

Conflicts in Modern Families and Their Root Causes

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Abstract

The family is a group of people who join together as one because of blood ties and kinship. The more members there are in the family, the more opinions will be raised. Families are vessels for shelter, protection, spilling love, and sharing all sorrows as well. In the digital age, many families are affected by constant change and circumstances. That's when each opinion of the family members will clash and even tear each other down. It cannot be avoided by anyone because everyone is obliged to resolve it. This research is library research, which is a study that uses literature by examining books, and other sources of information that are relevant to the scope of the discussion. The results show that conflicts in modern families occur due to several factors, namely childcare patterns, family economy, and unequal domestic burdens. The lack of communication space between family members is also a cause of conflict in the family.

Keywords: *conflict, modern family, Islam*

Introduction

Everyone longs for a family that is peaceful, full of love and affection, in order to attain comfort, tranquility, and serenity. There is a saying that my home is my castle and paradise, which depicts that the family is the most comforting place for every individual. However, achieving happiness within a marriage is not an easy task. Especially in the modern era, a family will face increasingly complex problems that can serve as triggers for cracks within a household.

All efforts are made with the goal of happiness and longevity within the family. Marriage is a spiritual and emotional bond between a man and a woman, who then become husband and wife to form a harmonious, loving, and compassionate household. In reality, it is not easy to build and realize a happy, perfect, and smooth-running family. Some couples will face various trials and challenges along their marital journey. In fact, some couples even choose the path of separation (Atieka, 2011).

The concept of a modern family is embraced by individuals, whether they reside in rural or urban areas. The measurement of a modern family is not based on its geographical location but on how they think, behave, and their way of life. Although in reality, modern families are often associated with people living in urban areas. According to Shalahudin, as quoted by Fatchurrohman (2012), urban modern society has the following characteristics:

- a. Heterogeneous society in terms of educational background, economy, social status, religion, and ethnicity.
- b. Individualistic, not dependent on others.
- c. Loose social control, individuals manage their own personal affairs and do not want to be burdened with other people's matters.
- d. Rapid social dynamics and the abundance of facilities that facilitate various aspects, supported by agile curiosity.

The above characteristics can give rise to social problems that impact family life in urban environments. Loose social control, for example, can encourage someone to engage in behavior that violates norms. Job and economic issues among the lower class can also pose challenges for modern family life. They may not be mentally and financially prepared to face a rapidly developing life.

Methods

This research utilizes the library research method, which is a study that relies on literature sources by examining books, manuscripts, and other relevant sources of information within the scope of the discussion. The findings from the literature review are the result of research conducted to address a specific

problem, grounded in critical and in-depth analysis of relevant literature materials. These literature materials are positioned as sources of ideas or inspiration that can generate further thoughts or insights. The author gathers data by collecting sources related to the topic of discussion.

Discussion

Modern Family and Non-Modern Family

Modern means replacing old habits with new ones. In a modern family, parents and children can balance their opinions. Parents also do not exercise arbitrary authority over their children, and everything can be communicated effectively. This also applies to pluralistic families that emphasize open communication and discuss all matters through consensus, where every family member has the right to express their opinions, and there is respect and support for each member's desires within the family.

The way modern parents educate their children is significantly different from non-modern parents. For example, it involves storytelling and avoids physical violence such as pinching, using sticks, or any other form of violence (Kansil, 2017). Modern families are often referred to as dual-career families, where both husband and wife work. The impact of dual careers is the emergence of timing problems between work demands and family responsibilities. With high-risk jobs and the pressures or demands from superiors during work, conflicts can arise. Similarly, family matters such as financial needs, child-rearing, and other demands can also contribute to conflicts. The challenge of balancing work and family affairs can create conflicts within the household and strain one's capacity to perform at work (Yusuf et al., 2019).

According to Letha Dawson and John Scanzoni in Yupidus (2017), they state that marital relationships can be divided into four patterns: 1) owner-property, where the wife is considered the husband's possession, similar to money and other valuable belongings; 2) head-complement, where the wife is seen as a complement to the husband; 3) senior-junior partner, where the wife is not just a complement but also a friend; and 4) equal partner, where there is no higher or lower position between the husband and wife. Patterns of relationships like the latter are categorized as modern families.

In the owner-property relationship pattern, the husband sees the wife as his possession, just like money and valuable belongings. The husband's role is to provide for the family, while the wife takes care of household chores since the husband has already provided for her and their children. The husband has authority over his wife in all matters, and the wife must obediently follow his commands. The wife's role is to make the husband happy, bear and raise

children. The wife's significance is solely for social purposes. Consequently, the wife's dignity is determined from all aspects, and even her social status follows the husband's social status (Yupidus, 2017).

