

## Local Cultural Approach in Navigating Family Conflict: Understanding Cultural Strategies for Human Well-Being

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### Abstract

*This study explores the complexities of family conflict within a local cultural framework, focusing on its impacts on physical and mental well-being through mapping its intensity, root causes, and long-term consequences. The study aims to understand how unresolved interpersonal tensions can negatively impact emotional and social health, ultimately affecting harmony and balance within local communities. The approach uses a theoretical framework that underscores the importance of culture-based communication, negotiation skills that respect local norms, and appreciation for diverse perspectives as steps to reduce conflict and promote mental health. This research contextualizes conflict within various local cultural settings, specifically within families influenced by communal and intergenerational values. Through in-depth analysis of the family as the unit of study, variables such as communication and social relationships are examined with an emphasis on unique socio-cultural dynamics. The findings highlight the negative impact of unresolved family conflict on emotional well-being and the stability of social relationships within the family unit. Conflict can disrupt interpersonal dynamics, creating long-term disharmony that undermines family cohesion. These adverse effects underscore the need for systematic, ongoing interventions to support mental health and collective well-being. This study emphasizes the importance of addressing family conflict as a critical component in achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of Good Health and Well-being. Interventions that adopt a local cultural approach—such as effective communication strategies and conflict resolution skills rooted in communal norms—are essential for fostering healthier and more harmonious family environments. By identifying three primary approaches—cultural rehabilitation processes, the development of communication that values local culture, and conflict management skills—the study provides practical insights aligned with global efforts to improve mental health and social well-being in accordance with the SDG framework.*

**Keywords:** Family Conflict, Interpersonal Tensions, Family Resilience, Good Health and Well-being.

### Introduction

Family conflict within a local cultural context reflects more than just interpersonal tension; it also reveals the importance of collective values and social norms that shape communal well-being. In many local communities, the family is seen as a social unit that binds individuals with collective responsibilities (Bell, 2018). When conflicts arise, they are perceived as a threat to harmony by the entire community, not just by the individuals involved (Hetherington & Clingempeel, 2000). Understanding conflict through a local cultural framework emphasizes the importance of preserving social balance in ways that align with community norms. Therefore, family conflicts are often seen as issues that must be resolved promptly to maintain harmony.

Studies on family conflict in Indonesia show that local practices, such as family discussions and the role of community leaders as mediators, remain highly relevant in resolving disputes (Abdullah et al., 2022). Community leaders are often involved in bridging differences, especially when conflicts involve traditional values under threat from modernization. Meanwhile, modernization has brought significant changes to family structures and roles, creating generational divides between the older and younger generations (Cummings & Davies, 2010). These changes add complexity to family conflict resolution and necessitate approaches that value generational perspective diversity.

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This article aims to explore how local cultural approaches can provide effective strategies for managing family conflict. In many communities, values such as solidarity, respect for family hierarchy, and the importance of maintaining a shared reputation are foundational in reducing conflict (Maurović et al., 2020). By understanding family conflict from this perspective, we can see how local practices contribute to maintaining family members' mental and emotional health while supporting broader community well-being. This approach not only focuses on resolving interpersonal conflicts but also on strengthening the social structure of the family as a harmonious unit.

Ultimately, a local culture-based approach to handling family conflict is expected to offer a more holistic and sustainable framework for well-being. Through these strategies, families can play an essential role in supporting the achievement of inclusive well-being, aligned with global efforts to enhance mental and social health. This study seeks to broaden our perspective on family conflict, viewing it not only as an interpersonal issue but also as a process influenced by broader social and cultural dynamics, which ultimately contribute to collective balance and well-being (Cichy et al., 2007).

### *Conceptual Framework*

The conceptual framework for family conflict within a local cultural context is heavily influenced by values that prioritize harmony and the sustainability of social relationships. In Indonesian society, the family is not only the smallest social unit but also serves as a primary institution that shapes individuals' social identity and ensures the preservation of shared values (Fatia, 2023). The family's role in maintaining social harmony demonstrates the relevance of Family Resilience Theory in explaining how families can face conflicts while maintaining stability and internal cohesion. Family resilience provides each member with the ability to work together in facing tension, creating a balance that strengthens family bonds (Abdullah et al., 2022).

