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## The Influence of Constructive Conflict Resolution Styles and Perceived Stress On Marriage Satisfaction Among Dual Earner Couples

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**Abstract:** This study aims to investigate the influence of constructive conflict resolution styles and perceived stress in marital satisfaction among dual-earner couples in DKI Jakarta. A quantitative method using incidental sampling is used to select respondents who meet specific criteria. Questionnaires were distributed to 117 married respondents who have been married for 1 to 5 years and are dual-earners; both of whom are employed in DKI Jakarta. The instruments used in this study include the Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory (CRSI), Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), and ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale (EMS). Results showed constructive conflict resolution style indicated a  $p$ -value  $< 0,05$  with  $R^2$  value of 8,3%. This means that  $H_{a1}$  is accepted, indicating a significant influence of constructive conflict resolution style on marital satisfaction. The  $p$ -value for perceived stress  $< 0,05$  with  $R^2$  value of 10,4%, meaning  $H_{a2}$  is accepted. The results from the multiple linear regression analysis show that both constructive conflict resolution styles and perceived stress significantly influence marital satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Constructive Conflict Resolution Styles, Perceived Stress, Marital Satisfaction

### INTRODUCTION

Marital satisfaction is a subjective assessment of an individual's overall perception of the quality and strengths of their marriage (Veronika & Afdal, 2021). It also serves as a key determinant of the happiness experienced by married couples. This evaluation is closely linked to goals and expectations established within the marriage, as well as fulfilling the desires and aspirations of both spouses. According to Blood (as cited in Sari & Sunarti, 2023), readiness for marriage includes emotional, social, role-related, age-related, financial, and psychological preparedness.

Financial or economic readiness significantly impacts marital satisfaction (Shabrina & Mashoedi, 2023). This is supported by research conducted by Tyas et al. (2017), which demonstrated a positive correlation between financial readiness for marriage and marital satisfaction. Traditionally, the husband is considered the head of the family, responsible for leadership and financial provision, while the wife focuses on childcare and household

management. However, with societal advancements and increasing economic demands, family roles have evolved (Herawati et al., as cited in Andayani, 2020). Today, husbands and wives can share responsibilities both in professional work and household duties. Moreover, wives also have opportunities to contribute financially by working. Couples where both partners are employed to support the family are referred to as dual-earner couples (Christine, Oktorina, & Mula, 2010, as cited in Andayani, 2020).

Furthermore, marital happiness and satisfaction serve as indicators of a couple's success in navigating their relationship and resolving conflicts, as explained by Hurlock (2011). According to Dewi (2019), individuals evaluate their marital satisfaction based on their personal perceptions of their marriage. Research suggests that a fulfilling marital relationship enhances overall life quality and provides numerous benefits for individuals (Robles et al., 2014, as cited in Aurellia & Arjadi, 2023). However, not all married individuals experience such satisfaction. Feeling unsatisfied in marriage often derived from unmet expectations, sexual dissatisfaction, prolong conflicts, failure to resolve emotional disputes, and poor communication and conflict resolution skills (Saputri, 2020). Previous research has also demonstrated that marriage dissatisfaction correlates with the inability to resolved prolonged and ongoing conflicts, which can lead to divorce among married couples.

According to David H. Olson, ten factors determine marital satisfaction and happiness: communication, personality compatibility, intimacy, flexibility, shared activities, problem-solving, religious beliefs, sexual relations, interactions with family and friends, and financial management (as cited in Veronika & Afdal, 2021). Additionally, a study by Mongdong and Kusumiati (2023) found that the presence of children also influences marital satisfaction among couples.

Marital satisfaction can reflect the strength of an individual's commitment to their marriage despite the presence of conflict, stress, and disappointment. Landolt et al. (2023) define stress as an event or situation that affects both partners, either directly when both face the same stressor; or indirectly when stress experienced by one partner impacts the relationship as a whole. Yulianti and Karneli (2020) identify six primary sources of stress in marriage; financial issues, parenting, health, sexual life, communication, and trust. Stressors in marriage, which refer to factors that trigger stress, conflict with parents, socioeconomic challenges, and parenting responsibilities (Destia, 2016). Furthermore, minor yet repetitive stressors can also contribute to the deterioration of marriage.

