# ADOLESCENTS' CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF RURAL AREAS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY IN CIANJUR, WEST JAVA, INDONESIA

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## ABSTRACT

*Background: Research on adolescents' conflict management usually attributed to the field of developmental psychologists. Theoretical underpinning correlates this "storm and stress" period with interpersonal conflicts with friends, schoolmates or even parents. In Indonesia, very few data deals with interpersonal conflicts of adolescences, but data from Minister of Youth and Sports, Republic of Indonesia (2017) shows that there is an increasing trends of conflict between schools and community of adolescents, regardless of the context. The present study draws insight from the void of research on adolescents' management of interpersonal conflicts in the context of rural areas in Indonesia. Objective This study aimed at developing conceptualization of adolescents' conflict management in rural areas in Indonesia, which will be accumulated for theoretical enrichment of social psychology on conflict resolution. Method Qualitative – case studies of 3 adolescents in Desa Jati, Cianjur, West Java, Indonesia. Method of analysis is the matization in psychology. Result After 2 months of data collection and a month of data analysis, study result shows that mechanisms of interpersonal conflict management style of 3 research subject, relies heavily on the parenting style. Especially, how the parent deals with spousal conflicts. As husband and wife, parent becoming a sole example for research subject on how to communicate differences and find the best solutions for any problems. Results also implicate that research subjects who*

*has been involving in many religious activities, absorb the style of conflict management from Ajengan or Kyai (religious leader) whom they are learning from. Mechanisms or interpersonal management of conflict, within the context of adolescents in rural area in Cianjur, still needs more exploration.* **Conclusion** *The findings support earlier proposition, mechanisms of conflict management style in the context of adolescents in rural areas in Cianjur, West Java, originates from familial pattern of conflict resolution and also how the community surroundings adolescents teach them how to deal with conflicts.*

**Keywords:** conflict management, adolescents' conflict management, mechanism of conflict resolution, family communication, community.

**Background of study**

A critical mass of literature of conflict management theories has been enriched with scales and measurement tools that help in understanding of how various factors effecting conflict and resolution of conflict. However we need a new perspective delineating this concept in a such different context. Firstly, in the context of Indonesia, demographic data shows that Indonesia has 18% from total population that ages between 12 to 19 years old (Infodatin, 2014). It needs more updated study on how adolescents' conflict management, especially in rural areas. In Indonesia rural areas comprises 46 %, and strategically, rural areas contributes highly to the economy of the country. Secondly, conflict management theory still lacks of the analysis of conflict management aspects connected to the shifting demographic and technology realities.

Kuan (2004) stated that conflict management theories draw its roots from developmental psychology and sociology. Developmental psychology relies heavily on cognitive and bio psychological factors. Sociology completes it with social and relational factors. In this study, influenced by Kuan (2004), researchers determined these two approaches as one horizon that guides the interpretations of research results.

From the standpoint of developmental psychology, children absorb his or her parent's conflict management, through all the years of communication and role-modeling, as a source of information. Children learn how spouse finding resolution of some differences, that parent

as a dyadic partner naturally helps children forming mindset and values on conflict and how to solve it.

Sociological approach perceives conflict management as a form of social control (Black, 1976). Interpersonal conflicts, generally, initiated as actor's response to another's undesirable behavior or behavior that is not appropriate from the point of view of offended actor's stance. Several studies on conflict management, focused in adolescence, concluded that age-related and cohort-related characteristics trigger conflict (Jassawala, Sashittal, 2017), a non-constructive style of conflict, engagement and withdrawal are conflict management styles common to teen years individual (Bonache, Ramirez-Santana, Gonzalez-Mendez, 2016), effects of parenting practices on violent behavior and conflict management of adolescence (among others from Cutrin, Gomez-Fraguela, Maneiro, Sobral, 2017). In this study, researchers try to build research-based thoughts, as an answer to the question of how conflict management of adolescents in the context of rural Indonesia.

