

The Influence of Emotional Intelligence on the Ability to Resolve Marital Conflict in Men in Banten Province

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to examine the influence of emotional intelligence on the ability to resolve marital conflict among men in Banten Province. The research employs a quantitative approach with an explanatory design to empirically test the relationships between variables. The population consists of married adult men aged 20–40 years, with samples selected using a random sampling technique. Data were collected through standardized questionnaires that have been tested for validity and reliability. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The results indicate that emotional intelligence has a significant effect on the ability to resolve marital conflict, with a t-statistic value of 11.412 and a p-value of 0.000. The effect size is 0.739, indicating a strong relationship between the two variables. These findings confirm that higher emotional intelligence plays an important role in improving the quality of interpersonal communication with one's partner through an individual's ability to manage and resolve marital conflicts adaptively.

KEYWORDS: *Emotional Intelligence, Conflict Resolution, Interpersonal Communication, Men, Marriage*

I. INTRODUCTION

Humans are essentially social beings who cannot be separated from the process of interacting with others in daily life (Mustafa, 2012; Sari & Widayastuti, 1999). In every interaction, differences in interests, needs, and perspectives are inevitable. These differences often create tension that can lead to conflict (Ifitah Khoirina Savitri et al., 2024). From a communication perspective, conflict is not merely understood as opposition, but also as part of an interpersonal communication process involving the exchange of messages, both verbal and nonverbal between individuals with differing interests (Cahn & Abigail, 2014).

Conflict as a communication process shows that interactions between individuals do not always run harmoniously. Rather, they are dynamic and complex. Conflict can arise in various life contexts, such as within families, workplaces, friendships, and marital relationships. In this context, conflict is not always negative, it can serve as a means to achieve mutual understanding when managed constructively. Conversely, poorly managed conflict can develop into prolonged disputes that damage the quality of interpersonal relationships.

In marital relationships, conflict is a phenomenon that is almost unavoidable. Marriage involves two individuals with different backgrounds, values, and experiences who interact intensively over a long period. This intensity increases the likelihood of disagreements and misunderstandings. Previous studies show that marital conflict is often triggered by communication problems, such as lack of openness, low empathy, and the inability to express emotions appropriately. These conditions can cause initially simple conflicts to become more complex and recurring.

One study conducted by Khoiroh and Sa'diyin from the Institut Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan shows that poor communication is a major trigger of conflict in marriage, especially among young couples. The findings indicate that the quality of interpersonal communication is a key factor in maintaining relationship stability, and weak communication skills can intensify tension in marriage (Khoirot & Sa'diyin, 2022).

Empirically, marital conflict is also closely associated with rising divorce rates. Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) of Banten Province in 2024 show that divorce is dominated by factors related to relational conflict. Of the total recorded cases, the highest causes were abandonment by one partner (442 cases) and domestic violence (290 cases). Other contributing factors include gambling (166 cases), alcohol abuse (32 cases), and polygamy (15 cases), further adding to the complexity of the issue. These figures indicate that conflict arises not only from incompatibility in values but also from destructive behaviors and the inability of couples to manage emotions and build effective interpersonal communication (BPS, 2025).

In interpersonal communication, the ability to resolve conflict is a crucial skill that determines the quality of marital relationships. Effective conflict resolution depends not only on cognitive abilities to find solutions but also on emotional abilities to understand oneself and one's partner. Individuals who can manage their emotions well tend to respond to conflict more adaptively, compared to those who react impulsively or defensively (Sharma 2024; Jardine, Vannier, and Voyer 2022; Endah 2020).

A study on the relationship between components of emotional intelligence and conflict resolution styles in Christian marriages found that couples with high emotional intelligence characterized by self-awareness, empathy, and social skills are more likely to use constructive conflict resolution styles. In contrast, couples with low emotional intelligence tend to engage in more aggressive or confrontational conflict styles (Sanjaya et al., 2024).

Based on these issues, one concept widely used to explain this ability is emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence refers to an individual's ability to recognize, understand, and manage their own emotions as well as those of others (Goleman, 2025). Individuals with high emotional intelligence are better able to control impulses, demonstrate empathy, and build more effective communication (Milani, 2020). In the context of marital conflict, emotional intelligence plays an important role in helping individuals understand their partner's perspective, reduce conflict escalation, and promote more constructive solutions (Siregar, 2024).

