

Implementing Family Counseling Education to Resolve Domestic Conflict

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ABSTRACT

From an educational and psychological perspective, the family is expected to be the primary environment providing love, protection, and the formation of values and character for each family member. This study aims to determine the implementation of family counseling in handling domestic conflict in Bello Village, Kupang City. This research method uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach, with data collection techniques conducted through interviews with married couples experiencing domestic conflict, counselors, and local community leaders. The results of the study indicate that domestic conflict is generally caused by a lack of effective communication, economic problems, differences of opinion in childcare, and interference from the extended family. The implementation of family counseling is carried out through the stages of problem identification, improving communication, providing assistance, and evaluating family relationships. The results of the study indicate that family counseling has a positive impact in reducing the intensity of conflict, improving interpersonal communication, and creating more harmonious family relationships. However, the implementation of family counseling still faces obstacles such as low public understanding of counseling services and social stigma. Therefore, it is necessary to increase socialization and strengthen family counseling services as a preventive and curative effort to maintain household harmony.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The family is the smallest social unit in society and plays a crucial role in shaping individual personality and fostering social well-being. From an educational and psychological perspective, the family is expected to be the primary environment providing love, protection, and fostering the formation of values and character for each member. Domestic harmony is the ideal condition desired in family life because it supports the optimal emotional, social, and spiritual development of family members. (Muttaqin, 2022).

However, in the realities of life, households are not free from various conflicts that arise from differing life principles, financial problems, ineffective communication, jealousy, infidelity, and differences in family roles. Domestic conflict is a common occurrence in family life and can lead to arguments and even divorce if not managed properly. (Yanti, 2020). In addition, family conflict can also

be triggered by external factors such as interference from the extended family, differences in socio-cultural backgrounds, and pressure from the social environment (Indah et al., 2026)

Unresolved domestic conflict can have various negative impacts on both partners and other family members. Prolonged conflict can affect the psychological well-being of family members, leading to anxiety, depression, behavioral disorders, and reducing the quality of interpersonal relationships within the family (Fahmi, 2025).

Facing domestic conflict requires systematic and professional handling to resolve the issues constructively. One approach that can be used is family counseling. Family counseling is the process of providing assistance to family members to improve communication patterns, increase understanding among family members, and develop collaborative problem-solving skills. (Amalda, 2025) Family counseling also plays a role in increasing family resilience, strengthening interpersonal relationships, and preventing greater conflict in domestic life. (Sa'diyah, & Sunarto, 2025).

Several previous studies have shown that family counseling has an important role in creating household harmony by improving communication and understanding of roles in the family (Saputra et al, 2023). In addition, the family counseling approach can also be used as a preventive strategy to reduce conflict and improve family welfare (Subhi & Sunyato, 2025). However, the implementation of family counseling in local communities, particularly within specific community contexts such as sub-districts, has not yet been studied in depth.

Based on the results of initial observations carried out in Bello Village, Kupang City, it was found that domestic conflicts still frequently occur. various causes and varying degrees of problems. Observations were conducted through direct observation of community conditions and initial communication with several families and local community leaders. The observations indicated that some families experienced problems related to effective communication between husband and wife, economic issues related to meeting family needs, differences of opinion regarding childcare, and the influence of the extended family on household decision-making. In some cases, these conflicts created tension in family relationships and affected interactions between family members.

Therefore, research on the implementation of family counseling in addressing domestic conflict in Bello Village, Kupang City is important to understand the implementation process, effectiveness, and supporting and inhibiting factors in implementing this service. The purpose of this study was to determine the implementation of family counseling in addressing domestic conflict in Bello Village, Kupang City. It is hoped that this research will serve as a reference in strengthening family counseling services as a preventive and curative effort to maintain domestic harmony.

2. METHODS

The research method used in this study is qualitative research. In accordance with the statement (Lopo, 2025) Qualitative research focuses on the natural state of objects. This research was conducted in November 2025, located in RT 06, Bello Village, Maulafa District, Kupang City. The subjects in this study were married couples experiencing domestic conflict, counselors or parties providing family counseling services, and community leaders who understand the conditions of families in the research environment. Subject selection was carried out purposively. Data collection techniques in this study included observation, interviews, and documentation. Data collection techniques were carried out through interviews with married couples experiencing domestic conflict, counselors, and local community leaders. The data obtained were then analyzed descriptively qualitatively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. (Augusta 2003).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of research conducted in Bello Village, Kupang City, several findings were obtained regarding the implementation of family counseling in resolving household conflicts. The results of the study revealed that household conflicts that occur in families are caused by several main factors, namely a lack of effective communication between husband and wife, family economic problems, differences in opinions regarding childcare, differences in family roles, and interference by the extended family in household decision-making. Based on the results of interviews with informants, communication conflicts are the most dominant conflict that occurs. This is characterized by a lack of openness between partners, misunderstandings in interactions, and the inability of couples to manage emotions when differences of opinion arise.

