



Tao of Communication: Developing a Gender-Balanced Husband-Wife Communication Model at KUA North Tambun

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Abstract

Communication between men and women is a social phenomenon deeply intertwined with gender constructs, culture, and societal value systems. Disparities in mindsets, language, and conversational patterns often lead to communication imbalances that result in interpersonal conflict, discrimination, dominance, and even exploitative relationships. Male-dominated communication paradigms remain the social norm across various cultural contexts, thereby reinforcing dynamics of subordination between husbands and wives. This situation contributes to increased household conflict, divorce, domestic violence, and infidelity. This study employs the Research and Development (R&D) method, integrating models developed by Borg & Gall and Derek Rowntree. Expert evaluations in the fields of Islamic philosophy (*Ushuluddin* with a 96% suitability rate), linguistics (99%), and instructional media technology (96%) confirmed the urgency and quality of the prototype (which received a 97% rating). The model underwent initial testing with 10 respondents, achieving an 88% feasibility score, followed by a second stage with 25 respondents, achieving 93%. Based on the rating scale categories, the model is classified as "Feasible," indicating that both the book and the model are suitable for use. The book **Tao of Communication** aims to foster harmonious relationships—particularly between husbands and wives—ultimately yielding positive implications by helping to reduce divorce rates.

Keywords: Gender communication; Husband-wife communication; Interpersonal communication; Tao of Communication

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INTRODUCTION

This research was submitted and approved through the Indonesian Education Scholarship (BPI) program on September 12, 2022, as a dissertation research proposal entitled "Tao of Communication: The Construction of Communication Balance in Gender." This research focuses on married couples who file for divorce or divorce litigation due to communication issues. The aim of this research is to identify and develop a communication balance model that has a positive impact, namely, minimizing the number of divorces caused by communication.

Based on initial data, namely the divorce rate in Indonesia (2017–2021), there were 337,343 cases, or 75.34% of divorces. Research by Adeni and Harahap (2017) demonstrates that strong gender bias through verbal and nonverbal aggression remains a complex problem: men generally fall in the moderate category (38%), while women fall in the low category (36%). According to the National Commission on Violence Against Women's Annual Report (CATAHU) dated March 7, 2023, 339,782 of the total complaints were related to gender-based violence (GBV). Violence in the personal sphere still dominates reporting of GBV cases, namely 99% or 336,804 cases. The behavioral theory (Dominance, Inducement, Submission, and Compliance, or DISC) was first introduced by William Moulton Marston in his book *Emotions of Normal People*, published in 1928. Marston's theory states that the expression of emotional behavior can be categorized into four main types, which originate from a person's self-perception in relation to their environment. These four types are labeled by Marston as follows. 1) Dominance (D), emphasizes achieving results, and self-confidence; 2) Inducement (I), emphasizes the ability to influence others, openness, relationships; 3) Submission (S), emphasizes cooperation, sincerity, dependability; 4) Compliance (C), emphasizes quality and accuracy, expertise, competence.

Although Marston was the first to propose the DiSC theory, a personality test based on this theory was not developed until 1956 by Walter V. Clarke. A misogynist will view women as deserving of oppression, marginalization, and exploitation. Meanwhile, sexism is the belief that men are superior to women. Both are distinct and contradict the human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination.

Differences in Conversation Patterns: "Men's and women's verbal communication" also differ in vocabulary. This is due to differences in their socialization, particularly their differing interests in various aspects of life. The language differences that create perceptions can be explained as follows: women use more words, are more in-depth, ask more questions, including "Good, right?", and use more emotional words than men. Men's language, on the other hand, exhibits paradoxical grammar and is sometimes impolite and sexually suggestive.

The communication pattern between men and women in this case verbally can be seen from what was conveyed by (Mulyana, 2008) in the book *Introduction to Communication Science*. Where the use of vocabulary offered by women may be more refined when compared to men who are rough, in this study the researcher then provides pronouns from smooth to Jamal in Qur'anic Terminology or yin in Taoist Terminology and Jalal in Qur'anic Terminology or yang in the concept of philosophical cosmology "Taoism" which means rough.

The paradigm of male communication dominance has become a social standard that still exists across various social and cultural levels. In soap operas, advertisements, talk shows, and films, elements (Domination "D" and Submission "S") frequently appear. The term



"BDSM" was first recorded in a Usenet post from 1991, and is interpreted as a combination of the abbreviations B/D (Bondage and Discipline), D/S (Dominance and Submission), and S/M (Sadism and Masochism). BDSM is now used as an overarching phrase encompassing a wide range of activities, forms of interpersonal relationships, and subcultures. This is intended to see the balance in the concept of message planning.

will be sent from both of them (Man and Woman who are husband and wife), that is, the researcher wants to see how "something/message" is conveyed in the conversation. So that divorce occurs. Communicators need to plan their "message" with the goal of engaging the recipient in an interaction. Balance and harmony are also essential, and the philosophy of balance is found in Taoism, where this philosophy is considered the balance of life and harmony with nature. This teaching predates Confucianism by several thousand years. Taoism became a popular religion and belief system. Its teachings focused on achieving harmony in life, perfection, and spirituality. Taoism flourished within the imperial court, but was overshadowed by Confucian doctrine. While Taoism viewed humans as part of nature and harmonious relationships, Confucianism emphasized the gaps and hierarchies between people (Valentine, 2024).