Head-complement relationship pattern, in this pattern, the husband sees the wife as a complement to his life. The husband provides love and affection, satisfies their sexual needs, and they communicate openly. They manage their lives together. The husband's responsibility is to provide for the family, but if at any time the wife needs assistance in household chores, the husband will lend a hand. The wife's role is to manage household affairs, support the husband's work and needs, and she is allowed to work if permitted by the husband. The husband and wife can plan everything together. When the husband asks or instructs the wife to do something, the wife has the right to question and refuse the husband's requests and orders. Although the decision lies with the husband, he does not have the right to force his wife's will.

Senior-junior partner relationship pattern, where the wife sacrifices everything for her husband. If the wife works, her income should not exceed the husband's income. If the wife wants to pursue a career, she must support her husband's career first. The social status of the wife and children is determined by the husband's social status.

Equal partner relationship pattern, where the husband and wife have equal rights and responsibilities in their desires and managing the household. Both have the opportunity to develop their desires in all aspects. Essentially, the husband and wife have the right to contribute as much as possible to the family without imposing any rules (Yupidus, 2017).

Conflicts in the Family

In the course of life, every family is bound to face various challenges in the form of differences and disagreements, both between husband and wife and between children and their parents, as they are the main actors in the family. This is what can be referred to as conflict. Conflict is a process of undermining and destroying the other party while seeking to fulfill one's own desires or opinions (Hasana, 2017).

Conflicts in the family can be classified into two types:

- a. Solvable conflict: This type of conflict is short-term, and so are its underlying issues. These conflicts are easy to resolve. Differences of opinion in this type of conflict can be resolved over time by unifying the opinions of all family members. For example, choosing the color of wedding attire.

- b. Perpetual conflict: This type of conflict is long-term and can even persist indefinitely because its root causes are personal in nature. These conflicts usually recur. For example, issues related to differences in beliefs (Segrin & Flora, 2011).

According to Scanzoi in Dewi and Basti (2008), areas of conflict in marriage include several issues. Common problems that arise include finances (acquisition and use), child education (such as the number of children and discipline), friendships, relationships with extended family, recreation (type, quality, and quantity), disapproved activities, division of household chores, and various other problems (religion, politics, sex, marital communication, and various trivial matters).

Meanwhile, the aspects of conflicts in the dual role of working women, according to Kopelman in David Yusuf Ilham et al. (2019), include: (1) child-rearing, (2) assistance with household chores, (3) communication and interaction with children and spouse, (4) family time, (5) setting priorities, (6) career pressure and family pressure, and (7) husband's perspective on the dual role of women.

Regarding marital conflicts, there are at least two types of conflicts. *First*, horizontal conflict is a conflict that occurs between one party and a group of equal standing. In law, the position of husband and wife is equal. There is no higher or lower position. So, in the event of a dispute, both parties will insist on their own opinions. However, in society, the majority consider the husband's position to be higher than the wife's. This perspective creates a sense of superiority and inferiority (Hasana, 2017). *Second*, diagonal conflict refers to conflicts arising from perceived unfair treatment between the husband and wife. This can lead to rebellious behavior or even abusive and terrifying treatment.

According to Galvin and Broomel in Wardyaningrum (2013), family conflicts can be categorized into two types: those focusing on fundamental issues and those less focused on fundamental issues. Fundamental issues include matters such as religion, child custody, religion, and education. On the other hand, conflicts that are less focused on fundamental issues involve day-to-day activities such as vacation decisions or task assignments. Some conflicts related to the above issues can be resolved, while others may not reach a resolution. The most severe outcome of unresolved conflicts is separation or divorce.

Family conflicts also lead to disharmony among family members. According to William J. Goode in Syamsul Hadi et al. (2020), forms of family disharmony include the following:

- a. Invalidity (role failure): This refers to an incomplete family unit, which can be considered similar to other role failures in the family because

either the father or husband is absent or fails to fulfill their duties. At least one family member, either the mother or father, is needed to fulfill their role obligations.

- b. Separation, divorce, and abandonment: Family disruption occurs when one or both partners decide to leave each other.
- c. Empty shell family: In this case, family members continue to live together but do not greet or cooperate with each other, especially failing to provide emotional support to one another.
- d. Absence of one partner due to undesirable circumstances: Some families are broken apart because the husband or wife has passed away, been imprisoned, or separated from the family due to war, depression, or other disasters.
- e. Unwanted failure of crucial roles: Family crises are often caused by mental-emotional illness.