The relevance of emotional intelligence becomes even more apparent when linked to how conflict develops in everyday interactions. Morton Deutsch illustrated that conflict can move in either a constructive or destructive direction depending on how each party responds to the situation (Deutsch, 1949). Individuals with high emotional intelligence tend to use constructive approaches, such as open dialogue, negotiation, and collaborative problem-solving, while those with lower emotional intelligence are more likely to adopt destructive approaches or avoid conflict, which can prolong problems and worsen interpersonal relationships.

However, most research on emotional intelligence and conflict still focuses on the general population or couples as a whole, without paying specific attention to gender roles, particularly men. In many social and cultural contexts, men are often subject to norms that restrict emotional expression. They are typically encouraged to be rational, strong, and not display emotional vulnerability. This condition can influence how men communicate and respond to conflict in marital relationships.

A study shows that men tend to have lower levels of emotional intelligence compared to women. Research titled *Age and Gender Differences in Ability Emotional Intelligence in Adults: A Cross-Sectional Study*, conducted in Spain with 12,198 adults aged 17–76, found that gender significantly affects emotional intelligence levels. The findings provide strong evidence that gender contributes to differences in emotional intelligence, with men generally demonstrating lower emotional intelligence than women (Cabello et al., 2016). This difference has implications for how men handle conflict, as they tend to focus more on logical problem-solving while paying less attention to the emotional aspects of interpersonal communication. As a result, conflict resolution processes do not always lead to mutual understanding and may instead create emotional distance within relationships.

In Indonesia, particularly in Banten Province, research specifically examining the relationship between emotional intelligence and the ability to resolve marital conflict among adult men remains limited. In fact, the diverse social, cultural, and economic conditions in the region influence the dynamics of interpersonal relationships in marriage. Based on this background, there is a research gap regarding the limited number of studies focusing specifically on the role of emotional intelligence in resolving marital conflict among adult men within the context of interpersonal communication in Indonesia.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of emotional intelligence on the ability to resolve marital conflict among men in Banten Province. It is expected to contribute to the development of interpersonal communication and social psychology studies, particularly in understanding the role of emotional intelligence in fostering more adaptive, constructive, and sustainable marital relationships.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Stimulus-Response (S-R) Theory

Stimulus-Response (S-R) theory is part of the behaviorist paradigm in psychology, which explains that human behavior is formed through the relationship between stimuli and responses (Moore, 2011). This approach was pioneered by figures such as John B. Watson and B. F. Skinner, who viewed behavior as observable reactions to environmental influences, without emphasizing internal mental processes (Saul, 2025). Within this model, behavioral change is understood as the result of specific stimuli that trigger relatively automatic responses.

Within the Stimulus-Response (S-R) framework, a stimulus refers to any form of trigger that can influence an individual, whether external, such as physical, social, and cultural environments, or internal, such as psychological conditions. Recent developments suggest that stimuli are not limited to external factors but also include "internal cues" that can activate mechanisms within the individual (Pan et al., 2024). Meanwhile, a response refers to the observable behavior or action that emerges as the outcome of this process.

In this study, intelligence in adult men is positioned as an internal stimulus that influences how individuals respond to marital conflict. Emotional intelligence, which includes the ability to recognize, understand, and regulate one's own emotions as well as those of a partner, serves as a primary trigger in activating adaptive cognitive and affective processes when facing conflict. Thus, although it originates internally, emotional intelligence functions similarly to external stimuli in that it activates information-processing mechanisms within the individual.

The response in this study is reflected in the individual's ability to resolve marital conflict constructively. This response can be observed through behaviors such as willingness to listen to a partner, the ability to express emotions without violence, the use of cooperative conflict resolution strategies, and the ability to reach mutually satisfying agreements. Furthermore, the response also includes communication patterns during the conflict process, such as the ability to regulate emotions, reduce tension, and prevent the escalation of disputes.