Taoism, or Daojia (School of the Way), emerged as a radically different voice, perhaps even a critique or radical alternative to the mainstream thought of its time, particularly Confucianism. While Confucianism focused on structured society, government, and ethics, Taoism turned its attention to nature, spontaneity, and individual freedom from the shackles of artificial social rules. Early Taoist thinkers saw that human attempts to engineer society through rigid laws, rituals, and morality were themselves the source of chaos.

It is important to distinguish between the philosophical Taoism (*Daojia*) that is the focus of this study, and the religious Taoism (*Daojiao*) that developed centuries later. Daojia is a philosophical school centered on texts such as the Tao Te Ching and Zhuangzi, which offer a perspective and way of life. Meanwhile, Daojiao is an organized religion, complete with gods, rituals, temples, and practices to achieve immortality. Although both are interrelated and influence each other, the focus of this study is on their philosophical heritage relevant to the Construction of Communication Balance with the Aim of Creating Harmony in Household Life, or in other words, Creating a (*Sakinah Ma Waddah Wa Rahmah*) Family.

The most challenging issue for researchers is when we discuss communication patterns between women and men, or between men and men, or between women and women. We often encounter cultural differences in the exchange of information and ideas. Although we don't deny that the concepts of the I-Ching, according to the wuweiwisdom group, are always present around us, such as the concepts of change, movement, transformation, momentum, and regeneration.

However, unlike the Taoist view that everything in the universe is created by the polarity of Yin and Yang, this duality is always present around us. Prof. Sachiko Murata calls it the Divine Duality. While there is a husband who doesn't communicate much, there is always a wife who communicates a lot, or vice versa. The polarity referred to in this research is that everything in this natural life moves in a series called Theism is Destiny (God's Line/Series of Decrees), and this series produces two currents: the first current follows, and the second current. two opposites. For example, Yin and Yang, Hot and Cold, Up and Down, Day and Night, Male and Female, and so on.



Unbalanced communication patterns in the structure of social institutions (family) have an impact on disputes between couples, outside of this structure, such as friends, groups, football organizations for example, or between tribes, etc., can also create tension in communication.

Communication imbalances can also strain relationships at the social level, coupled with income inequality between husband and wife, and also contribute to household breakdowns. For example, a wife's salary is higher than her husband's, in-laws are also considered capable of triggering household breakdowns, and the presence of a third party in marital life is considered problematic, as is the inability to provide a mattress, kitchen, well, or childcare. The divorce rate in Indonesia, for example (2017-2021), was 337,343 cases or 75.34% of divorces occurred.

In (Pambayun, 2024) Page 3 explains that research by (Adeni & Harahap, 2017) proves that the strong view of gender bias through verbal and non-verbal aggression is still a complex problem: male students are generally in the medium category (38%), while female students are in the low category (36%). According to the National Commission on Violence Against Women's Annual Report (*CATAHU*) dated March 7, 2023, 339,782 of the total complaints involved gender-based violence (GBV). Personal violence still dominates GBV reporting, accounting for 99%, or 336,804 cases.

Lifestyle website Yourtango surveyed 100 mental health professionals regarding their patients' marital problems. Communication failures lead to deterioration in marital relationships. Sixty-five percent of participants admitted that their patients' divorces were caused by communication factors between partners, which always led to arguments. Second, 43% of participants agreed that a partner's inability to resolve conflicts was the cause of divorce. 70% of participants agreed that a failure to respect their wives was the cause of poor communication in the household. 83% were irritated by their husbands' inability to provide a channel for their wives to confide in or be good listeners who would make their wives more comfortable sharing their stories with others.

Women, as second-in-command, have always determined social status. In Makassar in 1820, John Crawford noted that in South Sulawesi, women were considered to be the holders of the throne and mediators between the general public and local leaders. Meanwhile, in Java, women strengthened their political role at the domestic level. A Javanese proverb states that “*apik ing Suami gumantung istri, apik ing anak gumantung ibu*”, which roughly means that the good or bad of a husband and child is a reflection of their wife and mother (Heri Junaidi, Rusmiatiningsih, 2019). Despite their domestic power and limited public political presence, Javanese women are actively involved in politics, participating in elections, participating in political party campaigns, and lobbying for discussions on Indonesian laws related to domestic violence, pornography, and child protection (Handayani & Ardian Novianto, 2011).

The above reality drew the researcher's attention to a perspective on (Communication Balance), which the researcher then labeled or termed the "Tao of Communication." To develop this concept, the researcher studied and explored it through a case study of gender, specifically the Communication Patterns between Men and Women in a Social Location at the North Tambun Religious Affairs Office in Bekasi (KUA Read Kantor Urusan Agama), West Java 2026.



