

## The Effect of Marriage Commitment and Marriage Adjustment toward Marriage Satisfaction of GBKP Priest's Wife

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### Abstract

This study examines the impact of marriage adjustment and commitment on the satisfaction of GBKP priests' wives in their marriages. Being a GBKP priest's wife can be challenging as they may feel neglected due to the husband's responsibilities towards the congregation. Due to lack of time, the husband's busy schedule may also prevent them from assisting with household chores or caring for the children. The research focused on 35 married GBKP priests' wives who have been married for at least one year and have one child. This study uses three measuring devices, namely Kansas Marriage Satisfaction Scale compiled by Schumm (1986) to measure marriage satisfaction, The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) by Spanier (1976) to measure Marriage adjustments, and the 8-item Marriage Commitment Scale developed by Stanley and Markman (1992) to measure marriage commitment. The regression test analysis revealed that marriage adjustment significantly affects marriage satisfaction, while marriage commitment does not. This study's findings may benefit the Karo Protestant Batak Church in developing policies supporting priests' families' well-being.

**Keywords:** *Marriage commitment; marriage adjustment; marriage satisfaction*

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### Introduction

Having a happy and satisfactory marriage is the hope of every married couple, including the hopes of women who marry men who work as priests in the Karo Protestant Batak Church. Working as a priest generally demands the priest to use much time for service as a Shepard, leader, and teacher, decreasing the time and quality of relationships in the family. As a member of the family of God's

servants, the priest's wife is also responsible for the wife's service. Nora (the term for the priest's wife) is expected to show their care and attention to the church, the environment of the church, and the surrounding community where her husband serves. In addition to this, the wife is also expected to support the wife's service in accordance to her given grace or talent, support the husband's services in the spiritual field or daily life, remind the husband to carry out his services well as a servant of God in the congregation, not to interfere or regulate husband's service work, and not to become a obstruct wife's service (Clay, Newlin, & Leeks, 2005; Hyun & Shin, 2009; PPWG GBKP, 2014; Sihite, Suryaningsih, & Claudia, 2022).

Based on the statements above, it can be assumed that being the wife of the GBKP priest is not easy. The priest's task to provide more attention to the church tends may make the wife feel given less attention. Because of the many mandatory daily services the husband has, they tend to have little time to help with childcare or help with domestic tasks. Thus, the priest's wife in GBKP must be prepared and willing (both voluntarily and involuntarily) to solve problems or conduct household chores independently (Brahmana, Suryanto, & Suyanto, 2019; Chan & Wong, 2018; Plummer, 2008; Sihite, Suryaningsih, & Claudia, 2022.)

Every married couple desires a satisfying marriage, but achieving this can be challenging. Although the level of satisfaction in marriage significantly impacts the relationship between a husband and wife, not all marriage is satisfactory. Unfortunately, many couples divorce for various reasons (Widodo, 2021). According to BPS data reported by kumparan.com (2019), divorce cases increased in East Java from 84,000 to 88,000 in 2018. The leading causes of divorce were continuous quarrels (42.51%), economic difficulties (36.67%), one party leaving (14.38%), and domestic violence (1.66%). These statistics data show an increased divorce rate, indicating that many couples struggle to find satisfaction in their marriage, eventually leading to divorce.

For a marriage to be satisfying, the husband and wife must put in effort. That means each partner has essential roles and responsibilities that contribute to the expected level of satisfaction in the relationship. In this case, both partners must understand what satisfaction means to their spouses and act to fulfill their needs. The level of satisfaction in a marriage can have positive or negative effects

on the relationship. Studies suggest that marriage satisfaction can impact the welfare of individuals measured by life satisfaction and self-esteem (al-Darmaki et al., 2016).