Emotional Intelligence Theory

Emotional intelligence refers to an individual's ability to recognize, understand, manage, and express emotions effectively, both toward oneself and others. Emotions, in essence, are a set of beliefs and meanings developed within an individual that serve as a reference framework for interpreting and evaluating various situations encountered. In other words, emotions do not only emerge as spontaneous biological responses but also result from the internalization of values, norms, and social rules learned through continuous social interaction (Kartika, 2022).

Through interpersonal experiences, culture, and social environment, individuals build an emotional repertoire that influences how they label feelings, interpret emotional stimuli, and manage emotional intensity. Daniel Goleman, in his book *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* (1995), defines emotional intelligence as "Emotional intelligence is the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships" (Rossingol, 1995). This definition contains three core components that form the basis for understanding and developing emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2025), namely:

Recognizing Our Own Feelings and Those of Others.

This component emphasizes the ability to identify, recognize, and understand emotions, both in oneself and others. Individuals with this skill can read non-verbal emotional cues such as facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language. Goleman identifies two main domains within this category:

Self-Awareness: The capacity to deeply understand one's personal emotions, including their causes and impact on behavior and decision-making.

Empathy: The ability to understand and feel the perspective and emotions of others, forming the foundation for healthy interpersonal relationships.

In the context of adult men, self-awareness helps them identify personal emotions (anger, disappointment, fear) to respond and communicate wisely to marital conflicts, while empathy facilitates constructive conflict resolution.

Motivating Ourselves.

This component emphasizes the ability to manage emotions to maintain internal motivation. This motivation allows individuals to resist short-term impulses for long-term goal achievement, remain optimistic, and stay resilient in facing challenges. Goleman states that emotional motivation is rooted in an individual's values, beliefs, and life goals. For adult men, strong internal motivation helps them endure emotional pressures during marital conflicts, stay focused on problem-solving together, and prioritize reflection and responsibility in long-term relationships.

Managing Emotions Well in Ourselves and in Our Relationships.

This component includes regulating personal emotions and the ability to navigate social interactions. Two primary domains are:

Self-Regulation: The ability to control negative emotions such as anger, frustration, or anxiety so they do not disrupt thinking or action.

Social Skills: The ability to manage social relationships effectively through communication, cooperation, conflict resolution, persuasion, and leadership (Nasution et al., 2023).

Men with high emotional intelligence can manage their emotions constructively, avoid impulsive or aggressive behavior, and build healthy, productive social interactions based on empathy, assertiveness, and compromise.

These three components interact to form emotional competence, which influences an individual's ability to handle pressure, conflict, and complex social interactions. In this study, emotional intelligence is assumed to affect the ability of adult men to resolve marital conflicts in Banten Province.

Conflict Resolution Theory

The Conflict Resolution Theory proposed by Morton Deutsch emphasizes that conflict is a natural social phenomenon and is not always negative. According to Deutsch, conflict can develop in two ways: constructively, when managed with open communication, trust, and a cooperative orientation, or destructively, which occurs when there is suspicion, closed communication, and a win-lose mindset (Coleman, 2001; Tsonchev, 2010). This theory highlights that conflict resolution does not lie in eliminating differences, but in how individuals or groups manage interactions to achieve healthy and fair outcomes.

In general, conflict resolution can be understood as the process and ability of individuals to manage differing interests so that mutually satisfying outcomes are achieved. Deutsch (1973), in *The Resolution of Conflict: Constructive and Destructive Processes*, asserts that conflict is an inevitable phenomenon in human life. He rejects the traditional view that sees conflict as entirely negative and to be avoided. Instead, conflict has a dual potential to develop constructively or destructively, depending on how the interaction process between parties is managed. There are four principles that determine whether a conflict develops constructively or destructively (Deutsch, 1973):

Cooperative Orientation

Cooperative orientation refers to the attitude that conflicting parties are positively interdependent, where the success of one party supports the success of all, rather than threatening it. This orientation transforms the meaning of conflict from a “win-lose competition” into a collaborative opportunity to achieve shared goals. With a cooperative orientation, parties shift their motivation from defending personal positions to seeking common interests, creating space for honest information exchange, integrative negotiation, and decision-making that considers the needs of both sides (Deutsch, 1949).