The existing reality (Das Sein), which has been found to be the cause of divorce, include:

1. Constant disputes and arguments, prolonged conflict, incompatibility, loss of harmony, and failure to resolve household problems. These factors are the biggest causes of divorce in Indonesia.
2. Economic problems, inability to meet family needs, unemployment, debt, or differences in how to manage family finances.
3. Domestic Violence (KDRT): Physical, verbal, psychological, or sexual violence that causes insecurity in the marital relationship.
4. Infidelity or the presence of a third party. Extramarital relationships that undermine a couple's trust and commitment.
5. Poor communication: Lack of openness, empathy, and the ability to resolve conflict constructively.
6. Partner neglect: One partner leaves their partner without clear responsibilities for an extended period.
7. Jealousy and loss of trust. Excessive suspicion can lead to prolonged conflict.
8. Incompatibility of values and personalities. Differences in life principles, parenting styles, beliefs, or life goals that are difficult to reconcile.
9. Sexual problems: Dissatisfaction in sexual relationships or incompatibility of sexual needs in partners.
10. Other factors (polygamy), early marriage, gambling, drunkenness, differing views, and even changing religions in certain cases.

While the desired condition (Das Sollen) is harmony, in married life, researchers refer to this gap as a communication imbalance

The toughest test for gender communication activists is also facing two forms of interpretation: the Naqliyyah (Qur'an and Hadith) and Aqliyyah (Rational Science) interpreters, with their respective justifications (both from the Structuralist and Post-Structuralist schools). Strengthened by Eagly's assumption that communication and behavior between men and women are determined by their views and roles in social situations (Alice Hendrickson Eagly, 2007).

In the Islamic Holy Book, it is stated in Surah Al-Mulk, verse 3, which means (*He is the God of Mankind*), *created seven heavens in layers. You will not see in the creation of the Most Merciful God the slightest imbalance. So, look at it again (over and over again)! Do you see any imbalances (defects/ cracks)?*

In the Tafsir Jalalain written by Jalaluddin As-Suyuti and Al-Mahalli, it is stated that the God of Man (Allah Swt) has created seven heavens in layers. Some of them are on top of others without touching. Every object in nature floats firmly in the middle of the universe, without any pillars to support it or without any ropes to tie it together. Each sky occupies a designated space in the middle of the universe, and each layer consists of countless planets. Each planet follows a predetermined orbit.

In this verse, we are shown the existence that exists outside of us (the earth) to study. Is there something unbalanced in the creation process? If you can't see what's outside the Earth, study your surroundings. Is there anything out of balance? The concept of Tawazun or balance in all things, including the use of 'aqli arguments (arguments derived from rational reason with



a Deductive/Post-Positivistic method) and naqli arguments (sourced from the Qur'an and Hadith with an Empiricist/Positivistic method). Harmonizing the attitude of reverence towards Allah SWT and reverence towards fellow human beings.

In this study, the researcher is interested in involving and studying intellectual figures who have questioned fundamental issues related to the nature of gender in the social constellation of the highest reality hierarchy matrix, namely, to gain "wisdom" from the concept of "balance" and most figures are grouped as "Sufis", not meaning they are "mystics." Read Seekers of Truth and Spiritual Experience. Figures such as Rabi'atul Adawiyah with his concept of "Teachings of Love and Compassion", Muhammad Al-Ghajali about "Women", Ikhwan As Shafa regarding the existence of philosophical knowledge that functions to guide science and religion (ulum as sharia) and worldly knowledge (ulum ar riyadiyyat), Zhang Jiao or Laozi regarding "Tao," and it is not impossible that other related figures could be involved.

Quraish Shihab said that wisdom is derived from the word "*hakama*," which originally meant to hinder. From the same root, a word meaning "control" was formed, meaning something that serves to lead to good and prevent evil. Achieving this goal requires knowledge and the ability to apply it.

Through a series of studies, researchers seek answers that may only be possessed by people from the sapiential tradition group "wisdom/Sufism tradition"; regarding the meaning of the essence of gender from the perspective of Islam and Taoism. How are the communication patterns of men and women in the structure of the universe (cosmology)? How is the relationship between Gender Communication, Sexuality, and Spirituality? What happens if a man has more of his feminine side (Yin/ Jamal) than his masculine (Yang/ Jalal) or vice versa? Can we reject or maintain the role and function of Gender? Then, how to create Balance in Communication?

According to the actual conditions (Das Sein) at the North Tambun Religious Affairs Office, the causes of divorce include persistent disputes and arguments, prolonged conflict, incompatibility, loss of harmony, and failure to resolve marital problems. These factors are the biggest causes of divorce in Indonesia. Economic problems, inability to meet family needs, unemployment, debt, or differences in how to manage family finances. Domestic Violence (KDRT) Physical, verbal, psychological, or sexual violence that causes insecurity in marital relationships. Infidelity or the presence of a third party. An extramarital relationship that destroys a couple's trust and commitment. Poor communication, lack of openness, empathy, and the ability to resolve conflict constructively. Spousal neglect: One party leaves the partner without clear responsibilities for a long period of time. Jealousy and loss of trust. Excessive suspicion can lead to prolonged conflict.