Conversely, marriage dissatisfaction can impact the instability of husband-wife relations, leading to a rift in relationships and even divorce (Gottman & Levenson, 2002). Hurlock (2010) states that divorce is a result of marital dissatisfaction. Marriage satisfaction is also associated with a low level of stress psychologically and physically in individuals. A husband and wife who are satisfied with their marriage tend not to experience physical or psychological stress. Conversely, low satisfaction in marriage is associated with various physical diseases, such as high blood pressure and heart disease, as well as psychological problems, such as anxiety, depression, and substance abuse (Santrock, 2010)

The demand for a priest's wife in GBKP is to ensure a peaceful and smooth domestic life and be involved in service in the congregation (Brahmana, Suryanto, & Suyanto, 2019; Sihite, Suryaningsih, & Claudia, 2022). For example, they are expected to have an active role in mother groups, be involved in the coordination or be vocal in groups of mothers, help when misfortune happens, and so forth. The abundant household or church demands undoubtedly impact marriage satisfaction (Hyun & Shin, 2009; Brahmana, Suryanto, & Suyanto, 2019). According to Fowers and Olson (1993), marriage satisfaction is conceptualized as a comprehensive evaluation of marriage life that has ten aspects, namely personality issues, similar roles, joint activity communication, religious orientation, financial management, solutions to problems, sexual orientation, children and parents, as well as family and friends. There are several factors that affect marital satisfaction, such as marriage adjustment and marriage commitment.

Rachmawati and Mastuti (2013) revealed that based on their study, wives with a high marriage adjustment generally have a higher level of marriage satisfaction than those with a moderate marriage adjustment show differences in the level of marriage satisfaction. Thus, adjustments in marriage have a significant role in marriage satisfaction (Anjani & Suryanto, 2006; Atwater & Duffy, 2009 in Retiara et al., 2016; Tazkiya and Puspitawati (2022),).

In addition to the adjustment process in marriage, marriage satisfaction is closely related to the

commitment to maintain a marriage. This aligns with the concepts put forward by Johnson (1999) that there are three forms of commitment in a marriage commitment: personal, moral, and structural. A personal commitment combines several components whose core is that personal commitment is related to individual desires to maintain relationships with a partner based on satisfaction and love in marriage relations (Johnson, Caughlin & Huston, 1999; Arriaga & Agnew, 2001). According to research by Johnson (1999), the wife generally tends to contribute more to personal, moral, and structural commitment than the husband. Wismanto (in Serli, 2016) states that commitment is the main foundation in maintaining marriage relations. The higher the commitment to a marriage, the higher the satisfaction the couple feels so that the decision is to continue the relationship between the couple (Serli, 2016). Commitment is an all-positive and negative power that keeps individuals in a relationship (Taylor, Peplau, & Sears, 2009; Owen et al, 2014). People who are very committed in a relationship have a high possibility of staying together in all situations, both joy and sorrow, to achieve common goals (Taylor, Peplau, & Sears, 2009). This is evidenced by Boseke's (2015) research, which showed a significant positive relationship between marriage commitment and satisfaction.

Based on the description above and considering the condition of the phenomenon of marriage in the priest's family at the Batak Protestant Karo Church, where the success of the husband's service is not only based on the quality of his servants alone but is also influenced by the service of the wife, the authors are interested in examining the effect of marriage adjustment and marriage commitment on marriage satisfaction of the priest's wife at the Batak Protestant Karo Church. This research is unique because it was conducted on the priest's wife and comes from the Karo Batak culture, where this research has never been done before.

There are 2 hypotheses in this research:

1. Marriage adjustment affects the marriage satisfaction of the GBKP pastor's wife.
2. Marriage commitment affects the marriage satisfaction of the GBKP pastor's wife.

## **Method**

### *Design*

This study is categorized as a correlation study using a quantitative approach. According to Creswell

(2013), the quantitative approach measures the relationship between variables. Variables are generally measured using instruments so that the data obtained can be analyzed using statistical procedures. This study consists of three variables that are divided into independent and dependent variables. The independent variable consists of marriage adjustments and marriage commitments, whereas the dependent variable is marriage satisfaction.