**Method**

**Participants**

Participants in this study are three adolescents whom occupant from Desa Jati Bojong Picung, Cianjur Regency, West Java. *First* participant, one male (16 years old, named *J)* who was studying in his second grade vocational high school. *Second,* one female (16 years old, named NN) who was studying in her second grade in high school. And the *third* is a female, 15 years old named RG, now in her first grade of high school. The selection of participants are based on the observations of researchers in the surrounding environment, as well as considering aspects of time availability of participants.

Father of J is a farmer, but does not own some land and assigned by the owner of the land to work productively with sharing system. Mother of J is a housewife and once ever worked in Saudi Arabia as a maid for some Saudi's family. Father of NN is a military retirement and the mother is a petty trader who opens up a stall to sell everyday needs. Father of RG works as a construction worker and her mother a full time housewives.

**Procedure**

The researcher stayed with one of the occupant in Desa Jati, then visited the two participants to be interviewed on a mutually agreed schedule. Then the researchers asked for more information related to their parents. After being permitted, and based on that information, researcher visited their parents to conduct interviews as informants of the participants (triangulation process). Researchers also came to the Rural Administrator to obtain official data of population of adolescents age 10 to 19 and also adolescents problem and conflict in this area. In order for enrichment of research perspective, researchers also interviewed one of the cultural prominent figures in order to gain views of adolescents' life from a cultural perspectives. When all the data has been obtained, the researcher performs the process of data analysis.

**Data collection**

The process of collecting data was conducted by in-depth interviews. In-depth interview technique, enabling researchers to obtain data in detail and deeper that helped the researchers in conducting data analysis process. Before conducting an in-depth interview, the researchers first tried to build good relationships with participants and informants by opening the conversation on a daily-life topic and then ending up on interview based on the interview guideline (building rapport). Building rapport was easier because all researchers lived with native inhabitants around Desa Jati. Member-check conducted informally, within conversations and visits to the participants.

**Data analysis**

The analyzed data were the results of interviews with participants and informants which have been transcribed in the form of verbatim. From the verbatim, researchers classify existing statements into 181 coding. Coding here, are empirical labeling put into every statements in verbatim. Researchers then regroup those 181 codinginto as many as 74 categorization statements. After re-analysis, the number of categorizations decreased to 18 and finally conceptualized into 5 thematizations.

Table 1.Categorization of research

| List | Categorization |
|------|----------------|
| 1 | Subject characteristics |
| 2 | Characteristics of subject's parents |
| 3 | Conflict management |
| 4 | Parenting |
| 5 | Relationship with parents |
| 6 | Relationship with friends |
| 7 | Problem solving |
| 8 | Role of parent in decision making subject |
| 9 | The role of others in subject decision making |
| 10 | The problems faced by the subject |
| 11 | Rules/parents ban on subjects |
| 12 | Parent's desire for the future of the subject |
| 13 | The subject's desire for his future |
| 14 | How subjects respond to problems |
| 15 | Description of subject activity |
| 16 | Subject interest |
| 17 | Parental concerns |
| 18 | The role of culture in determining behavior |

Table 2.Thematization of research

| List | Thematization |
|------|----------------|
| 1 | Conflict management |
| 2 | Parenting style |
| 3 | Personality |
| 4 | Social influence of conflict management |
| 5 | Self-interest |

**Result**

The first subject has an avoidance management conflict style. The first subject perceives that a problem is something to be avoided, due to fact that

*"I don't wanna trapped by any problem, problems with my fear,  that can make me being alone or fear"*

And he also does not want to let any conflict with peers becoming physical violence.

*"don't you think that any physical fight will end up bad for everybody"*

The parents of the subject taught not to give excessive attention to the problem.

*"my mom and dad set examples about conflict. Every time my parent solving conflicts with understanding each other, my mom will stay silent or my dad tries not talk when my mom says something in her furious times"*

In addition, the spiritual activity undertaken by the subject, as a serious thing and the role of community leaders make the subject tend to avoid conflict. Participant J sometimes when to some *pengajian* or Quranic recital event, as a way to learn Islam better. And the *ulama* or teacher asks students to practice patience in any domains of life, especially when you have to face conflict. These teachings touches J and makes him an avoidance-style conflict management individuals.