Incompatibility of values and personalities. Differences in life principles, parenting styles, beliefs, or life goals that are difficult to reconcile. Sexual problems. Dissatisfaction in sexual relationships or a mismatch in sexual needs between partners. Other factors (polygamy), early marriage, gambling, drunkenness, differences of opinion, and even conversion in certain cases. While the expected condition (Das Sollen) is harmony, in married life this gap is what researchers call a condition of imbalance in the communicator.

Frits Heider (1946) has a paradigm regarding Balance; his conceptualization shows a situation in which existing units and sentiments are experienced "living" side by side without pressure. Heider's balance theory is in his book "The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations".



Its scope concerns the bonds between individuals. This theory explains how individuals who are part of a social structure tend to form bonds with one another. One of the processes by which a group can be connected is by establishing open connectivity. Communication participants can create and convey verbal messages to others, and they can interpret the messages created by other members. Heider's theory focuses on interpersonal relationships. Heider's interest was in all psychological states related to liking or disliking individuals and other objects.

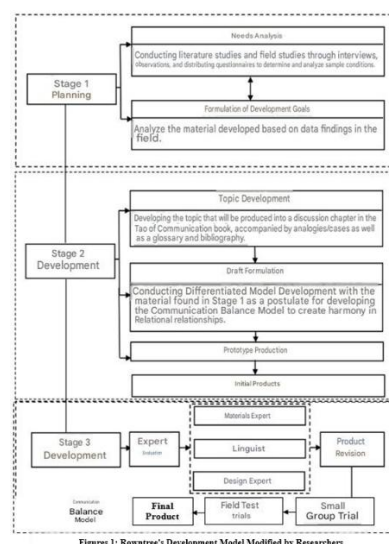
Heider's hypothesis concerns certain intra-individual conditions that can affect connectivity in a conversation. Heider also argues that imbalanced states create tension and produce stress. This hypothesis assumes that individuals need to maintain a balance between their perceived certainty and their assessment of the information they believe. The problem in this communication balance allows researchers to adopt various propositions, one of which is Miller's, which is based on his thinking about the existence of three types of information, namely: cultural information, sociological information, and psychological information (Sunarwinadi, 1993). Each can help a person's predictions in planning their communication messages.

Miller's proposition prompted my interest in researching the possibility of its occurrence in intercultural situations, particularly in the context of intercultural adaptation. This complexity has motivated researchers to attempt to unravel these social and cultural issues, hopefully creating a balance in communication. Therefore, the title the researchers chose is "Tao of Communication: Developing a Communication Balance Model for Husbands and Wives in the North Tambun (KUA) West Java 2026."

METHODS

This model development method utilizes research and development (R&D), namely product planning based on the Rowntree development model, which is then reconstructed by the developer, in this case the researcher herself.

The steps to produce the Tao of Communication prototype product (development of a communication balance model between the genders, in this case husband and wife), are as follows:



Figures 1: Rowntree's Development Model Modified by Researchers

- 1) Stage One: Preliminary Study is the initial stage in conducting research and model development. Preliminary research is conducted using a descriptive and qualitative approach. This approach begins with a literature review and field study.
- 2) Stage Two: Model Development Stage. The model development stage consists of the following steps: Product design (Guidebook); Design validation and design revision;
- 3) Stage III: Once the product has reached a feasibility stage, a trial phase will be conducted. The product trial will be conducted by material experts (experts in *Ushuluddin*/Islamic Philosophy), language experts, learning media technology experts, and product user testing (small groups and main field trials) (Kembo MR, Dhiu KD, 2021).

Data Collection Techniques

The data obtained in this study were quantitative (questionnaire), the three experts in the field of Islamic Philosophy obtained a score of 96%, the Linguist a score of 99%, and the Learning Media Technology expert a score of 96%. This proves that the average rating of the three experts was 97% was obtained. This proves that the Tao of Communication Book is in a position to be used, based on the rating scale as follows:



Figures 2: Proved by Expert

Questionnaire data obtained from the formative evaluation results of expert validation and product trials were derived from the average score obtained from all components regarding the feasibility of the product being developed.

The questionnaire score was calculated by calculating the maximum number of criteria scores, with the highest score being 4, the number of questions being (following the number of questions for each evaluator), and the number of respondents being (expert evaluation, one-on-one evaluation, and Majelis Taklim group evaluation) using the following formula:

$$\text{Criterion Score} = \text{Highest score} \times \text{Number of questions} \times \text{Respondents}$$

To determine the number of respondents' responses as a percentage, the following formula is used: (Sugiyono, 2012).

$$P = n \times 100\%$$

Note:

P: Percentage Frequency of each questionnaire response

n: Number of respondents

After the criterion score is obtained, the response scores are entered into an interval rating scale, starting from the lowest percentage range to the highest percentage, as shown in the table of rating scale validity categories below:

Table 1: Rating Scale Validity Level Categories (Windiyani, 2012)

Value	Category	Interpretation
1	Unclear	
2	Knows	Already know as much as 25%
3	Not Clear	Already know as much as 50%
4	Clear	Already know as much as 75%
5	Very Clear	Already know as much as 100%

Thus, the results of this data analysis were used as the basis for revising the previously developed Tao of Communication reference book, which was then referred to as formative evaluation. The effectiveness of the model was then assessed based on learning outcomes in the form of a performance assessment, which referred to an assessment rubric and was analyzed using calculations based on a predetermined rating scale.

