



## The Role of Communication in Work-Life Balance: A Study of Female Employees at a Religious Institution

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Received : March 10, 2024

Accepted : April 27, 2024

Published : April 30, 2024

Citation: Hartati, N, S., Rubino., Indra, F. (2024). The Role of Communication in Work-Life Balance: A Study of Female Employees at a Religious Institution. *Ilomata International Journal of Social Science*, 5(2), 601-614. <https://doi.org/10.61194/ijss.v5i2.1267>

**ABSTRACT:** The objective of this research is to conduct a communication analysis of female employees of the Medan City Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in order to ascertain how they maintain a balance between their professional and familial responsibilities. The objective is to analyse and identify the family communication model and the impact of communication on female employees in maintaining work-life balance. The research approach employed is qualitative, with the objective of obtaining an in-depth description of the data. The data were obtained through in-depth interviews and an analysis of relevant documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted in an unstructured format with female employees of the Medan City Ministry of Religion Office, while documentation was employed to collect data that would supplement the research results. The findings indicate that the linear communication model, the interactional communication model, the transactional communication model, and the constructive communication model are effective communication strategies in specific contexts where communication between a husband and a wife in a family is required to be conveyed in a clear and targeted manner. These communication approaches are dialogic and collaborative in nature, which allows families to reach a common understanding and develop shared values. This contributes to the strengthening of familial cohesion and facilitates the balance between work and family life.

**Keywords:** Family Communication, Female Employee, Work and Family



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## INTRODUCTION

The advent of modernization and globalization has rendered the phenomenon of women working a common occurrence in society. Women are now free to pursue employment for a multitude of reasons and purposes, according to their individual needs. Women, who were previously confined to the domestic sphere, are now able to enjoy equal rights with men, namely the right to work and to pursue a career.

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Women who elect to continue their professional careers after marriage and childbirth are compelled to reconcile the competing demands of work and family life. The ability to achieve a harmonious equilibrium between these two domains is crucial for the fulfillment of their roles and the maintenance of a smooth work-life balance.

As indicated by data from the Central Bureau of Statistics, the number of women in the workforce reached 50.70 million in 2020. This figure represents a 2.63% increase compared to the previous year, when the number of working women was 49.40 million individuals aged 15 and above. The data indicates that an increasing number of working women are required to fulfil both their professional obligations and their familial responsibilities. The demands placed upon women in both the workplace and the family domain result in a challenging balancing act between their professional and personal lives.

The concept of work-family balance can be defined as an individual's capacity to maintain a harmonious equilibrium between their professional and familial roles. Individuals who are adept at achieving this balance tend to exhibit positive behaviors in both their personal and professional lives, as they are able to reconcile the demands of their various roles without compromising the responsibilities associated with any of them.

Globally, women frequently bear the dual burden of being responsible for working outside the home and doing household chores. Despite advancements in gender equality, many women still encounter obstacles in dividing their time and attention between their careers and domestic roles ([Suntiyah & Hayat, 2022](#); [Awalya & Lindawati, 2023](#)).

In the contemporary era, female employees encounter significant challenges in maintaining equilibrium between their professional and familial obligations. Inflexible work schedules frequently preclude them from attending to their familial responsibilities, including childcare and the care of family members with special needs. This underscores the vital importance of effective communication within the family unit to achieve a harmonious equilibrium.

Meanwhile, family communication can be defined as a process of interaction between family members with the aim of exchanging information, ideas, feelings, and opinions. The objective is to foster understanding, intimacy, and cooperation within the family unit. Family communication encompasses the use of both verbal and non-verbal language and is subject to certain norms and patterns that differ from those observed in communication outside the family ([Abdul Rahman & Alavi, 2023](#); [Lubis & Pohan, 2019](#); [Reader, 2022](#); [Rositch et al., 2019](#)).

The family communication of female employees plays a pivotal role in fostering domestic harmony. Through transparent and responsive interactions, they are better able to reconcile the demands of their professional and domestic roles. Research indicates that effective communication enhances social support and fortifies emotional connections within the family, thereby reducing conflict and improving overall quality of life.