The Root Causes of Family Conflict

According to Bastermatch in Dewi & Basti (2008), the source of marital conflict is that both partners actually feel unhappy, and usually, the source of the conflict cannot be defined by the couple. However, as a couple, they sense that something hinders the intimacy of their relationship.

Meanwhile, according to Sadarjoen in Dewi & Basti (2008), there are several interrelated sources of marital conflict that dynamically influence each other. These sources include unavoidable differences, differing expectations, sensitivity, intimacy in marriage, cumulative aspects of marriage, competition in marriage, and changes in marriage. Husbands and wives will inevitably have differences, but it is how each couple interprets these differences that leads to conflicts, with one party accepting and the other rejecting them.

The main factors contributing to conflicts are communication between the husband and wife and the financial conditions of each partner. Other underlying issues that cause conflicts are as follows:

- a. Double burden on the wife: The wife is responsible for domestic affairs at home while also working outside the home. This can result in a lack of effectiveness in completing either or both tasks.
- b. Limited opportunities to spend time together: Time for quality bonding is limited due to the busy schedules of both partners at their respective workplaces. This greatly affects communication between the husband and wife, parent and child, and other family members living in the same household.

- c. Lack of affection, comfort, joy, and hospitality within the home among family members.
- d. Lack of spiritual closeness: Weakness in spiritual aspects can lead to emptiness of the heart and mind, making one easily prone to emotional reactions.
- e. Low self-confidence and self-worth: Both the husband and wife may feel that they are not valued within the family (Yusuf et al., 2019).

Islamic Solutions for Resolving Family Conflicts

Family plays a crucial role in the growth and development of its members. Family psychology equips individuals with the skills to nurture family members, resolve conflicts with open and broad thinking, protect family members from destructive cultural and social differences, foster constructive individual characteristics, and establish more effective communication. Religion serves as a strong fortress against various threats that can undermine family life. In this regard, religion serves as a source to restore and solve problems. Therefore, it is essential for spouses to hold and practice religious teachings to the best of their abilities, meaning they are willing and capable of living a religious life within the family, both in times of joy and sorrow. Efforts towards this can be made by deepening religious knowledge and drawing closer to Allah (Abdillah & Rafiqoh, 2019).

In Islam, there is the concept of a “sakinah, mawaddah, wa rahmah” family, which refers to a family formed by a husband and wife who begin their relationship on a good note by applying Islamic values in fulfilling their rights and responsibilities as spouses and raising their children in an atmosphere of love and mercy. If each family member understands and is aware of their duties and responsibilities, marital harmony can be achieved.

In the context of Islam, there are several general rights and obligations of each spouse, including the following:

- a. Husbands and wives have the noble obligation to establish a harmonious family, which serves as the foundation of society.
- b. Husbands and wives are obliged to love, respect, be faithful to, and provide both material and emotional support to each other.
- c. Husbands and wives have the responsibility to nurture and care for their children's physical, spiritual, and intellectual growth.
- d. Husbands and wives must protect each other's honor.
- e. If a husband or wife neglects their obligations, each party can file a complaint with the religious court.

- f. Husbands and wives should have a permanent residence, determined jointly.

Apart from considering the rights and obligations of spouses, Islam has also established the roles of husbands and wives in family life, where:

- a. The husband is the head of the family, and the wife is the homemaker.
- b. The rights and position of the wife are balanced with those of the husband in family life and societal interactions.
- c. Both parties must base their actions on religious law (Arsi, n.d.).

Family conflicts arise when each spouse does not fully understand their roles, positions, rights, and responsibilities. By adhering to the principles of monotheism (tauhid) and understanding their roles as husbands or wives, every problem within the family can be resolved through mediation between spouses, between children and parents, or between the nuclear family and the extended family.

Conclusion

Modern family conflicts arise in several aspects, namely child-rearing, family finances, and the comfort of the home environment. The root cause of these conflicts is the emptiness of the heart and mind due to being distant from God, leading to easily triggered emotions and a lack of self-confidence among family members, making them feel useless. Additionally, the lack of warmth in the home atmosphere due to the busyness of each family member and the burden of double responsibilities borne by one party also contribute to conflict. Education and nurturing within the family are crucial in building a “sakinah, mawaddah, wa rahmah” family, where the family becomes calm, peaceful, experiences fewer conflicts, and is capable of resolving the problems they face by understanding their rights and responsibilities as both husband and wife.

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