A study by Diartha et al. (2016) stated that "Performance assessment can provide a comprehensive picture of participants' abilities. Therefore, the success of implementing performance assessment is closely related to good assessment design. Therefore, researchers need to develop performance assessments that are appropriate to learning needs" (Diartha et al., 2016).

This questionnaire used a rating scale, consisting of a list of questions about symptoms or behaviors presented in the form of a scale or category with meaningful values ranging from lowest to highest (Masidjo, 1995). Before the questionnaire was used for data collection, construct validity testing was conducted based on expert opinion (Sugiyono, 2012). The following is the model framework used for the Tao of Communication product trial, the development of the Communication Balance Model on Gender.

Table 1: Product Tao of Communication Book N=25

CHAPTER	Rated aspect	Rating scale			
		4	3	2	1
THE ROOTS OF THE TAO OF COMMUNICATION					
1	The Nature of Communication in Human Life				
	• Description of communication as a natural process	24	1		
	• Accuracy of sub-chapter	22	3		
	• Clarity of discussion material	22	3		
2	The Roots of Taoist Philosophy				
	• Description of the roots of Taoist	25			
	• Accuracy of sub-chapter	25			
	• Clarity of discussion material	25			
3	Language, Meaning, and Silence in Taoism				
	• Description of language, meaning and silence	25			
	• Accuracy of sub-chapter	25			
	• Clarity of discussion material	25			
4	Eastern and Western Communication Paradigms				
	• Description of Eastern & Western communication	25			
	• Accuracy of sub-chapter	24	1		
	• Clarity of discussion material	24	1		
5	Critique of Modern Communication Theory				
	• Description of criticism of Western communication theory	25			
	• Accuracy of sub-chapter	25			
	• Clarity of discussion material	25			
6	The Nature of Communication from a Taoist Perspective				
	• Description of the Nature of Communication from a Taoist	25			
	• Accuracy of sub-chapter	25			
	• Clarity of discussion material	25			
7	Silence and Meaning in Communication				
	• Description of Silence and Meaning	25			
	• Accuracy of sub-chapter	25			
	• Clarity of discussion material	25			
8	LANGUAGE, SYMBOLS, AND SIMPLICITY				
	• Description of language, symbols and simplicity	25			
	• Accuracy of sub-chapter	25			
	• Clarity of discussion material	24	1		
9	LANGUAGE, SYMBOLS, AND SIMPLICITY				
	• Description of language, symbols and simplicity	25			
	• Accuracy of sub-chapter	23	2		
	• Clarity of discussion material	24	1		
10	Contemporary Communication Crisis				
	• Description of Contemporary Communication	5	20		
	• Accuracy of sub-chapter	10	15		
	• Clarity of discussion material	12	13		
11	Towards a Synthesis of East and West				
	• Description Towards Synthesis of East and West	19	6		
	• Accuracy of sub-chapter	17	8		
	• Clarity of discussion material	20	5		

THE BODY OF THE TAO OF COMMUNICATION					
12	Conceptual Foundations of the Tao of Communication				
	• Conceptual Description of the Tao of Communication	25			
	• Accuracy of sub-chapter	24	1		
	• Clarity of discussion material	24	1		
13	Dimensions of the Tao of Communication				
	• Description of the Tao of Communication Dimension	24	1		
	• Accuracy of sub-chapter	22	3		
	• Clarity of discussion material	22	3		
14	Tao Of Communication Conceptual Model				
	• Description of the Conceptual Model of Tao of Communication	25			
	• Accuracy of sub-chapter	24	1		
	• Clarity of discussion material	24	1		
15	Measuring the Tao of Communication				
	• Description of Tao of Communication Measurement	10	15		
	• Accuracy of sub-chapter	10	15		
	• Clarity of discussion material	15	10		
A GUIDE TO THE TAO OF COMMUNICATION					
16	Tao of Communication in Social Life				
	• Description of the Tao of Communication in Social Life	25			
	• Accuracy of sub-chapter	25			
	• Clarity of discussion material	18	7		
17	The Tao Of Communication In The Digital Era				
	• Description of the Tao of Communication in the Digital Era	19	6		
	• Accuracy of sub-chapter	24	1		
	• Clarity of discussion material	24	1		
18	Leadership and Conflict Resolution				
	• Description of Leadership and Conflict Resolution	24	1		
	• Accuracy of sub-chapter	22	3		
	• Clarity of discussion material	22	3		
19	Applications and Implications of Theory				
	• Description of Application and Implications of Theory	25			
	• Accuracy of sub-chapter	25			
	• Clarity of discussion material	25			
20	Harmonious/Sakinah Family Communication Guide				
	• Description of the Harmonious Family Communication Guide	25			
	• Accuracy of sub-chapter	25			
	• Clarity of discussion material	25			

The data above shows that 25 respondents in the main field test gave a rating of 4 (Very Clear) with a score of 5588. The ideal score is 4 (assessment category) x 25 (N = respondents) x 60 (question items) = 6000. Therefore, the total assessment score is 5588 x 6000 = 0.93, a percentage of 100 = 93%.