## METHOD

This research was conducted at the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Jln. Sei Batu Ginggaing No. 12, Kel. Merdeka, Kecamatan Medan Baru, Medan City, North Sumatra Province. By using qualitative methods by describing the data clearly. The data collection technique used is namely in-depth interviews with sources and documentation to support the success of the research. To sharpen the analysis the author uses journals, book dictionaries and related journals.

Qualitative research is a research procedure that produces data in the form of written words, which serve to describe a phenomenon. These data are obtained through observations in the field and interviews. The objective of this method is to compile the data that has been collected into a scientific research study ([Creswell & Creswell, 2018](#)).

The primary characteristics of qualitative research include an emphasis on natural conditions, direct engagement with data sources, the central role of researchers as instruments, the presentation of data in verbal or visual forms, a focus on processes over outcomes, inductive data analysis, and the interpretation of data by researchers ([Mekarisce, 2020](#)).

The objective of this study is to examine the strategies employed by working women to achieve a balance between their professional and familial responsibilities, as well as to understand how these women perceive the fulfillment of this work-life balance.

Sugiyono ([Effendy, 2020](#)) posits that the data collection method is the most crucial step in the research process, as the primary objective is to obtain data. Without a comprehensive understanding of the data collection technique, the researcher may not be able to gather data that meets the specified standards.

The initial data collection method employed in this study is observation, which, as a data collection technique, possesses distinctive characteristics when compared to other techniques. Observation is conducted with the objective of obtaining information that is necessary to answer the research questions. The results of observations can be in the form of activities, events, objects, specific conditions or atmospheres, and the emotional feelings of respondents.

The second data collection method is the use of interviews. This approach is employed when researchers seek to gain a more nuanced understanding of the respondents' perspectives, particularly when the number of respondents is limited.

As posited by Stewart and Cash ([Herdiansyah, 2014](#)), interviews are interactions that entail the exchange of information, responsibilities, sentiments, beliefs, motives, and knowledge between researchers and respondents.

The interview employed in this study is a semi-structured interview with an open-ended question format, yet it remains consistent with the established interview guidelines and serves as a benchmark for the interview process.

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As posited by Herdiansyah (2014), the data analysis stage represents a pivotal aspect of any study. The data obtained from the field through a multitude of data collection methods are subsequently processed to yield research findings, which are then subjected to rigorous analysis. As posited by Corbin & Strauss (in Sarosa, 2021: 3), the process of data analysis in qualitative research is inherently interactive, whereby repetitive interrelationships may emerge during the collection and analysis of data. This research employs an interactive model of data analysis, as proposed by Miles & Huberman (in Sarosa, 2021: 4), comprising four distinct stages.

1. The data collection process is an ongoing activity that occurs throughout the research period.
2. Data condensation is the process of selecting, centralizing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming data obtained from research notes.
3. Once the data has been compiled, the subsequent step is to present it in a coherent and accessible format, namely in the form of a written account that clearly delineates the key themes.
4. The final stage of the data analysis process is the drawing of conclusions, which is conducted in conjunction with the verification of the data, with the aim of ensuring that the conclusions are supported by the data that has been analysed.

As posited by Moelong (in Hadi, 2016: 75), the process of testing the validity and reliability of qualitative research is referred to as data validity checking. In the present study, the researchers employed two methods, as proposed by Marvasti (in Herdiansyah, 2014: 287), with the objective of testing the validity of the data provided by the respondents.

The first method is to analyze the verbatim transcript of the interview, namely by reexamining the verbatim copy provided by the researcher to the respondent. This entails determining whether the respondent's statements were accurate and whether any sentences had been altered by the researcher.

The second method is to employ a multilevel perspective, specifically the perspective of others. In this study, the other person is an informant with a background as a close family member of the respondent, namely the husband and children. Informants can validate the veracity of the respondent's statements.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### *Family Communication.*

In the field of sociology, the family is regarded as a miniature institutional system and is a constituent of the social system that exists in every culture. It is defined as a group of people who gather on the basis of marriage, descent, blood relations, kinship, or adoption and live together in a household.