Community Conflict Theory, which emphasizes that conflicts arise from differences in interests or perspectives that do not align with collective values, provides a significant framework for understanding family conflict dynamics. In a local cultural context, family conflicts are often not resolved solely among the disputing parties but also involve support from the community or relatives as part of the broader social system (Bell, 2018). The presence of respected community elders or parents as mediators in conflict resolution emphasizes the importance of social support in maintaining family harmony. This approach not only addresses the existing problem but also strengthens the collective bonds within society (Buehler & Gerard, 2002).

Relational Dialectics Theory also serves as an important foundation in understanding family conflict, as it reveals that every interpersonal relationship contains tensions between the need for closeness and independence (Cichy et al., 2007). This tension arises particularly in parent-child relationships, where the roles of social hierarchy and cultural norms significantly influence the balance between autonomy and togetherness. In a local cultural context, such conflicts are often managed through negotiation processes that recognize each family member's role, maintaining balance in relationships (Erickson & Block, 2013).

Additionally, the role of communication in managing family conflict cannot be separated from Intercultural Communication Theory. In Indonesian culture, respectful and polite communication patterns significantly influence how family members express dissatisfaction or resolve conflicts (Markman & Renick, 2002). The ability of family members to manage differing perspectives effectively through culturally grounded, courteous communication is a crucial factor in preserving family cohesion. This approach not only prevents conflict escalation but also strengthens mutual respect and unity within the family (Lucas-Thompson et al., 2020).

The role of communal values in resolving conflict is closely related to the concept of social solidarity, where families are expected to be the primary unit instilling collective values and maintaining relationships among community members. Studies show that this solidarity is essential in encouraging family members to resolve conflicts in ways that consider not only individual interests but also their impact on overall social harmony (Bolze et al., 2017). Thus, applying communal values in conflict resolution helps create a conducive environment for balanced family growth.

Finally, Community Resilience Theory complements the framework for understanding family conflict by emphasizing the importance of community resilience in facing crises or social conflicts (Maurović et al., 2020). In a communally strong society, each family member is encouraged to work together and learn from past conflict experiences, allowing families to grow stronger. This theory is relevant in a local cultural context, where community support often becomes a source of strength for families in facing pressures or challenges. This approach enables families to maintain social cohesion, which ultimately contributes to collective well-being in society.

## Methodology

This research aims to understand family conflict and its long-term consequences on interpersonal relationship dynamics within a local cultural context. Given the strong influence of cultural values on interaction patterns and conflict resolution, this study adopts a qualitative approach as its primary methodology. This approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of the social and cultural processes underlying behavior and perceptions within families, especially in terms of how communal values shape conflict resolution mechanisms (Creswell, 2013). Thus, this study not only describes family conflict but also highlights the influence of cultural factors underlying the resolution process.

Case selection was conducted systematically using reports from local communities and social services. The inclusion criteria in case selection were families experiencing ongoing conflict and involving dynamics reflecting local cultural values. This selection process aims to enable the study to identify conflict patterns relevant to the norms and values upheld by the local community (Yin, 2014). The selected families come from diverse social and economic backgrounds but face conflicts arising from generational differences, conflicting values, and misunderstandings that reflect tensions between modernization and tradition.

Data was collected through in-depth interviews and non-participant observation to capture authentic interactions and emotional responses within the family environment. Semi-structured interviews were used to ensure flexibility in information gathering while guiding participants to discuss cultural aspects that influence conflict. The interview guide includes cultural elements such as the role of community leaders, communal values, and local norms influencing conflict resolution (Patton, 2015). This method allows researchers to gather rich data on interpersonal interactions in a natural setting, reinforcing the validity of findings by capturing emotional expressions and behaviors that may not be revealed in quantitative research.

Non-participant observation was conducted within the family environment to capture interaction aspects that are often difficult for participants to articulate in interviews. This observation aims to identify communication patterns, emotional expressions, and power dynamics visible in everyday interactions, all of which are rooted in local cultural norms (Charmaz, 2006). Additionally, this observation method enables researchers to directly record how family members perceive and respond to conflict in their social context, creating a deeper and holistic picture of conflict and its resolution.