This means that the Tao of Communication book, from Chapters 1-20, is categorized as suitable for use by 25 respondents because it falls into the Very Clear category.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

One factor contributing to the rise in divorce is a lack of harmonious communication. The Primary cause is that conversations are merely about transmission. This is similar to the concept of theorizing patriarchy, which states that when a message is sent, the recipient, in this

case, the communicator (wife), must act upon it and carry it out, and vice versa. This lack of understanding of roles, including when to act as husband or wife, as employee, as subordinate or superior, is also a factor.

Researchers concluded that the lack of teaching media or guidance for harmonious communication for families was the basis for the birth of the book "Tao of Communication," stemming from academic concerns about the increasingly mechanistic and transmission-oriented development of communication science.

Amidst the rapid flow of digital information, surfing digital spaces has created widespread privacy and given rise to new perspectives. Essentially, communication is a process of achieving and creating harmony and mutual understanding that is often overlooked. Modern humans are equipped with various technologies to connect, yet at the same time, relational crises and fragmentation of meaning are increasingly prominent. This condition encourages the need for a review of the basic assumptions that have supported the construction of Western communication theory, and opens up space to explore alternative paradigms that offer different perspectives.

Taoist philosophy, with its emphasis on balance, natural flow, and meaningful silence, provides a rich and relevant framework for addressing these challenges. This book represents the culmination of research that seeks to critically synthesize ancient Taoist wisdom and contemporary communication theory discourse. The goal is not to reject or replace established scholarly traditions, but rather to enrich them with dimensions that have received little attention, such as intuition, spirituality, simplicity, and non-verbal communication that transcends the limitations of language (empathy).

The discussion is designed to bridge two seemingly separate realms of thought: the Western analytical-empirical tradition and the Eastern holistic-intuitive tradition.

The development material presented in the book, *The Tao of Communication*, is systematically organized, beginning with a deconstruction of conventional understandings of communication, an introduction to the roots of Taoist philosophy, and the formulation of a new conceptual model called the *Tao of Communication*. Each chapter is designed to gradually build the reader's understanding, from philosophical foundations to practical applications in various social contexts, from interpersonal relationships and organizations to dynamics in the digital age, to a guide to harmonious communication for husbands and wives (sakinah mawaddah wa rahmah).

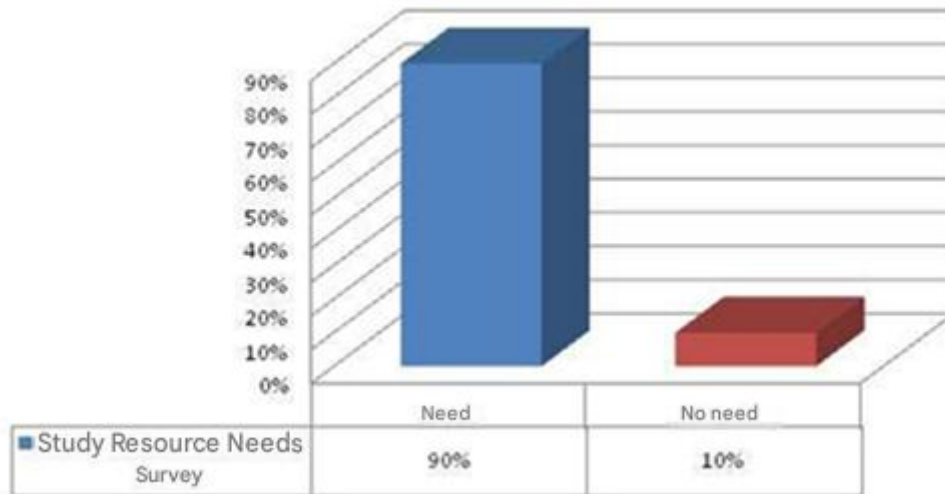
The goal of this development is to produce a prototype book, which involved an in-depth literature search across various disciplines, including philosophy, communication studies, psychology, and sociology. The researcher's greatest hope is that this work will not only become required reading for students and academics in the field of communication science, but will also serve as a source of inspiration for practitioners, household leaders and their structures, and anyone concerned with the quality of human interaction (socio-cultural).

Hopefully, this book will spark new dialogues and encourage further research that further explores the potential of Eastern wisdom to enrich the global treasury of communication science.

The data findings regarding the need to create a book product as a learning resource or guide to harmonious communication are illustrated in the graph below.



Survey of the Needs for a Communication Guidebook for Families



Figures 2: Needs Chart

Model Development Results

The result of this research model development is a book. It contains a communication balance model and a guide to harmonious/sakinah communication, titled "Tao of Communication," which consists of 20 chapters. It discusses Western philosophy, its strengths and weaknesses, and its application to social structures (in this case, the family: husband, wife, and children).