Family communication is defined as an interaction between a husband, wife, or father, mother, children, or other family members who are still in the family bond. Therefore, effective

communication is essential for shaping a child's personality and socialization, as well as for maintaining a harmonious family. There are three key reasons for focusing on family communication: first, family communication is an early experience in social life, as it is through communication that children learn to interact with others; second, communication plays a role in establishing, maintaining, and breaking down family relationships, with the social interaction of each family member shaping their personality; and third, communication reflects interpersonal relationships between family members, which is considered an indicator of the quality of family relationships. Secondly, communication plays a role in the establishment, maintenance, and dissolution of family relationships. The social interaction of each family member shapes their personality. Thirdly, communication reflects interpersonal relationships between family members, which is considered an indicator of the quality of family relationships. ([Sholeh & Juniarti, 2022](#))

The results of research indicate that communication and finance are significant factors in divorce. Additionally, conflict in households where the wife earns more than the husband is attributed to the wife's less optimal role as a mother and wife. Mothers who work to assist in meeting household needs may result in children receiving less maternal care, and the wife's service to the husband may also be reduced. ([Susanta et al., 2020](#))

The results of the study indicate that communication and financial issues are among the most significant contributing factors to divorce. Additionally, in households where the wife earns more than the husband, conflicts frequently emerge due to the perceived inadequacy of traditional gender roles. Mothers who work to support their families may experience challenges in providing optimal care for their children, while the availability of services to their husbands may also be limited ([Susanta et al., 2020](#)).

The following section will outline the key aspects of effective communication.

In order to maintain equilibrium between their professional and familial roles, female employees must cultivate effective communication within the domestic sphere. There are five principal aspects of effective communication:

Clarity is a crucial aspect of effective communication. The clarity of language and information conveyed is of paramount importance, as it minimizes the potential for misunderstandings between family members. The information conveyed must be accurate and reliable. Accurate information facilitates the formulation of appropriate decisions within the family unit.

The language and information conveyed should be appropriate to the context or environment. An understanding of the context allows for the adaptation of communication strategies to align with the circumstances at hand. Flexibility in the flow of language and information is a crucial aspect of effective communication. For instance, when requesting financial assistance, individuals often prioritize discussing the challenges they are facing before disclosing their intention to borrow money. This phenomenon also occurs when conveying emotions to others.

Cultural aspects include language, information, and manners or etiquette. An understanding and respect for cultural nuances in communication facilitates the establishment of harmonious relationships.

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Effective communication is crucial for female employees in maintaining a healthy work-family balance. By employing clear, accurate, contextualized, flexible, and culturally aware communication, female employees can mitigate domestic conflict and ensure that their roles as wives and mothers are not neglected. Furthermore, it enables them to negotiate their needs and expectations both at work and at home, thereby fostering a more harmonious and balanced environment ([Kaila-Kangas et al., 2023](#); [Krane et al., 2014](#)).

This is evident from the interviews and observations of several female employees at the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The primary issue in the divorces that occurred was the wife's salary exceeding that of the husband. This contributes to a sense of inferiority and financial insecurity among husbands. While families who continue to reside under these circumstances are able to mitigate misunderstandings between family members and maintain effective communication, the prevalence of these circumstances suggests a need for further investigation.

### *Female Employee*

Women employees play an important role in various sectors and industries around the world. They contribute not only their professional expertise to the workplace, but also unique perspectives that facilitate diversity and innovation. Many female employees have worked their way up from entry level to significant leadership positions, serving as role models for the next generation and inspiring them to pursue ambition without gender boundaries ([Akbar, M. F., Putubasai, E., & Herman, 2019](#)).