Data analysis was carried out in stages using interpretive methods involving restatement, description, and interpretation. These steps ensure that each data dimension is analyzed in depth, beginning with the organization of findings to identifying relevant thematic patterns. Interpretive analysis is used to reveal how cultural values influence family conflict and its resolution patterns (Geertz, 1973). The final stage involves synthesizing descriptions that integrate empirical findings with existing theoretical frameworks, providing comprehensive insights into the role of culture in family conflict.

## Results and Discussion

### *The Anatomy of Family Conflict at The Local Level*

Family conflict in Indonesia reflects not only internal issues but also the cultural complexities embedded within society. Several factors influencing family conflict, such as generational differences, values, and communication patterns, are shaped by traditional values deeply rooted in local culture. For example, older

generations who tend to be more conservative often struggle to understand younger generations' more progressive views. This creates tension that frequently requires intervention from respected community leaders to mediate (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Anatomy of Family Conflict

No.	Factor Influencing Family Conflict	Code
1	Conflicts between parents and children often arise due to generational gaps. A child's personal aspirations may clash with parental expectations regarding career or marriage, with traditional values playing a significant role in this tension. This discord can lead to frustration on both sides.	Generational Gaps
2	The diverse cultural and social landscape, coupled with rapid modernization, has led to a series of complex family conflicts. Differences in values and culture among family members are significant contributors. The younger generation tends to be more open to change and modernization, while the older generation remains conservative and traditional. This can cause disagreements and misunderstandings, especially regarding issues like education, career choices, and social norms.	Differences in Values and Culture
3	Poor communication within the family is a crucial factor. Misunderstandings and miscommunications can arise when family members do not communicate effectively, leading to conflict. Parents not listening to their children's concerns or opinions can create frustration and resentment. Similarly, spouses not communicating their needs and desires can result in feelings of neglect and abandonment.	Poor Communication
4	Financial problems significantly contribute to family conflicts. Income disparities among family members can cause disputes over budgeting, spending, and saving. Spouses may have differing financial priorities, leading to disagreements on how to allocate their income.	Financial Issues
5	Gender inequality is another significant factor contributing to family conflicts. Despite Indonesia's progress in gender equality, issues like gender-based violence, unequal pay, and limited access to education and employment opportunities persist, causing conflicts within families. Women may feel trapped in unsatisfying marriages or experience domestic violence, leading to feelings of anger and resentment.	Gender Inequality
6	Sibling rivalry is a significant contributor to family conflict. Siblings may compete for their parents' attention and affection, leading to jealousy and resentment. These conflicts can involve issues such as inheritance, property, or other family assets.	Persaingan Antar Saudara Kandung
7	Conflicts with in-laws are another important factor. Cultural and social norms that emphasize family and social relationships can lead to high levels of involvement in family affairs, causing conflicts between in-laws, especially regarding child-rearing practices, household responsibilities, and financial decisions.	Conflict with In-Laws
8	Disagreements over education significantly contribute to family conflicts. The competitive nature of the Indonesian education system and differing parental expectations can cause conflicts, especially when parents want their children to pursue careers traditionally considered inappropriate for their gender.	Educational Disagreements
9	Different parenting styles also contribute to family conflict. Parents may have varying approaches to child-rearing, leading to conflicts within the family. For example, authoritarian parents might clash with their children who prefer a more permissive approach, causing disagreements over discipline, boundaries, and expectations.	Parenting Styles

Table 1 outlines key factors that influence family conflicts among Indonesian families. Primary sources of conflict include generational gaps, differences in values and culture, poor communication, financial issues, gender inequality, sibling rivalry, conflicts with in-laws, and disagreements over education and parenting. Each factor is grounded in social and cultural contexts that shape family dynamics. For instance, generational gaps arise when younger family members adopt modernization and progressive ideals, while older members often hold conservative beliefs, leading to disagreements, particularly regarding career, marriage, and lifestyle. Similarly, differences in values and culture reflect the clash between traditional customs and contemporary norms within family settings. Other factors, like financial issues, are linked to income disparities and conflicting financial priorities among family members. This range of factors demonstrates the complexity of family conflict as it spans multiple aspects of family life and interpersonal relationships.