Although Western philosophy is conceptually rich, it is spiritually dry. This entire approach is based on the assumption that Western scientific communication is an active, rational, and intentional act. Communication is viewed as something done, an action, rather than a flow (Tao). Western science has experienced a crisis, as illustrated in his book "The Passion of the Western Mind," published in 1993. In the chapter "The Crisis of Modern Science," Tarnas details the errors of Western science, including:

1. The postulates of Western science (Space, Matter, Causality, and Observation) have been proven incorrect (Controverted).
2. Kant's view of the universe is not true, but rather a creation of the mind.
3. Newtonian determinism loses its foundation, now shifting to "stochastic"
4. Subatomic particles are open to interpretation in the spiritual realm. "The author calls them God particles."
5. The Principle of Uncertainty: Heisenberg discovered that the motion of an electron cannot be determined simultaneously, neither its position nor its velocity. This calls into question the ability to observe.
6. Ecological (atmospheric) damage, called the "planetary ecological crisis."

This is where Eastern philosophy, particularly Taoism, provides a profound alternative perspective to irrigate a long-dry space.

Introduction: Tao of Communication

Tao of Communication can be defined as a philosophy and practice of interaction, not viewed from a religious perspective. It is a philosophy that aims to cultivate harmony (harmonious attunement) with the natural flow (Tao) of interconnected reality, manifested through spontaneous (Ziran), unforced (Wu Wei), and balanced (Yin-Yang) communication. This definition, while concise, contains several key components that fundamentally distinguish it from other communication paradigms. Each of these components needs to be unpacked to understand its richness and implications fully.

First, the Tao of Communication is identified as both a philosophy and a practice. This dual emphasis is crucial. It is not simply a descriptive theory observing communication from a distance; it is a living philosophy, a perspective inherently tied to concrete practice. Theory and practice are inseparable. Understanding its principles means simultaneously being called to embody them in everyday interactions. It rejects the separation between knowledge and action, between scholar and practitioner.

Second, the goal, or telos, is to cultivate harmonious attunement. This is a direct response to the void in the dimension of harmony we have identified. The goal is not instrumental effectiveness, persuasion, or even mere cognitive understanding. Harmony is a more holistic state, encompassing emotional resonance, relational balance, and a sense of participation in a greater whole. The term "cultivate" is also important; it implies that harmony is not something that can be engineered or forced, but rather something that must be nurtured in order to grow organically.

Third, this harmony is achieved through the natural flow (Tao) of interconnected reality. This places human communication within the broadest cosmological context. It recognizes that our interactions are not closed systems, but rather part of a much larger ecosystem of reality. Wise communication is one that is able to "listen" to and move with the larger currents of situation, culture, and even nature itself. This is the ontological foundation of this theory, which rejects anthropocentrism and embraces an ecological perspective.

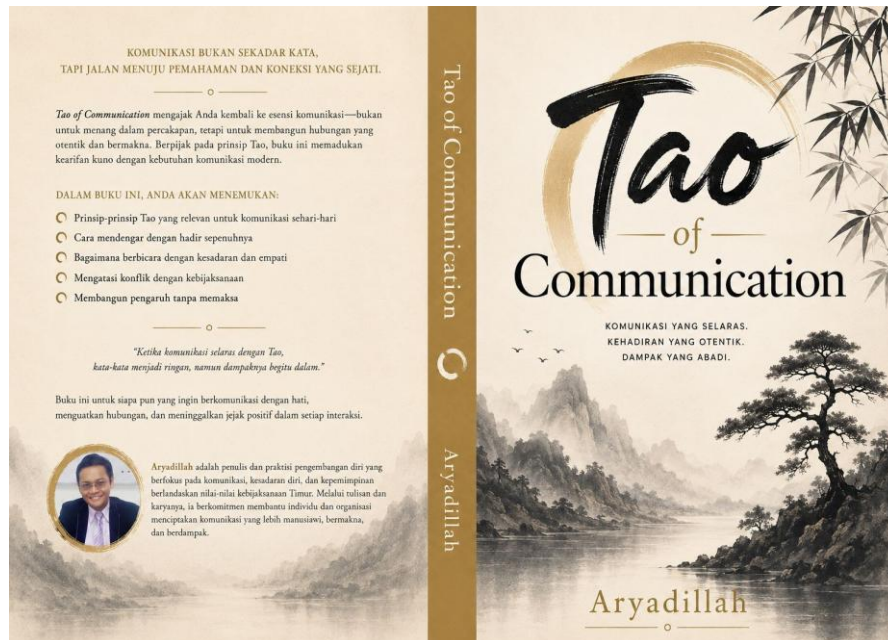
Fourth, the practical manifestation of this harmony is explained through three key concepts. Spontaneous communication (Ziran) means it emerges from an authentic, uncontrived state of being, free from masks and egoic pretensions. Non-coercion (Wu Wei) means it does not seek to dominate, manipulate, or control; instead, it creates conditions in which understanding and connection can emerge naturally. And balance (Yin-Yang) means it dynamically navigates and integrates polarities such as speaking and listening, conflict and harmony, and connection and autonomy.

Compared to conventional definitions of communication, the differences are striking. Many definitions focus on the "process of transmitting meaning" or the "act of sharing information." The Tao of Communication shifts the focus from transmission (a mechanical metaphor) to cultivation (an agricultural metaphor). It also shifts the focus from "meaning" or "information" (as movable objects) to "harmony" (as a dynamic, relational state).