Open Communication

Open communication is the ability and willingness of parties to express information, feelings, and interests honestly and clearly while respecting the other party. This openness reduces negative assumptions, minimizes misunderstandings, and allows the identification of root problems. Open communication also facilitates clarification and reframing processes, resulting in integrative solutions that address the needs of multiple parties.

Constructive Problem-Solving

Constructive problem-solving focuses on identifying shared problems, exploring alternative solutions, and negotiating to achieve *win-win* outcomes. This approach requires openness to new information, creativity in formulating mutually beneficial options, and commitment to testing assumptions and compromising when necessary.

Trust and Mutual Respect

Trust and mutual respect form the emotional and normative foundation for constructive conflict processes. Trust reduces assumptions of ill intent and fosters confidence that the other party will act reliably. Mutual respect ensures that differences in perspective are not seen as threats but as valuable variations of viewpoint. Without adequate trust and respect, open communication and problem-solving are vulnerable to failure. Building and maintaining trust and a culture of mutual respect are strategic activities for long-term conflict management.

In the context of marriage, this theory is relevant because spouses often face differences in needs, values, and expectations that trigger conflict. Cooperative orientation, open communication, constructive problem-solving, and trust and mutual respect are key to achieving positive conflict resolution, where solutions benefit both parties (*win-win orientation*).

The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and The Ability to Resolve Marital Conflict

Emotional intelligence is a factor that plays a role in influencing the ability to resolve marital conflict. From the perspective of Stimulus-Response (S-R) theory, emotional intelligence functions as an internal stimulus that affects how a man responds to conflict situations within his marital relationship.

Men with high emotional intelligence tend to engage in open communication, apply constructive problem-solving, demonstrate respect and trust, and adopt a cooperative orientation when experiencing conflict with their partners. Therefore, high emotional intelligence becomes a key factor in how adult men in Banten Province respond to and resolve marital conflicts.

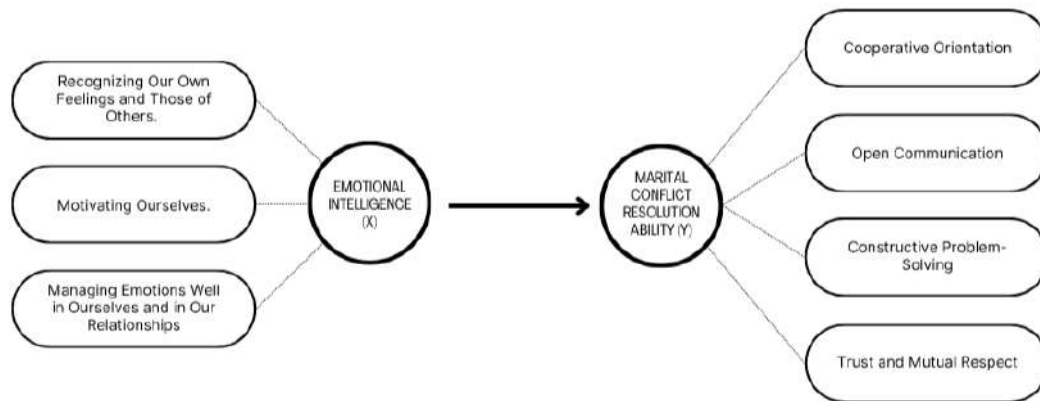


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Model

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

1. Emotional intelligence influences the ability to resolve marital conflicts among adult men in Banten Province.

III. METHODS

Research Design and Study Location

The paradigm underlying this study is positivism, and the approach used is quantitative, as it aligns with the research objective, namely to systematically examine the effect of emotional intelligence on the ability to resolve marital conflict (Sugiyono, 2020). The research design is explanatory research, which aims to explain the causal relationship between independent and dependent variables, as well as to test hypotheses formulated based on theoretical foundations. This study was conducted in cities within Banten Province, namely Serang, Tangerang, South Tangerang, and Cilegon. The selection of urban areas in Banten is based on academic considerations that urban populations tend to have higher educational backgrounds and face more complex conflicts, making them more relevant as the setting for this research.

Population and Sample

The data sources in this study were early adult married men aged 20–40 years in Banten, with a total population of 20,610 based on marriage statistics from the Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) Banten Province. The population distribution is as follows: (1) Tangerang City: 7,818 couples, (2) Cilegon City: 2,524 couples, (3) Serang City: 4,064 couples, and (4) South Tangerang City: 6,204 couples.

