, my wife goes to the paddy field near at home. In their job I help my wife at the beginning and at the end of the working process, cause it needs man help to support them".

Some of wives have an opportunity to afford another job as a part-time teacher in elementary school or selling agriculture product. They could understand enough that their income from agriculture sometimes couldn't meet the family need, and the decision making can become a competitor process for the limited resources. In addition, researcher found that several wives are continuing their education to the bachelor degree. They spent their weekend in Pekanbaru to go to college. It is also explained that the family as an open system interacts with their environment, while in these contexts are working environment, trading and education environment.

Furthermore, formal and informal leaders remind the researcher that in their culture most women have the land right ownership from their parents. For those who is the owner of the

land do this tradition until this time. They adopt the matrilineal concept, which gives more priority of the asset ownership to the daughter. While husband or man doesn't have either. The data showed that there are 2.755 family as an owner of the land, while the other 3.250 family are not have.

One of the formal leader explain regarding the women ownership of land from their family tradition :

" our family tradition in land ownership is that land as the parents asset will give to the daughter not to the son. This mean that women will take some obligation regarding the family decision making. While the son has to find

their own property as an asset by working (most of them are entrepreneur). It's common that the son leave the village to go to another town or to Java to earn money. And they will back to Kampar after they have enough saving or welfare, though it is take several years"

From this we could summarize that wife has almost equal position since they have greatest resources and it would gives greater opportunity for wives in family's decision making. This condition were in line with the concept that the spouse who contributes the greatest resources to the marriage will have the greater influence and power over decision making.

Five, ¹ norms or expectations of appropriate behavior, impact the area of choice as well. For example legal, social norms and religion, influences the choices parents have for nurturing and disciplining children or the choices couples have for dissolving a marriage.

The researcher found that norms in that husband and wives influence their relationship are religion and culture norms. Their culture were influence by Melayu tradition with dominated by moslem religion, this support by education system that moslem education still their favorite choice.

In addition this could be seen from some of the moslem school from elementary to senior high school (madrasah, ibtidaiyah, and tsanawiyah). Most couples were prefer the moslem school than government school for their children. They believe that moslem school would

give impact to their children behavior, not only in religion area but also in attitude, knowledge, and other skills.

Some of the husband stated about their son education :

“ We prefer to sent our son to the madrasah than to government school. We want our son have strong basic in religion and he wouldn't have negative influence from his friends. We can't avoid to the enviroentment that offer some negatif tradition like new life style, smoking, cunsumtif and others.... ”

“ Some of the reason to sent our doughter to madrasah is that we want her to understand the Melayu culture we affraid of the affect of other culture from outside the young people would esier influenced by others.... ”

From observation researcher found boarding moslem school in some of the location. This would become husband and wife decision making for the education of their children. Since this has been their tradition as moslem, it would not long enough for discussing

Conclusion

Finding from this research show that the factor determine family's decision making are awareness, roles, social structure, resources and norms. The researcher believe that this factor could determine the husband and wive in family's decision making process. Most of the couple looks have good relationship with spouse. This indicate that they could overcome the family problem eventough the are in the low income. Most of decision making in their family could manage enough. But the researcher see that the resources that they have should be use in optimum capacity if they have enough knowledge in skill. The resources are the time to communicate with family member, the asset that they have, and their enthusiasm for learning and working hard.

The role and social structure gives vary experiences and alternatives to learn how to solve the problem. This would richenest the couples way of thinking in decion making. Another

important element is the norms. These could be the guidance for the family in making decision. The muslim norms will affect to the whole life aspect, furthermore it is not only they get as tradition form but support by the education system. This also would be guarantee for everlasting value for the family member especially for the young generation.

The researcher recommend that the wife potential could be support not only by the husband and the other family member but also by the government institution. The wife could gain their highest potential to support their family. Not only the wife give contribution in family economic but in upgrading all the family member potential. This situation would give some affect to the husband works that they could be partner and sharing each other. Then the decision making process would have greater form.

The government should give some support to couple by giving the opportunity with innovation knowledge, and other skill. For example knowledge and skill in making value added to the rubber plantation and rice production.

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