Besides communication conflicts, economic conflicts are also a major trigger for domestic conflict, particularly regarding meeting family needs and dividing household responsibilities. Conflicts within families often create tension between family members and affect the quality of family interactions.

The research results also show that the implementation of family counseling is carried out through several stages, namely problem identification, providing assistance, improving communication, and evaluating family relationships. Counselors help couples understand the sources of conflict, facilitate open communication, and help families find solutions to the problems they face. After participating in the family counseling process, most informants showed positive changes in family relationships. These changes include increased communication between couples, reduced intensity of household conflict, increased understanding between family members, and the creation of more harmonious family relationships. However, this study also found several obstacles in the implementation of family counseling, including low public understanding of family counseling services, stigma against individuals who participate in counseling, and limited professional counseling staff.

The results of this study also revealed that domestic conflict in families is largely caused by communication and economic issues. This finding suggests that the quality of interpersonal communication is a crucial factor in maintaining family harmony. A lack of effective communication can lead to misunderstandings, prolonged conflict, and a decline in the quality of family relationships. This finding aligns with (Sarkowi et al., 2022) which states that household conflicts generally occur due to a lack of effective communication between partners and differences in interests within the family.

Apart from that, economic factors also trigger domestic conflict because they are related to fulfilling family needs and the stability of home life.household. Unresolved conflicts can have psychological impacts on family members and reduce the quality of interpersonal relationships. This is in line with (Masi, 2021) which states that prolonged family conflict can affect the psychological condition of family members, (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2013) which explains that family conflict can impact child welfare and family stability.

The research results also show that the implementation of family counseling makes a positive contribution to resolving domestic conflict by improving communication and increasing understanding among family members. Family counseling helps couples identify problems, understand their respective roles, and develop collaborative problem-solving skills. This finding aligns with family counseling theory, which states that family counseling aims to improve interpersonal relationships within the family through increased communication and constructive conflict resolution. Rustham, (2019) also explains that family counseling helps family members understand each other's behavior so that more harmonious relationships are created.

Furthermore, the success of family counseling is influenced by the openness and active participation of family members in the counseling process. Without commitment from family members, the counseling process cannot run optimally. This finding aligns with research Yanti, (2020) which states that the success of family counseling is largely determined by the involvement of family members in the counseling process.

However, in practice, this study found obstacles in the form of low public understanding of family counseling services and stigma against individuals who participate in counseling. This situation indicates

the need to increase public awareness of family counseling services. Sa'diyah, & Sunarto, (2025) explained that family counseling plays a crucial role in improving family resilience and preventing domestic conflict, thus requiring broader development of this service. Therefore, the research findings indicate that the implementation of family counseling plays a crucial role in resolving domestic conflict and improving family harmony. Family counseling serves not only as a conflict resolution effort but also as a preventive strategy to maintain family stability and well-being.

The findings of this study reveal that family conflicts in Bello Village, Kupang City, are primarily triggered by ineffective communication, economic pressures, differences in parenting perspectives, unequal role distribution, and interference from extended family members. Among these factors, communication problems emerged as the most dominant source of conflict. This finding aligns with interpersonal communication theory, which posits that ineffective communication patterns often lead to misunderstandings, emotional tension, and relational dissatisfaction within family systems. According to family systems theory, the family is an interconnected system in which communication functions as the central mechanism that regulates interaction and emotional exchange among members. When communication becomes distorted characterized by lack of openness, misinterpretation of intentions, or poor emotional regulation conflict tends to escalate because family members are unable to negotiate differences constructively. Therefore, the dominance of communication conflict in this study can be explained by the limited skills of couples in managing emotional expression and active listening, which are essential components of healthy marital interaction (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2013).

The findings of this research are consistent with previous studies that highlight communication breakdown as a key determinant of marital conflict. Research conducted by Sarkowi et al. (2022) found that ineffective communication between spouses often leads to prolonged disputes because individuals tend to interpret messages defensively rather than collaboratively. Similar results were also reported by Masi (2021), who emphasized that unresolved communication problems often evolve into broader relational dissatisfaction and psychological distress among family members. The similarities between these studies and the current findings suggest that communication-related conflict represents a universal pattern in marital relationships across different sociocultural contexts. However, the present study provides additional contextual insight by identifying the role of cultural norms and extended family involvement in shaping communication patterns within Indonesian families. In collectivist societies, family decisions often involve broader kinship networks, which may complicate communication between spouses and intensify disagreements. This contextual dimension expands previous findings by demonstrating that communication conflict is not merely a personal interaction problem but also a socially embedded phenomenon.