One indication of the success of women's empowerment is the increasing presence of women in the industrial world. This is driven by economic interests and technological advances, and the high level of education for women is no longer limited. It is therefore not uncommon to see today's active female employees working in various corporate agencies, both private and public. ([Des, 2022](#))

Female employees are defined as individual women who engage in work activities across various sectors and professions. They contribute to the work environment by holding a variety of roles and responsibilities, including executive positions and field work. This definition encompasses women's participation in the world of work, which involves the completion of job tasks, the development of professional skills, and their contribution to the growth and sustainability of the organizations they work for. Female employees play a key role in creating diversity in the workplace and contributing to a healthy and inclusive dynamic within various industry sectors. ([Hafied, 2023](#))

In addition, female employees frequently encounter distinctive challenges in their careers, including the challenge of balancing professional and personal responsibilities. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of them are able to surmount these obstacles with the assistance of their families, colleagues, and initiatives designed to promote gender equality in the workplace. Their success not only reflects their individual abilities but also demonstrates the importance of inclusivity and equality in the creation of a superior and more diverse work environment for all. ([Nafisyah, 2022](#)) ([Sa'adah, 2022](#)) ([Awalya, R. S., & Lindawati, 2023](#))

The significance of fostering family communication among female employees who are engaged in professional endeavors is considerable. The establishment of robust and transparent

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communication within the family unit serves to provide invaluable assistance in the management of work and family obligations. Effective communication between female employees and their families allows them to organize their expectations and needs more effectively, which in turn facilitates better time management and planning. Furthermore, extensive family communication can diminish stress and enhance mental well-being, thereby enabling individuals to more effectively navigate professional and personal challenges. Therefore, the establishment of family communication serves not only to reinforce the bonds within the domestic sphere but also to provide a robust foundation for female employees to attain success and contentment in both their professional and personal domains. ([Astuti, M. T., & Triayunda, 2023](#)), ([Ilham Muchtar, M., Abidin, Z., & Lama Bawa, 2023](#)), ([Mansur et al., 2022](#))

### *Maintaining Work and Family Balance*

Female employees often face significant challenges in maintaining a balance between a successful career and family responsibilities. They have to manage their time carefully to meet the intensive demands of their jobs while still giving sufficient attention to their families. Many of them develop effective time management strategies and utilize technology to stay connected with their children and spouses even when they are busy in the office ([Akbar, M. F., Putubasai, E., & Herman, 2019](#)).

The family communication theory in question is the Family Integration Theory developed by Jennifer Pearce-Morris in 2023. This theory focuses on how the integration of various aspects of family life, such as work, gender roles, and interpersonal dynamics, affects communication and overall family well-being. Pearce-Morris emphasizes the importance of coordination and adaptability in family communication as key to achieving a balance between individual needs and family needs ([Alam & Zaini, 2021](#); [Berrick et al., 2020](#); [Tew et al., 2017](#); [Thévenon & Luci, 2012](#)).

In navigating these dynamics, support from partners, family, and an inclusive work environment is essential. Success in balancing work and family depends not only on individual abilities, but also on an environment that supports the needs of women in their careers and families. Company initiatives to provide policies that support work-life balance and the promotion of gender equality not only enable female employees to develop professionally but also create a more productive and inclusive work environment for all employees. ([Susanta et al., 2020](#)), ([Mohamad Permana & Suzan, 2023](#))

Maintaining work-life balance is a concept of balance that involves ambition or career in happiness, leisure and spiritual development. There are three components of balance. First, time balance concerns the amount of time given to work and roles outside of work. Second, involvement balance involves the level of psychological involvement and commitment to work and outside of work. Third, satisfaction balance, the level of satisfaction at work and outside of work. ([Rahmayati, 2021](#)), ([Mezaluna Zahwa Putri Legawa & Alex Sobur, 2023](#))

Work Life Balance (WLB) is a theory that explains how individuals manage work and family environments and the boundaries between the two to achieve balance ([Herrera & Proff, 2023](#); [Schueller-Weidekamm & Kautzky-Willer, 2012](#)). According to Fisher (2006), there are five strategies in shaping Work Life Balanced, among others:

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1. Alternating  
Is a strategy carried out by someone by arranging alternative activities, such as doing relaxation in the midst of busy work.
2. Outsourcing  
Is a strategy carried out by someone who can represent several jobs that are side jobs or become a second priority but do not forget to hold their mandatory work.
3. Bundling  
Is a strategy carried out by someone to carry out activities simultaneously, for example accompanying children to learn while doing office tasks.
4. Tecflexing  
Is a strategy carried out by someone utilizing technological sophistication to complete work so that the time used can be more flexible.
5. Simplifying  
Is a strategy carried out by a person in reducing some work that is less necessary and based on the needs, economic value, and benefits that will be obtained by individuals.