### *Participants*

The research subjects who could be involved in this study are 35 people. The subjects in this study were the wife of the GBKP priest, with the criteria set as follows:

- a. Married for at least one year
- b. Has a minimum of one child
- c. Originally from the Karo Tribe
- d. Is a member of the GBKP since before marriage
- e. Does not work as an active priest, both inside and outside the GBKP

Research sampling uses accidental sampling techniques; therefore, samples were chosen by recruiting whomever from the population meets the research characteristics.

### *Questionnaire*

The data in this study were collected through several scales measuring the three research variables. Marriage Satisfaction is a subjective reflection and evaluation of the individual's satisfaction with their marriage, which has one-dimension, unidimensional unity. The marriage satisfaction score was measured using the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale assembled by Fowers & Olson (1993) has 15 items. The EMS scale was used with its original five response categories from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The higher the score obtained, the higher the marriage satisfaction felt by the respondent and vice versa. Using SPSS, it is known that the reliability of this instrument is 0.817. The following is an example of an item on the EMS scale: My partner and I understand each other perfectly; I am very happy with how we handle role responsibilities in our marriage; I have some needs that are not being met by our relationship.

Marriage Adjustment is the adaptation process between the husband and wife who unite in a family and are willing to learn to accommodate each partner's needs, desires, and hopes. Marriage adjustments are measured using The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) from Spanier (1976). The DAS scale contains 32 items and can be completed in just a few minutes because of its simple form and easy answer. The DAS scale consists of four components: consensus, unity, satisfaction, and affectional expressions. The results of the reliability test of the marriage adjustment scale show that the reliability value of this scale is 0.846, with sample items as follows: how often do you or your partner leave the house after a fight ? ; Have you ever regretted getting married ? ; How often do you and your partner fight?

Marriage Commitment is the desire of husband and wife to maintain long-term marriage relationships, both emotionally and cognitively. The Marriage Commitment Scale assesses marriage commitment was developed by Stanley and Markman (1992), which consists of eight items (for example, "I pay attention to the needs of my partner"), assessed on the Likert 5-point type scale from 1 (strongly disagree) up to 5 (strongly agree). The average score is the overall measure of a marriage commitment. .The results of the reliability test of the marriage adjustment scale show that the reliability value of this scale is 0.803, with sample items as follows: Except when a spouse dies, marriage should be a once-in-a-lifetime commitment; It would be difficult for my friends to accept it if I ended the relationship with my partner; I want this relationship to stay strong no matter what rough times we may encounter.

#### *Data analysis*

Based on the hypothesis submitted above, the data analysis used in this study uses SPSS (Statistical Program for Social Science). The collected data will be analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis. Multiple linear regression analysis aims to determine the relationship between two or more independent variables with the dependent variable.

## Result

### *Demographic Data*

This section describes the study's results based on age. The range of respondent's age is 29 years (youngest) to 50 years (oldest), with the following details: age 29 (2,86%), 38 (2,86%), 46 (2,86%), and 47 (2,86%); age 30 (5,71%), 34 (5,71%), 36 (5,71%), 39 (5,71%), 42 (5,71%), and 48 (5,71%); age 32 (8,58%), 35 (8,58%), and 40 (8,58%); age 33 (14,28%), and age of 43 (11,42%).

Based on research, the last level of education respondents is quite heterogeneous, ranging from SPK to Masters. The level of education with the same frequency ( $n=1$ ) is found in high school (2,86%), SPK (2,86%), Doctoral (2,86%), and Diploma One (2,86%), each with one participant. In contrast, the last level of education was predominantly Undergraduate Students, with a frequency of 20 people (57,14%).

Research shows that the youngest marriage age of respondents was three years of marriage (5,71%), and the longest marriage was around 28 years (2,86%). The frequency of the length of the respondent married from the smallest to the most significant year spread evenly.

Research also presents various duration in which the respondent accompanied the husband as a priest. The most minor year accompanies a long time accompanying three years (5,71%), while the longest accompanies 22 years (8,58%). The most frequent assistance is for eight, nine, and 16 years, each of which is four couples.