When conflict and stress persist in married couples, they can contribute to marital dissatisfaction and increase the likelihood of divorce. Hence, adopting effective conflict resolution styles is an essential to overcome problems that may occur in a marital relationship, as suitable conflict resolution styles significantly influences marital satisfaction. Effective conflict resolution enhances problem-solving skills, improves communication, deepens mutual understanding, strengthens trust, increases adaptability, and ultimately contributes to greater marital satisfaction and happiness (Saputri, 2020).

According to Kurder (as cited in Adriani & Ratnasari, 2021), there are two conflict resolution styles associated with marital satisfaction: constructive and destructive styles. Kilmann and Thomas (as cited in Sidharta et al., 2022) classify conflict resolution styles into avoidance, competition, compromise, accommodation, and collaboration. Each individual tends to adopt at least one conflict resolution style based on their experiences in managing disputes.

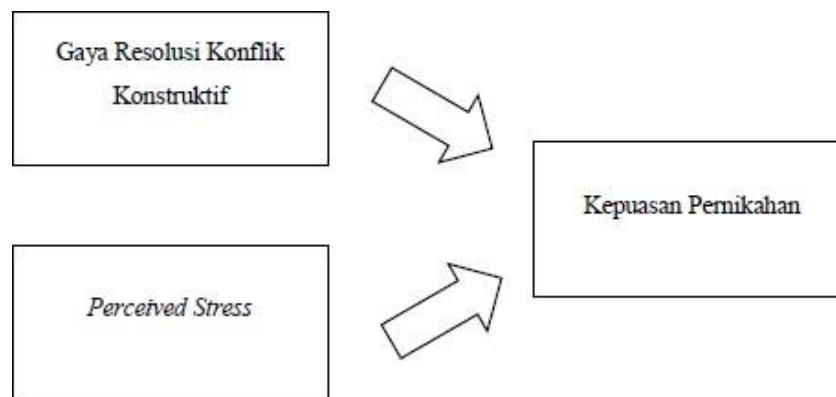
A study by Dildaar (as cited in Sidharta et al., 2022) on marital conflict and conflict resolution styles among dissatisfied couples found that destructive styles, such as avoidance and competition, were commonly used. Among the various styles, constructive resolution—comprising compromise and collaboration—is considered more effective as it facilitates shared goals and enhances relationship quality. However, excessive use of collaboration may lead to

frustration if one partner employs a different conflict resolution approach (Sidharta et al., 2022).

Additionally, Fincham et al. (as cited in Rifayanti & Diana, 2020) argue that marital commitment is a crucial factor in conflict resolution. Marital commitment is believed to support adjustment within marriage (Hope, as cited in Rifayanti & Diana, 2020). It helps spouses understand each other's strengths and weaknesses and plays a vital role in maintaining marital stability (Rifayanti & Diana, 2020).

As discussed, dual-earner couples face unique conflicts compared to single-income families. Common challenges include role ambiguity due to societal expectations and an imbalance between work and family responsibilities. These factors contribute to marital instability, making stress management skills essential for maintaining marital satisfaction.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that there is an influence between constructive resolution styles, perceived stress, and marital satisfaction among dual-earner couples. Both conflict resolution styles and perceived stress have an effect on the level of marital satisfaction experienced within married couples. The conceptual framework of this research is presented in figure 1 below.