Balancing work and family is a significant challenge often faced by many employees, especially women. Open and effective communication within the family is key to achieving this balance. Having regular discussions about work schedules, family needs and shared expectations can help identify ways to support each other in their respective roles.

The importance of communication is also evident in building support and cooperation between family members. For example, dividing household tasks and childcare roles fairly based on each family member's abilities and time availability can reduce individual burdens and prevent unnecessary conflict. Honest communication also helps manage expectations between spouses, children and other family members, so that all parties feel heard and valued in the effort to maintain this balance. ([Rahman, N. A. A., & Alavi, 2023](#))

The concept of work-life balance represents a crucial solution for female employees at the Ministry of Religious Affairs. As articulated by numerous female employees from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, work-life balance offers a valuable opportunity for them to contribute to the family economy while simultaneously maintaining their relationships with their spouses and children. This work-life balance system enables female employees to effectively divide their time between professional and domestic responsibilities.

In a work context, open communication with superiors and coworkers is also important. Having honest discussions about personal and professional needs can help set realistic expectations and allow for the flexibility needed to handle both work tasks and family responsibilities. Thus, effective communication not only facilitates the balance between work and family but also strengthens relationships and supports positive growth in all areas of life. ([Mohamad Permana & Suzan, 2023](#))

As a family communication model for female employees of the Medan City Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in maintaining the balance of work and family, there are five, namely:



1. Linear communication model (one-way)

is one of the simplest models, in which messages are considered as a one-way flow from sender to receiver. In a family context, this model may be seen when a parent gives instructions to their child without too much interaction or open feedback.

2. Interactional (two-way) communication model

recognizes that communication involves a two-way exchange of messages between the sender and receiver. Within families, this model can be seen when family members exchange opinions, give feedback, and discuss topics relevant to their daily lives. Examples are when couples discuss family vacation plans or when parents and children talk about school experiences.

Deeptalk, for example, is an in-depth two-way conversation that covers a lot of meaningful ground. Communication patterns are defined as the relationship or pattern between two or more people when they send and receive in the right way so that the intended message can be understood. Deep conversations that occur between children and parents can create happiness for children. For children, feeling cared for by parents will make children feel they are valuable and accepted in the family, while for parents, this can improve the quality of life ([Ilmi, 2023](#))

3. Transactional communication model (many directions)

Emphasizes that communication is a process of mutual influence in which messages are not only sent and received but also create a shared reality between sender and receiver. In a family context, this could mean that every conversation or message exchange not only affects the individual perceptions of each family member but also builds and maintains relationships between them. For example, when a child tells his parents about his academic achievement, their response not only validates the achievement but also strengthens the emotional bonds and support within the family.

4. Constructivist model of communication

It emphasizes that the meaning of each message is actively constructed by family members through their interactions. This model recognizes the important role of individual perceptions, values and experiences in interpreting the messages received. In families, this is reflected when family members face the same situation but have different interpretations based on their personal backgrounds and experiences. Examples can be seen in the way family members respond to important news or face life challenges.

To achieve effective family communication according to Joseph A. Devito has five conditions, namely openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness and equality.

a. Openness

is the willingness to respond happily to the information received in dealing with interpersonal relationships. The process of delivering messages in the concept of open communication involves being honest, transparent, and willing to share information in a clear and direct way. The sender conveys the message in a way that does not hide or obscure its intent, so that the receiver can understand exactly what is being conveyed.

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In a family context, some of women employee conveys her emotional needs to her partner, by revealing that she feels pressured by the workload and needs more support from the family. Secondly, the receiver receives the message with an open attitude to listen and understand exactly what the sender is saying. They may ask more questions to clarify the message or give honest feedback on what they received.