### *Variable Categorization*

The research variable is categorized into high, medium, and low. Categorization of the level is based on the value of the empirical mean and group normative deviation. The following is the exposure of statistical data on the marriage commitment variable and marriage adjustment as the independent variable of research and marriage satisfaction as a variable depending on the research.

Regarding marriage, the study found that the average score for marriage commitment is 67, with a standard deviation of 8. The average score for marriage adjustment is 90, with a standard deviation of 9, while the average score for satisfaction is 45, with a standard deviation of 7. From the study result above, marriage adjustment appears to influence marriage satisfaction, but commitment does not.

The researcher then categorizes each variable into three levels to see the number of satisfied subjects in their marriages at a high, medium, and low stage. The categorization is arranged empirically, with the following description.

Table 1  
 Category of Marriage Satisfaction Viewed from Marriage Commitment

Interval	Category	Subject	
		Frequency	Percentage
$75 \leq x$	High	7	20%
$59 \leq X < 75$	Medium	24	69%
$X < 59$	High	4	11%
Total		35	100%

Table 2  
 Empiric Score

Variable	Empiric Score			
	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Marriage commitment	8	40	67	8

Table 3  
 Interval Distance Formula

Interval	Category
$M + 1.SD \leq X$	High
$M - 1.SD \leq X < M + 1.SD$	Medium
$X < M - 1.SD$	Low



Based on the categorization, it can be seen that empirically there are seven research subjects or 20% high category subjects committed to their marriages, 24 people (69%) are in the medium category of their marriage commitment, and four people (11%) in the category of marriage commitment low.

Table 4  
Category of Marriage Satisfaction Viewed from Marriage Adjustment

Interval	Category	Subject	
		Frequency	Percentage
$X \geq 98$	High	7	20%
$81 \leq X < 98$	Medium	23	66%
$X < 81$	Low	5	14%
Total		35	100%

Table 5  
Empiric Score

Variable	Empiric Score			
	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Marriage adjustment	32	160	90	9

Table 6  
Interval Distance Formula

Interval	Category
$M + 1.SD \leq X$	High
$M - 1.SD \leq X < M + 1.SD$	Medium
$X < M - 1.SD$	Low

Based on the categorization, it can be seen that empirically there are 7 research subjects, or 20% of the high category subjects, already feel appropriate for their marriage, 23 people (66%) are in the medium category of the suitability of their marriage, and five people (14%) the remaining discrepancy against marriage.

Table 7  
 Category of Marriage Satisfaction Viewed from Marriage Satisfaction

Interval	Category	Subject	
		Frequency	Percentage
$X \geq 51$	High	9	26%
$38 \leq X < 51$	Medium	20	57%
$X < 38$	Low	6	17%
Total		35	100%

Table 8  
 Empiric Score

Variable	Empiric Score			
	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Marriage adjustment	15	75	45	7

Table 9  
 Interval Distance Formula

Interval	Category
$M + 1.SD \leq X$	High
$M - 1.SD \leq X < M + 1.SD$	Medium
$X < M - 1.SD$	Low

Based on the categorization, it can be seen that empirically there are nine research subjects, or 26% of subjects, are in the category of high satisfaction with their marriage, 20 people (57%) are in the medium category of marriage satisfaction, and six people (17%) the remaining dissatisfaction with marriage.

*Normality test*

Data can provide a complete picture of the spread of variables measured if it meets normality. The benefits of data are normal as a basic form of applicative data that is said to be applied. Based on Normality Test Result by using *One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test* knows that the three variables have met the requirements for data normality. Both marriage adjustment data, marriage commitment,

and marriage satisfaction have significant data ( $P > 0,05$ ), so the third can be said to be all normally distributed data.

*Linearity test*

The linearity test identifies that 2 (two) data on the variables included in the data analysis stage meet the equation of  $y = x$ . In this study, both independent variables, the marriage adjustment variable (IV1) and the Marriage Commitment (IV2), will be tested with the variable dependent on marriage satisfaction. The following are the results of the linearity test. The linearity test reveals that the marriage and marriage satisfaction variables have a linearity significance value of  $p < 0,05$ . Therefore, it is understood that the two variables have the closeness of the data in the line of the line  $y = x$  and that the two variables move together.