The second subject, NN, also has an avoidance management conflict style. But the difference lies in the fact that she tends to avoid the problems because of her reluctance to engage further in a conflict.

*"I am a lazy person (smiling), if I don't have energy to fight then I won't fight. Every conflict I will let it gone, only by checking the fact do I get into deeper problem or not"*

Meanwhile the situation of her family, living together in a compound of family and relatives conditions NN to be a friendly person. And her parent tells her not to be involved in an issue, so the subject prefers to avoid conflict. NN's mother is also a friendly person, and the family acknowledges they have to apply a relaxed state of mind and let all the customers shopping in their grocery business.

RG also prefers to learn conflict management from her family, especially her parent. In Cianjur, lots of construction workers go to Jakarta for 2 months or more, just to work in some construction sites and bring money later for their family. RG's father leaves home often for months and let mother takes care of everything, including parenting. RG can see that:

*"my parent has a good way of thinking, they always separated because my father has to work in Jakarta, I can feel that every time they have conflict, my parent will make it closed to me and my sister, but they always together. I think it is a good one (note: of conflict management)*

RG involves a lot with pengajian or Quranic recital event, but to her this occasion means more about finding friends and having good times. But she said:

*"I surely try to be a good girl, I attend pengajian and listen to Pak Ajengan (Ulama), Pak Ajengan always asks us to refrain from violence when we have conflict. We have to be patient and be grateful to our lives."*

**Discussion**

The study findings lead us to 2 (two) main themes or conceptualizations, first, the role of parent and parenting as a source of information and knowledge for adolescents in conflict management. Second is the role of community religious activities and also Ulama whom becomes the most important figure of how to handle life's problem, in this context a conflict.

All participants live in rural Cianjur, West Java, are the symbol of Indonesians' youth coping with digital technological advancement but the parents still hold cultural values that prefer non proliferation of conflict, and the harmony of human relations. Most of the times, these adolescents apply these principles that has been socialized from generation to generation. But it doesn't mean Cianjur has a lesser amount of youth problems. Drug abuse and sexual harassment has been a major problem since long time ago here. The harmony and non proliferation conflict has an effect for sexual harassment victims. Many times, sexual harassment problem covered by the parents, after negotiating a way out that will prevent deeper conflict between the family of the perpetrator and the victim. Cutrin, Gomez-Fraguela, Maneiro and Sobral (2017) conducted study on anti-social behaviors of middle and late adoscences, found several factors as determinants for those behaviors. Mostly comes from parental domains, such as parental knowledge, parental support and parent-youth conflicts. But indicated in the study factors such as peers relationship triggers conflict and at the end could lead to deviant or non deviant behaviors.

Research findings also confirm that in rural West Java, Islamic teacher or preacher figures (Ulama) still play a dominant role for setting behavioral exemplary for adolescents, in order for them understanding and applying behavioral conducts, here in the synergistic context of

values from Islam and native Sundanese. Our study enriches the thoughts of conflict management. Qualitatively, conceptualizations of adolescents' conflict management leads to the needs of more studies on the roles of social and cultural values as one of determining factors that has effects of forming styles and habits to resolve conflicts. As we know that adolescents still in the way of self concept formation, with their tendencies to be easily changed due to the dynamics of his or her surroundings, social and cultural values enhances the possibility of parental and peer effects, into a more stable conflict management style.

**Conclusion**

Of the three subjects studied, researchers found conflict management in adolescents in Jati Village, Cianjur tended to avoid problems. Management of conflicts in adolescents in Cianjur there is influence of religious activities undertaken, parenting parenting, and relationships with peers. The three subjects avoid the problem because they are reluctant to engage more deeply with the problems experienced, and the desire to maintain relationships without violence will result from a problem that will adversely affect individual relationships.

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