Same as when a child openly talks to a them about experiences at school, both good and bad, so that the parent can respond in a way that is supportive and builds trust. In both of these examples, open communication facilitates better understanding between family members, strengthens relationships, and creates an environment where everyone feels heard and valued. ([Ahwaluna, 2024](#))

### b. Empathy

The process of delivering messages in an empathetic communication concept involves the ability to listen attentively and understand the feelings and perspectives of others. The sender of the message tries to put themselves in the receiver's shoes, with the aim of feeling and understanding what the receiver is feeling.

For example, in a family context, a sibling expresses concerns about the challenges they are facing at school to their older sibling in hopes of getting support. The brother responds with empathy, showing deep understanding of his brother's feelings and experiences, and providing the moral support and assistance needed to help his brother overcome the problem. This kind of empathic communication strengthens the relationships between family members, creates strong emotional bonds, and increases trust in each other.

### c. Supportiveness

A situation that is open to communication support takes place effectively, where individual support shows an attitude of support and by being descriptive rather than evaluative, spontaneous rather than strategic. The process of delivering messages in a supportive communication concept involves providing moral, emotional, or practical support to the recipient of the message. The sender of the message focuses on conveying the message with the aim of providing encouragement, assistance, or recognition of the recipient's needs or feelings. For example, in a family context, a child who shares his academic achievements with his parents seeks recognition and support. The parent responds with warm praise and encouragement to continue studying hard. Supportive communication like this strengthens the emotional bonds between family members, increases self-confidence, and promotes positive growth in interpersonal relationships.

### d. Positiveness

Being positive about oneself and encouraging others to participate. The process of delivering messages in the concept of feel-good communication involves using words and attitudes that inspire, uplift, and improve the overall mood. The sender of the message focuses on conveying the message in a supportive and constructive manner, with the aim of increasing positive energy and optimism in the receiver.

For example, in a family context, a father giving feedback to his son after a sports match seeks to focus on the positive things his son did, such as his hard work or improved skills in the game. The

father uses words that appreciate and motivate his son to keep trying and develop their potential. This kind of positive-sense communication not only strengthens the relationship between family members, but also teaches values such as optimism, courage, and hard work.

e. Equality

Equality is the tacit acknowledgment that both parties are valued, useful, and have something important to contribute. The process of delivering messages in the concept of communication with equality involves respecting the views, experiences, and contributions of each individual without distinguishing hierarchy or status. The sender of the message strives to establish a fair and open relationship, where everyone has an equal opportunity to participate and contribute to the conversation. For example, in a family context, when family members sit together to plan a family vacation. Each family member has an equal opportunity to express their preferences about the destination, activities or time of day. Decisions are made collectively by considering the views of all family members, without domination from one particular party. This kind of equitable communication strengthens family bonds, creates a sense of shared responsibility, and builds mutual respect among all family members.

## **CONCLUSION**

Female employees at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office utilize a variety of communication models in an effort to achieve a balance between their professional and familial responsibilities. The results of this study indicate the existence of multiple communication models and methods within the family unit. One such model is the linear communication model, which describes a unidirectional flow of information from the sender to the receiver, without any feedback loop. Although straightforward, this model can be efficacious in certain circumstances where information must be conveyed with clarity and expediency. However, the absence of feedback may result in miscommunication or the perception of being ignored by other family members. The interactional communication model is characterised by two-way communication with feedback. In a familial context, this signifies that each family member is able to respond to the messages they receive. This model is more dynamic and allows for an ongoing dialogue, which can serve to reinforce familial relationships and enhance mutual understanding. The transactional communication model posits that the communication process is mutually influential between family members. The messages conveyed affect and are affected by the responses of other family members. This fosters a more interactive and collaborative communication environment, wherein each family member perceives a role and responsibility in the communication process. The constructive communication model represents a scenario in which family members collectively construct meanings, identities, and realities through their communicative interactions. This communication is dialogic and collaborative, allowing the family to reach a common understanding and develop their values. It contributes to the formation of robust family cohesion and facilitates a balance between work and family life.

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