Economic factors were also identified as a significant source of household conflict in this study. Financial instability can create psychological stress that disrupts emotional regulation and increases the likelihood of conflict escalation between spouses. From a theoretical perspective, the family stress model explains that economic hardship affects marital relationships by generating pressure that undermines emotional well-being and cooperative problem solving. Couples experiencing financial strain often exhibit higher levels of frustration, blame, and dissatisfaction, which subsequently influences the quality of marital interaction. This theoretical perspective explains why economic issues often become a catalyst for conflict within families. The findings of this research support previous studies indicating that economic stress significantly influences marital instability and family conflict dynamics (Conger & Conger, 2010; Masi, 2021). However, the present research also demonstrates that economic conflict rarely occurs in isolation; instead, it interacts with communication problems. When couples lack effective communication skills, financial difficulties are more likely to escalate into interpersonal disputes rather than collaborative problem-solving efforts.

Another important finding of this study is that family counseling plays a constructive role in addressing marital conflicts by improving communication patterns and fostering mutual understanding among family members. The counseling process implemented in this study involved several stages, including problem identification, assistance provision, communication improvement, and relationship

evaluation. This process reflects the core principles of family counseling theory, which emphasizes collaborative dialogue, emotional awareness, and shared responsibility in resolving family conflicts (Rustham, 2019). From a systemic perspective, counseling interventions aim not only to solve specific problems but also to restructure dysfunctional interaction patterns within the family system. The positive changes observed among participants—such as increased openness, reduced conflict intensity, and improved relational harmony—suggest that counseling functions as a transformative mechanism that reshapes communication dynamics and promotes healthier family relationships.

These findings are in line with previous research indicating that family counseling contributes significantly to conflict resolution and family resilience. Yanti (2020) found that couples who actively participate in counseling sessions tend to develop stronger empathy and problem-solving skills, which ultimately reduces the frequency of marital disputes. Similarly, Sa'diyah and Sunarto (2025) argue that family counseling strengthens family resilience by helping members recognize emotional needs, clarify expectations, and negotiate roles more effectively. The present study confirms these conclusions while also highlighting the importance of participant engagement in counseling outcomes. Unlike some previous studies that primarily focus on counseling techniques, this research emphasizes the role of openness and commitment from family members as critical determinants of counseling success. This finding suggests that counseling effectiveness is not solely dependent on professional intervention but also on the willingness of individuals to engage in reflective communication and behavioral change.

Despite its positive outcomes, the implementation of family counseling in this study encountered several obstacles, including limited public awareness of counseling services, social stigma associated with seeking counseling, and the scarcity of professional counselors. These challenges reflect broader sociocultural barriers that often hinder the development of counseling services in many communities. In societies where family problems are considered private matters, individuals may perceive counseling as an indication of personal or familial failure. As a result, many couples hesitate to seek professional assistance even when conflicts become severe. This phenomenon has been discussed in previous literature, which indicates that stigma and cultural perceptions frequently reduce the accessibility and utilization of counseling services (Sa'diyah & Sunarto, 2025). Compared to earlier studies, the present research highlights the structural dimension of this issue, suggesting that institutional support and community education are necessary to normalize counseling practices and improve service accessibility.

From a broader academic perspective, the findings of this study reinforce the theoretical proposition that family harmony is strongly influenced by communication quality and emotional regulation within the marital relationship. The results contribute to the growing body of literature emphasizing the importance of preventive counseling interventions in maintaining family stability. While many studies focus primarily on counseling as a corrective measure for existing conflicts, the present research suggests that counseling can also function as a preventive strategy that equips families with the skills needed to manage future challenges. This implication is particularly relevant in contemporary society, where economic pressures, digital communication patterns, and shifting gender roles increasingly influence family dynamics.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of family counseling plays a significant role in addressing household conflicts within the community of Bello Village, Kupang City. The findings demonstrate that family counseling functions not only as a conflict-resolution mechanism but also as a relational development process that strengthens interpersonal communication, mutual understanding, and collaborative problem-solving among family members. Through stages such as problem identification, communication improvement, and relational evaluation, counseling facilitates constructive dialogue between spouses, enabling them to recognize the underlying causes of conflict and to negotiate solutions more effectively. As a result, the counseling process contributes to a reduction in the intensity of marital conflicts and fosters more harmonious family relationships. The study therefore provides an important scientific contribution by emphasizing that family counseling can serve as both a corrective

and preventive strategy in strengthening family resilience, particularly in communities where communication breakdown and economic pressure often trigger domestic disputes.

However, the study also revealed that the utilization of family counseling services remains limited due to low public awareness, cultural perceptions regarding counseling, and the limited availability of professional counselors. These findings indicate that the effectiveness of counseling interventions is not solely determined by the counseling process itself but is also influenced by broader social and structural factors within the community. From an academic perspective, the research contributes to the development of family counseling discourse by highlighting the interaction between interpersonal dynamics and sociocultural contexts in shaping the success of counseling practices. At the same time, the study acknowledges several limitations, including the relatively small number of informants and the focus on a single community setting, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other social contexts.

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