The factors identified in Table 1 highlight the multifaceted nature of family conflicts, encompassing both interpersonal and structural challenges influenced by broader societal changes. Each identified factor represents an area of family life vulnerable to stress and misunderstanding, often intensified by external factors such as economic shifts and cultural globalization. This combination suggests that family conflict is an intersectional issue, requiring multidimensional approaches to resolution. Furthermore, this categorization emphasizes the importance of culturally sensitive conflict resolution strategies, as cultural values significantly shape familial expectations and behaviors. For instance, managing conflicts involving in-laws and sibling rivalries may require interventions that acknowledge and respect traditional family structures and social norms. Consequently, understanding these conflict factors provides essential insights for developing targeted interventions to address family tensions while promoting emotional well-being and social harmony.

#### *Impact of Family Conflict on Human Well-Being*

Family conflicts not only impact individuals but also have broader implications for collective well-being within communities. For instance, the inability of families to resolve conflicts can lead to mental health issues for both children and adults. Long-term impacts, such as feelings of isolation and low self-esteem, are often influenced by social pressures to maintain family harmony. In local culture, the value of harmony is highly regarded, so when conflicts go unresolved, they can result in significant rifts in relationships.

In Dayak communities in Kalimantan, family conflicts not only disrupt family dynamics but also challenge the community's deeply rooted social and cultural structures. These conflicts often reflect complex tensions within family roles and societal expectations, manifesting both short- and long-term consequences, with immediate and extended impacts. Short-term, direct impacts include disruptions in family interactions and emotional bonds, where disagreements over cultural obligations, inheritance, or generational differences may lead to frustration and alienation among family members. Younger family members who feel unsupported in their choices, such as career or education, often experience a disconnection from traditional values, fostering resentment and isolation. This emotional gap not only affects individual family members but also interrupts community cohesion, as family harmony is central to the Dayak's cultural identity and collective well-being.

Long-term, indirect impacts of family conflicts in Dayak communities extend beyond the family unit, affecting social relationships within the broader community. Unresolved conflicts can disrupt open and effective communication, diminishing trust and cooperation among extended family members and peers. This rift may impact psychological well-being, leading to anxiety, depression, and decreased self-worth, ultimately lowering overall quality of life and the ability to fulfill community roles (Buehler & Gerard, 2002). Additionally, children affected by family discord often face academic setbacks due to decreased concentration and motivation. For the Dayak, these educational impacts are particularly concerning, as they threaten the long-term sustainability of cultural knowledge and skill transmission, weakening the future of their cultural heritage and social resilience.

In addition to social and psychological effects, family conflicts also impact physical health within Dayak families. Short-term stress responses such as sleep disturbances, headaches, and digestive issues are

common among those involved in conflict, and these symptoms may escalate over time into chronic health problems if unaddressed. Indirectly, unresolved family disputes may perpetuate intergenerational tensions and social isolation, eroding community support systems. This cycle creates ongoing stress within the family and community, leading to further vulnerabilities to conflict and a reduction in overall communal harmony (Cummings & Davies, 2010).

In essence, family conflicts in Dayak communities illustrate the extensive impacts of unresolved issues on both individual and collective well-being. These short- and long-term impacts emphasize the importance of culturally sensitive conflict resolution strategies. Addressing these conflicts through community-oriented, culturally attuned approaches—such as mediation by elders or communal gatherings—can aid in healing processes, re-establish trust, and strengthen social bonds, fostering resilience within both family units and the broader Dayak community.

### *Solutions And Rehabilitation for Family Health and Well-Being*

#### *Rehabilitation Through Cultural Mediation and Counseling*

In Dayak communities in Kalimantan, cultural mediation and family counseling are primary methods for resolving family conflicts. This process often involves respected community leaders or elders who are considered to possess wisdom and deep understanding of local values and norms. Through their presence, conflicting family members can find common ground that aligns with customary traditions. This approach not only facilitates peaceful conflict resolution but also reinforces traditional values that uphold family harmony and unity. The communal gatherings or “ngumpul adat” involving the entire family are often used to defuse tension and reach mutually acceptable solutions, reducing the potential for long-term conflict.

This approach also serves as a rehabilitative mechanism that strengthens social and emotional relationships within the family, as culturally based mediation sessions offer a collective recovery process. Families undergoing counseling in a traditional environment feel morally supported by their community, which plays a role in maintaining emotional stability and collective well-being. Such traditional methods create a safe space for each family member to openly express their feelings, with the support of community leaders who act as mediators. This differs from conventional counseling approaches as it focuses not only on individual conflicts but also on restoring family and social cohesion as a whole.