For the research sample, the researcher employed a random sampling technique (Dawis et al., 2023). The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with an error tolerance of 0.075, as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = required sample size

N = total population

e = margin of error

Based on the formula above, the calculation is as follows:

$$n = \frac{20610}{1 + 20610(0,075)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{20610}{1 + 20610(0,005625)}$$

$$n = \frac{20610}{1 + 115,93}$$

$$n = \frac{20610}{116,93} = 176,3$$

Therefore, from a population of 20,610, a total of 176 respondents were selected for the study.

Data Collection and Research Instruments

Data collection in this study employed a questionnaire developed based on emotional intelligence and conflict resolution theories. The questionnaire consisted of two variables: emotional intelligence (X) and marital conflict resolution ability (Y). The emotional intelligence variable was measured through the ability to recognize one's own and others' feelings, motivate oneself, and manage one's emotions effectively both personally and in interpersonal relationships, based on Daniel Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2025). Meanwhile, the marital conflict resolution ability variable was measured using indicators related to cooperative orientation, open communication, constructive problem-solving, and mutual respect and trust, in accordance with Morton Deutsch's conflict resolution theory (Deutsch, 1973). All items were measured using a Likert scale.

Instrument Testing And Ethical Considerations

The research instrument was tested prior to data analysis to ensure its validity and reliability (Sugiyono, 2020). Based on the test results, all items were found to be valid and reliable, allowing the questionnaire to be distributed. Data collection was conducted through a questionnaire distributed via Google Forms and social media platforms. In addition, each respondent was provided with an explanation of the research objectives, the procedures for completing the questionnaire, and assurance of the confidentiality of their personal data. Participation was voluntary and free from any form of coercion, as part of ethical considerations to protect the rights and well-being of respondents (Hansen, 2023).

Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis in this study was conducted using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method with the assistance of SmartPLS software (Hair et al., n.d.). The evaluation of the structural model (inner model) was carried out to determine the extent to which the model is able to explain the relationships among the variables studied. The assessment was based on the coefficient of determination (R^2) values of the dependent variables, which indicate how much of the variation in the dependent variables can be explained by the independent variables in this study. Furthermore, hypothesis testing was conducted to examine the direct effects of the independent variables within the research model. This testing employed the bootstrapping method to obtain path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values. The relationships among variables are considered significant if they meet the 5% significance level criteria, namely t-statistic > 1.96 and p-value < 0.05 (Agresti, n.d.).

IV. RESULT

Respondent Characteristics

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	20-30 years	101	53,2%
	30-40 years	89	46,8%
Residence	Serang City	72	37,9%
	Tangerang City	35	18,4%
	South Tangerang City	38	20%
	Cilegon City	45	23,7%
	Others	11	5,7%
Occupation	Private Employee	88	46,3%
	Civil Servant	40	21,1%
	Entrepreneur / Business Owner	28	14,7%
	Freelance Worker	19	10%
	Unemployed	1	0,5%
	Others	14	7,4%
Monthly Income	<3 million rupiah	31	16,3%
	3-5 million rupiah	58	30,5%
	5-10 million rupiah	59	31,1%
	>10 million rupiah	42	22,1%
Last Education Level	Junior High School / Equivalent	1	0,5%
	Senior High School / Vocational High School / Equivalent	34	17,9%
	Diploma	41	21,6%
	Bachelor's Degree	95	50%
	Postgraduate Degree	19	10%

The sample size determined for this study was 176 respondents, however, the data successfully collected amounted to 190 respondents. Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The Table shows that most respondents were aged 20–30 years (53.2%), resided in Serang City (37.9%), worked as private employees (46.3%), had a monthly income of 5–10 million rupiah (31.1%), and held a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education (50.0%).

Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emotional Intelligence (X)	3.021	3.432	3.198	0.852
Conflict Resolution Ability (Y)	3.126	3.200	3.168	0.871

Descriptive statistics provide a general overview of the tendencies and variations of the research data for each variable examined. The statistics presented in this table include the minimum value, maximum value, mean, and standard deviation. It can be concluded that the respondents in this study had a relatively high level of emotional intelligence, as indicated by a mean score of 3.198. The respondents' ability to resolve marital conflicts was also categorized as high, with a mean score of 3.168.