*Hypothesis test*

The hypothesis test is used to answer the research assumptions. This study used a multiple linear regression test involving the marriage listing variable as the first independent variable, marriage commitment as the second independent variable, and marriage satisfaction as a dependent variable. Here are the results:

Table 10  
Multiple Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. The error of the Estimate
1	.630 <sup>a</sup>	.397	.360	5.095

a. Predictors: (Constant), Marriage\_Commitment, Marriage\_Adjustment

Table 11  
Research Variable ANOVA<sup>b</sup> Result

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	547.621	2	273.810	10.547	.000 <sup>a</sup>
Residual	830.779	32	25.962		
Total	1378.400	34			

A. Predictors: (Constant), Marriage\_Commitment, Marriage\_Adjustment

B. Dependent Variable: Marriage\_Satisfaction

Table 11 shows that the two independent variables free have an influence of 0.397 on the dependent variable, marriage satisfaction. This data aligns with the significant value in the value of F count (empirical) with the acquisition of a value of 0,00. Therefore, both the marriage commitment variable and the marriage adjustment simultaneously affect marriage satisfaction significantly.

### Regression Equation

The regression equation explains how independent variables can contribute to variable-dependent changes. The following is a change in the regression line equation. The results of this study by paying attention to the coefficient table below:

Table 12  
Coefficients Research Variable

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
1 (Constant)	-7.417	10.752		-.690	.495
Marriage Adjustment	.400	.103	.545	3.883	.000
Marriage Commitment	.181	.115	.221	1.573	.126

A. Dependent Variable: Marriage\_Satisfaction

From the above research findings, it is known that marital adjustment has an influence on marital satisfaction, while marital commitment does not affect marital satisfaction.

### Discussion

Based on the statistical test results, marriage commitment and adjustment simultaneously affect marriage satisfaction significantly. The following is a discussion of the two variables.

#### Marriage Commitment Does Not Influence Marriage Satisfaction

The findings of this study differ significantly from previous research, which suggested that marriage

commitment significantly impacts marriage satisfaction. Wismanto's (2004) research indicates that marriage commitment plays a role in one's level of satisfaction with their marriage. This study further supports the idea that commitment is the foundation for a successful marriage, as highlighted by Stafford & Canary (in Wismanto, 2004), which reveals that one of the strategies to maintain marriage relations is a commitment in the husband's relationship with the wife. Rusbult, Kumashiro, Coolsen, & Kirchner (2004) define marriage commitment as the level of dedication couples have to each other and their desire to remain married for a long time. When a couple is committed to marriage, they work together to overcome challenges and build a robust and lasting relationship.

The study found that the situation is different for the GBKP priest's wife, which makes the results unique compared to previous studies. While studies by Hou, Jiang, and Wang in 2018 showed that marriage commitment alone does not directly lead to satisfaction but is moderated by communication. This study found that effective communication between partners generally affects marital satisfaction. In addition, research conducted by Givertz, Segrin & Woszidlo (2016) also supports the results of previous studies, where from his research on married couples, it is argued that marriage commitment does not directly affect marital satisfaction.

According to the results of descriptive tests, the priest's wife shows medium levels of commitment and satisfaction in their marriage. This suggests that marriage commitment and satisfaction may decrease without trying to balance these factors early. In preparation for marriage, the GBKP typically provides marriage counseling led by the priest. During this counseling, the priest explains the Christian perspective on marriage. He emphasizes the importance of total commitment between a married couple, as stated in Mark 10:9 of the Bible: "Therefore, what God has united, should not be divorced by humans."

As a priest's spouse, it is highly regarded to have a strong understanding of the Bible, both directly and indirectly. Despite facing challenges in maintaining a healthy marriage due to the demands of the husband's service, the wife must remain committed to the relationship without worrying about personal satisfaction. This aligns with the Biblical teaching to "submit to your husband as to God, for the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church" (Ephesians 5:22-33).