#### *Rebuilding Relationships Through Cultural Communication Strategies*

In Dayak communities, relationship rebuilding often involves communication strategies that respect customs, language, and family hierarchy. The language used in family discussions is carefully chosen to reflect courtesy and respect, fostering an atmosphere conducive to reconciliation. Polite language and symbolic expressions rooted in local values, such as “bakarasam” or a peace agreement, serve to remind each family member of the importance of maintaining good relations and unity. Family discussions that involve all members, including elders, ensure that each person’s perspective and voice are recognized and respected.

Culturally based communication strategies allow each member the opportunity to listen and understand one another, rebuilding trust. This strategy also supports the application of empathy as a core value in Dayak family communication, where active listening is regarded as a sign of respect and recognition of differing views. This helps alleviate dissatisfaction and enables the formation of stronger bonds, not only within the immediate family but also across generations. This approach demonstrates how culturally grounded communication can mend strained relationships and strengthen family structures in ways consistent with local norms and values.

#### *Developing Conflict Management Skills Rooted in Local Norms*

The development of conflict management skills grounded in local norms is crucial for maintaining emotional and social balance within Dayak society. In these communities, support from parents and elders

plays a central role in helping younger family members develop the skills needed to manage conflict. Guidance from elders typically emphasizes wise ways of managing emotions, such as through emotional control and finding mutually beneficial solutions for all parties. By basing conflict resolution on traditional principles, each family member is reminded to respect personal boundaries, maintain privacy, and observe courtesy limits in everyday interactions.

Conflict management skills rooted in local norms not only serve as self-regulation mechanisms but also means to rebuild connections between family members involved in conflict. In many cases, extended family or the surrounding Dayak community participates in providing support, strengthening a sense of togetherness and promoting collective recovery. Awareness of personal boundaries and respect for privacy helps create a harmonious family environment where every member feels safe and respected. This illustrates that culturally based conflict management skills play a role not only in short-term resolution but also in building a strong foundation for emotional and physical well-being for the future.

## Conclusion

Family conflict among the Dayak communities in Kalimantan reflects a complex issue influenced by differences in values, unequal resource distribution, and family power dynamics. Modern challenges, such as changes in family structure, economic disparities, and communication disruptions, exacerbate these tensions. However, a local culture-based approach involving open communication, negotiation skills, and respect for traditional values has proven effective in resolving family conflicts. Solutions emphasizing strong communication, respect for each member's privacy, and emotional support can create a healthy environment and prevent prolonged conflicts.

A deep understanding of the theories and foundations of family conflict, coupled with practical strategies such as culturally based communication enhancement and emotional support, enables Dayak families to navigate conflicts more effectively, fostering healthier and more harmonious relationships. This approach aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) focus on promoting health and well-being, creating an environment where individuals can thrive emotionally and psychologically in accordance with their cultural values.

The strength of this discussion lies in exploring the root causes, severity, and long-term impacts of family conflict within the Dayak cultural context. By examining factors such as sibling rivalry, emotional well-being, and communication breakdowns, this study provides a comprehensive perspective that requires careful resolution. Awareness of the long-term consequences of unresolved conflicts and their impact on family stability and emotional well-being forms the basis for family harmonization efforts in Kalimantan. This understanding enriches the theoretical framework of family conflict by emphasizing open communication, culturally based negotiation skills, and respect for diverse perspectives, guiding the development of effective intervention strategies to improve family well-being within Dayak communities.

This study also acknowledges limitations in extensively exploring intergenerational impacts and problem-solving mechanisms. Therefore, further research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of various locally-based conflict resolution approaches, such as family therapy or mediation by community leaders, to provide practical insights into family conflict management. Future studies may analyze how unresolved family conflicts impact the next generation and identify cultural resilience factors effective in managing disputes. By expanding the scope of factors considered, analyzing conflict resolution strategies in greater depth, and exploring intergenerational impacts, future research can offer a more comprehensive understanding of family dynamics within the Dayak cultural context, while also supporting global efforts to promote health and well-being as outlined in the SDG.

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