This definition is inherently transformative. It does not ask, "How can I use communication to get what I want?" Instead, it asks, "How can I participate in this interaction in the most harmonious and congruent way?" This second question radically shifts the communicator's orientation from ego-centric to eco-centric or relational-centric.



Ultimately, the Tao of Communication redefines communication itself. Communication is no longer seen as a tool we use. Instead, communication is the field in which we live, move, and become ourselves. It is the Tao itself as it manifests itself in the realm of human interaction. Practicing the Tao of Communication means consciously choosing to be a clear channel for this harmonious flow.



Figures 3: Book Cover Design

Imagine the solar system. In the traditional view of communication (transmission), the sun (the sender) would be seen as “sending” the planets (messages) into their orbits. This is an absurd view. The Tao of Communication’s definition is more akin to Einstein’s understanding of gravity. The sun doesn’t “send” anything. Instead, its immense mass creates a curvature in the fabric of space-time (the context or Tao). The planets, in their attempt to move straight through this curved space-time, naturally follow orbital paths. Their harmonious movement is an “attunement” to the existing gravitational field. Communication, by this definition, is not about the sender firing off a message (Bullet Theory), but rather about the participants wisely finding their natural “orbits” within a co-created “relational field,” moving in a graceful and effortless dance.

Developing a Communication Balance Model on Gender

Harmonious communication is not primarily determined by speaking skills, but rather by how participants perceive reality before exchanging information. Cognitive transformation toward wu wei awareness is fundamental to creating harmonious, congruent, empathetic, and domination-free communication.

Isn't it true that the more a person experiences cognitive transformation toward non-coercive awareness (wu wei cognition), the greater the level of harmony created in their communication process? The Tao does not teach how to speak, but how to understand. This is not a speaking technique, but rather a transformation in how people perceive reality. In modern terms, this is called cognitive reframing.

Cognitive reframing is a psychological technique that aims to help individuals modify their perspective on challenging situations, encouraging a shift from negative interpretations to more neutral or positive ones. This method has its roots in cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), which posits that negative thoughts can lead to negative emotions, and by changing these thoughts, one's emotional response can also change. This process typically involves recognizing negative thought patterns, evaluating their validity, and developing alternative, more constructive perspectives on a situation (Mohn, 2024).

Practicing cognitive reframing through reframing thoughts, engaging in self-reflection, and using positive internal dialogue aims to make positive thinking a more automatic response. This technique is not only beneficial for personal emotional regulation but can also improve interpersonal relationships through communication.

For example, counseling for prospective brides and grooms at the Religious Affairs Office (KUA) provides an understanding of marital rights and obligations, and how to create healthier and more harmonious dynamics.

Thus, the communication balance model in this book reiterates the central message: communication is a practice of awareness, namely being fully present and listening (awakening creativity, feeling, and intention/empathy). Whether the goal is harmony or *sakinah* (peace and harmony), the path to achieving it remains the same. The Tao of Communication guides communicators to shift from ego-reactivity to conscious responsiveness, from the desire for control to trust in the natural flow, and from self-focus to maintaining the health of the entire relational system. We conclude on this highly practical and personally relevant note.

The researcher hopes that the Tao of Communication will not only be a theory to be studied, but also a path (*Te*), the word Path is synonymous with the Sufi terminology "*Tarekat*", so that this book becomes a practice to be followed.

CONCLUSION

Gender is a social construct that regulates the roles, functions, responsibilities, and relationships between men and women, shaped by their socialization and behavior, even by their mental and emotional characteristics. The treatment of both is largely determined by the local socio-cultural context or situation and the conditions created by events that shape communication patterns. The main axes of communication flow often used are the Linear Transmission Model by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver, entitled "A Mathematical Theory of Communication" (October 1984), Jürgen Habermas (Communicative Action) entitled "The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society" (1984), or Paul Watzlawick (Humans Cannot Not Communicate) entitled "Pragmatics of Human Communication: A Study of Interactional Patterns, Pathologies, and Paradoxes" (1987).

The author then raises a new axis or new paradigm (Newness), namely that building effective communication is not determined by the intensity or number of messages sent, unlike Western theory, which, according to Tarnas, has now experienced a crisis in Western science



and opened up an alternative path in Eastern philosophy, namely the Tao of Communication: opening up new opportunities or new cognitions for building harmonious communication.

Communication in this cognition is not determined by speaking skills, but by how humans understand reality before they speak. Cognitive transformation toward wu wei awareness is the foundation for creating harmonious, congruent, empathetic, and domination-free communication.

Therefore, the level of alignment or harmony between sender and receiver lies in the natural flow, where meaning is created in meaningful relational relationships.

The Tao of Communication demonstrates how a practical and profound framework for building relational relationships can be meaningfully integrated with spiritual and cultural aspirations to create a harmonious, balanced, and harmonious family, or, using Islamic terminology, "sakinah." By bridging the practical wisdom of Taoism with the core values of the Islamic tradition, we have seen that the path to harmony/sakinah is often universal, even though the language used to describe it may differ.

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