Instrument Validity and Reliability Test

Table 3. Instrument Validity and Reliability Test

Variable	Number of Initial Items	Valid Items	Composite Reliability (rh_c)	decision
Emotional Intelligence (X)	9	9	0,956	Valid and reliable
Conflict Resolution Ability (Y)	9	9	0,949	Valid and reliable

The results of the validity and reliability tests indicate that all initial items measuring Emotional Intelligence (X) and Conflict Resolution Ability (Y) met the required validity criteria. For both variables, all 9 initial items remained valid, with no items excluded from the analysis. Reliability testing using Composite Reliability showed strong internal consistency for both constructs, with Emotional Intelligence obtaining a value of 0.956 and Conflict Resolution Ability obtaining a value of 0.949. These results indicate that all variables are valid and reliable, and therefore suitable for further analysis.

Structural Model Test (Inner Model)

Table 4. Structural Model Test (Inner Model)

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Y	0.885	0.883

Structural Model Test (Inner Model) is assessed using the R Square (R^2) and Adjusted R Square values, which are used to measure the extent to which the independent variable explains the dependent variable in the model. The R Square value indicates that variable Y has an R^2 of 0.885, meaning that the ability to resolve marital conflict can be explained by emotional intelligence by 88%. This value indicates that the structural model has a relatively strong explanatory power.

Hypothesis Testing of Direct Effects (Bootstrapping)

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing of Direct Effects (Bootstrapping)

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ((O/STDEV)	P values
X -> Y	0.739	0.741	0.065	11.412	0.000

The table above shows that emotional intelligence (X) has a significant effect on conflict resolution ability (Y). This is indicated by the T-statistics value being above 1.96, the P-values being lower than 0.05, and the Original Sample value of 0.739, which indicates a positive direction of influence.

V. DISCUSSION

The Influence of Emotional Intelligence on the Ability to Resolve Marital Conflict

The bootstrapping test results show that the T Statistics value is above 1.96, the P Values are below 0.05, and the Original Sample value is 0.739, indicating a significant effect. This finding confirms that men who are able to recognize their own emotions and those of others, motivate themselves, and manage their emotions adaptively are more capable of viewing conflict as a shared issue, opening space for dialogue, and seeking constructive solutions. This is in line with the Emotional Intelligence Theory proposed by Daniel Goleman, which emphasizes self-awareness, empathy, and social skills as the primary foundations for managing interpersonal relationships, including marital relationships (Goleman, 2025; Nasution et al., 2023; Rossingol, 1995).

The respondent characteristics also indicate that the majority of men within the productive age range of 20–30 years, residing in Serang City, working as private employees, earning a middle-level income, and holding a Bachelor's degree (S1) are those who possess high emotional intelligence and strong marital conflict resolution abilities.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that emotional intelligence has a significant effect on the ability of adult men in Banten Province to resolve marital conflicts. The results of the structural model (inner model) test show that emotional intelligence explains 88% of the variance in conflict resolution ability. These findings underscore the strong role of intrapersonal factors, such as emotional regulation, empathy, and self-awareness, in shaping more adaptive conflict communication skills. Therefore, within the study of intrapersonal communication, strengthening emotional intelligence is a crucial aspect in promoting healthier conflict behavior in marital relationships.

Future studies are recommended to include additional variables, such as partners' communication styles, stress levels, or marital relationship quality, in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing conflict resolution in households.

Recommendations and Future Research

This study recommends that institutions engaged in premarital education and marital counseling develop experiential learning-based training programs in the form of couples' conflict simulation sessions. These sessions aim to help participants recognize emerging emotions, train appropriate emotional responses, and practice assertive and responsible communication in a structured and safe environment.

Future research is suggested to expand the scope of inquiry by exploring marital conflict communication dynamics through qualitative or mixed-methods approaches, particularly to understand how emotional intelligence influences symbolic processes, interaction patterns, and meaning negotiation between partners. This approach is expected to enrich perspectives in interpersonal communication and family communication within the context of marital relationships.

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