**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework**

## **METHOD**

This study utilizes a quantitative, non-experimental research method using an online questionnaire to collect data and focuses on dual-earner married couples. This is due to economic demands and the increased pressure or stress experienced by individual living in urban areas. Participants were selected using incidental sampling, with the inclusion criteria being married between 1 to 5 years and both partners being employed. A total of 117 married respondents, whose spouses are also employed, participated in this study. Instruments used in this research are Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory (CRSI) (Kurdek, 1994), Perceived Stress Scale (PSS (Cohen, et. al., 1994), and ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale (EMS) (Olson & Fower, 1993). Statistical analysis was conducted using JASP version 19.0.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to assess the effect of constructive conflict resolution styles and perceived stress on marital satisfaction. The results indicate that constructive conflict resolution styles significantly predict marital satisfaction ( $p = 0.002$ ,  $R^2 = 8.3\%$ ). Similarly, perceived stress has a significant negative effect on marital satisfaction ( $p < 0.001$ ,  $R^2 = 10.4\%$ ). A combined analysis of both predictors showed a significant overall model ( $p < 0.001$ ), with an adjusted  $R^2$  value of 18.6, indicating that these variables explain a moderate proportion of variance in marital satisfaction.

**Table 1. Model Fit Statistics of Constructive Conflict Resolution Styles**

*Model Summary - EMS*

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	RMSE
H <sub>0</sub>	0.000	0.000	0.000	7.536
H <sub>1</sub>	0.288	0.083	0.075	7.248

Source: Research data

**Table 2. Model Fit Statistics of Perceived Stress**

*Model Summary - EMS*

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	RMSE
H <sub>0</sub>	0.000	0.000	0.000	7.165
H <sub>1</sub>	0.322	0.104	0.096	7.165

Source: Research data

This study found that constructive conflict resolution is positively associated with marital satisfaction, while perceived stress negative affects it. These findings support previous research by Risna (2021), which demonstrated that couple using effecting conflict resolution styles experience higher marital satisfaction. Additionally, the results align with Gottman and Levenson (2000), who emphasized that unresolved stress contributes to relationship breakdowns.

**Table 3. Coefficient Table of Multiple Regression**

Model		Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized	t	p	Collinearity Statistics	
							Tolerance	VIF
H <sub>0</sub>	(Intercept)	49.009	0.697		70.348	< .001		
H <sub>1</sub>	(Intercept)	45.882	4.213		10.891	< .001		
	CRSI	0.823	0.222	0.312	3.713	< .001	0.995	1.005
	PSS	-0.568	0.139	-0.344	-4.095	< .001	0.995	1.005

Source: Research data

However, these study has its limitations. The use of self-reported data may result in bias, as response might be influenced by social desirability. Future studies could employ longitudinal methods or include qualitative interviews for deeper insights into marital dynamics. Future research could also explore whether cultural factors influence how couples manage conflict and stress. Expanding the study to include different demographic groups would enhance the findings.

**CONCLUSION**

This study aimed to investigate the impact of constructive conflict resolution styles and perceived stress on marital satisfaction among dual-earner couples. Given the increasing prevalence of households where both partners are engaged in full-time employment, understanding the dynamics that contribute to marital satisfaction is crucial for both researchers and practitioners in the field of relationship and family studies.

The findings indicate that constructive conflict resolution styles, which involve open communication, problem-solving, and compromise have a positive and significant effect on

marital satisfaction. Married couples who effectively manage disagreements using these strategies tend to experience higher levels of relationship harmony, emotional closeness, and mutual understanding. Conversely, the study reveals that higher levels of perceived stress have a negative impact on marital satisfaction. This suggests that external stressors, whether work-related or personal, can spill over into marital interactions, leading to tension, dissatisfaction, and potential relational strain.

These results reinforce existing psychological and marital research by emphasizing the crucial role of effective conflict management in fostering marital harmony. Furthermore, the study underscores the necessity of stress reduction strategies, such as emotional support, time management, and work-life balance interventions, to mitigate the adverse effects of stress on marital well-being.

With the rising number of dual-earner couples globally, these insights are valuable for relationship counselors, psychologists, and policymakers seeking to enhance marital quality and stability. Future research could explore additional moderating factors, such as emotional intelligence, coping mechanisms, and workplace support systems, to further understand how couples can navigate stress and conflict effectively while maintaining a satisfying marital relationship.

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