### *Marriage Adjustment Effect on Marriage Satisfaction*

According to Hurlock (1991), marriage adjustment is a process of adaptation between husband and wife. In this case, the husband and wife try to adjust to one another to prevent or resolve conflicts that arise. Unity between two individuals with many differences, such as the background of parenting, culture, perspective, and attitude towards something generally challenging. Many contradictions will emerge as a reaction to these differences but must continue to be pursued to lead to happiness and satisfaction in marriage (marriage satisfaction). According to Lasswel & Lasswel (1987), marriage adjustment is a continuous and continuous process in marriage. Thus, of course, many changes will be experienced by individuals throughout marriage life.

This change certainly does not always run smoothly. There will be times when conflicts, disputes, and even conflicts will occur. This is in accordance with what Gurin et al. (in Sears, 1994) stated, that conflict will always occur in marriage. The conflict, disputes or conflicts that often arise are about finance, children's education, relationships with others or extended families, the activities desired by couples, communication, and division of labor in the household (Sadarjoen, 2005). This is also in accordance with the research results delivered by Arond & Pauker (in Olson & Defrain, 2003), which state that the main problems often faced by newly married couples are domestic duties or work. The results of the study were also supported by the results of research conducted by Edward Bader and his colleagues (in Olson, Defrain, 2003), namely, for six months to 5 years the age of marriage problems that often became the leading cause of problems in the household is related to domestic duties.

Seeing the many negative impacts caused by marriage conflicts on marriage happiness is essential to make efforts so that the happiness of marriages experienced by married couples continues to be achieved and even increases. One indicator of achieving marriage happiness, a married couple must reach a satisfied marriage. It is just that the marriage satisfaction a married couple feels is not necessarily the same. Mar'at (2012) explains gender differences in marriage satisfaction; the wife has a lower level of marriage satisfaction than her husband. Ibrahim (2002) also made the same statement that the marriage satisfaction the wife feels is less than the husband.

From the results of the study, it is known that marriage adjustments influence marriage satisfaction in the wife of the GBKP priest, where the results of descriptive tests are known that the marriage adjustment and the marriage commitment of the wife of the GBKP priest are in the medium category. Based on the study results, the GBKP priest's wife has been able to adjust to his marriage. The condition of the husband who works as a servant of the congregation with a solid work time, coupled with an unbalanced domestic labor division and the demands of the wife to assist the husband's services, can be accepted and carried out by the wife. This aligns with the results of research conducted by Tazkiya and Puspitawati (2022), which reveals that marriage adjustments have a significant positive relationship with marriage satisfaction—the higher the marriage adjustment, the higher the marriage satisfaction created in the family.

In Genesis 2:18, it is said that the wife's function is a helper for her husband. This gives a meaning that in Christian marriages, the wife is given the responsibility to help and accompany her husband in his daily life. Furthermore, as a wife's wife, the priest's wife is assumed to understand this so that in family life, marriage satisfaction can be achieved because marriage adjustment can be made well.

## Conclusion

Based on the results of research conducted on the wife of the GBKP priest, it can be concluded that there is no significant influence between marriage commitment on the marriage satisfaction of the GBKP priest's wife and there is a significant influence between marriage adjustments and the marriage satisfaction of the GBKP priest's wife

## Suggestion

Further research is expected to include other variables yet to be studied in this study, such as spirituality, religiosity, coping strategies, and cultural influences to enrich and develop psychology, especially social psychology. And for Karo Protestant Batak Church Institute expected to make a particular division or part in the GBKP organizational structure that overshadows Nora/priest's wife to give Nora more attention. This particular division is expected to be able to compile routine and non-routine programs or activities that will involve the priest's wife so that through these activities,

GBKP can find out the problems and obstacles experienced by the priest's wife. Knowledge of problems and obstacles experienced by the priest's wife can help GBKP to compile steps to overcome them.

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