



Conflict In-Laws and Son-in-Law in Merariq Tradition

Aliya Dwi Citra Adhiningsih¹, Dhiny Nedyasari², Deby Suteja³

¹²³LSPR Institute of Communication & Business, Indonesia

Correspondent: 22172380021@lspr.edu¹

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ABSTRACT: This research explores the impact of the Merariq practice on interpersonal communication within families in Nyurlembang Village, West Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara. Utilizing a qualitative approach and employing a phenomenological case study methodology, this research engages with five *merariq* wives and one respective parents who is unaware of the kidnapping process. Data collection is conducted through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using Nvivo. The findings indicate that Merariq creates conflict, especially in the communication between prospective spouses and parents. In conclusion, an educational approach, open dialogue, and socialization programs are essential to raise awareness, improve interpersonal communication, and prevent tension in family relationships. The practical implications involve real efforts to enhance harmony within the cultural context of Merariq.

Keywords: Interpersonal Communication, Communications Management, Marriage, Culture, Family Conflict



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INTRODUCTION

The Central Statistics Agency records divorce cases in Indonesia reaching 516, 344 in 2022. This data shows an increase from the previous year, namely 447,743 in 2021, 291,677 in 2020. Meanwhile in West Nusa Tenggara, the divorce number reached 10,746 in 2022. The main cause of divorce cases are constant ([Badan Pusat Statistik, 2023](#)). One of the causes of disharmony in the household is disharmony in the household due to forced marriages ([Badan Pusat Statistik, 2022](#)). Apart from that, the maturity factor of the husband and wife will also determine harmony in the household because it influences the way things are looked at, the accuracy in taking attitudes and wisdom ([Musaitir, 2020](#)). The problem of forced marriage and the immaturity of married couples has been identified as one of the negative impacts of the marriage tradition by the Sasak tribe in West Nusa Tenggara ([Arikunto, 2016](#); [Krogel, 2016](#); [Ruan & Durresti, 2019](#); [Wu et al., 2023](#)).

The theory of Social Penetration was developed in 1973 by Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor. Through the concept of Social Penetration, Altman and Taylor elucidated the process of developing closeness in a relationship. Altman and Taylor argued that individuals would be able to establish closeness with others through a series of communication processes, progressing from superficial communication to more intimate communication. The theory of Social Penetration also explains that as a relationship evolves, the breadth and depth of conversations will increase ([Huang, 2022](#); [Javadpour, 2019](#)).

In the Sasak tribe, before marriage there is a process or customary system which is often referred to as *merariq*. Etymologically the word *merariq* is taken from the word "run", running. *Merari'an* means *melai'ang* means to run away. *Merariq* is also interpreted as the whole implementation of marriage according to Sasak custom. *Merariq* is also interpreted as an escape which is a real action to free a girl from the bonds of her parents and family ([Muhsinin et al., 2022](#)). Indonesia is a country with various tribes and cultures, each tribe has its own culture in various aspects including marriage procedures regulated by their respective customs. The process in traditional marriages is carried out in accordance with applicable customary laws and regulations which are dominated by old culture because it has been carried out from generation to generation by the ancestors so that all customary activities contain ancestral moral values that need to be respected by future generations so that they can be preserved and not abandoned ([Sirait, 2021](#)).

The escalating number of divorces and family conflicts in recent years, particularly in Indonesia, provides the foundation for this research. The primary focus of this study is on cultural conflicts and family communication that arise in *Merariq* marriages. By cultivating a more profound understanding of these dynamics, we can seek solutions that may enhance the well-being of couples marrying within this cultural tradition.

This study implies the importance for potential suitor to build pre-*merariq* communication with the prospective family to minimize potential post-marriage conflicts. In addition, when conflict occurs due to *merariq*, it is important to address it promptly through small talks that can lead to intimate conversations, as communication serves as the solution.

This study provides practical insights for communities implementing traditions to underline the need for effective interpersonal communications to improve family harmony and the needs of education on the potential interfamily conflict due to *merariq* ([Ahmed et al., 2014](#); [Asi Siburian, 2013](#)).

Merariq is a traditional marriage system that is still being implemented in Lombok ([Muhsinin et al., 2022](#)). *Merariq* is considered one of the ancestral cultures and moral values which are still highly respected today. Sasak marriage procession in Lombok where the man kidnaps the woman to show his seriousness in proposing, but this can be done if the woman has agreed. *Merariq* is a tradition that starts a marriage involving the groom's secretly meeting with the girl and taking him away at night to a hiding place ([Haslan et al., 2021](#)). The tradition of eloping is essentially based on an agreement between the two prospective bride and groom or the agreement of both parties to do pulling ([Muhsinin et al., 2022](#)), and the ritual is able to provide moral and social messages that are rooted for the Sasak people ([Ilmalia et al., 2021](#)), however, customary law in its development

continues to develop in tandem with the globalization era which has caused people's lifestyles to mix ([Sugitanata, 2020](#); [Sugitanata et al., 2023](#)).

The *merariq* tradition in the Sasak community gives rise to several levels of conflict. The first conflict occurs between families when a girl is kidnapped or elopes with someone who is not desired by the bride's parents, leading to family shame when *merariq* is rejected. Culture is understood to mean all human works, feelings and creations, namely all complex ways of life, including knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, customary law and all other skills and habits that humans acquire as members of society ([Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2021](#); [Smith, 2017](#); [Syakhrani & Kamil, 2022](#)). The people of Lombok are still heavily influenced by the culture of their ancestors, both in terms of buildings, traditions, arts and crafts, and food, which is still traditional ([Turmuzi et al., 2022](#)). The second conflict arises during the negotiation of the dowry and the bride's price. The third conflict involves tension in early marriage between the bride's parents and the son-in-law. The fourth conflict pertains to cultural and religious differences that persist to this day. The fifth conflict is related to human rights, namely related to the absence of free will for women.

The practice of early marriage from *merariq kodeq* has an impact on premature pregnancy, dropping out of school, domestic violence, divorce, psychological trauma as well as being vulnerable to informal marriage outside the legal framework ([Ihsan, 2020](#)). *Merariq kodeq* also greatly influences family harmony and affects mental health, divorce, abandoned children, forced to drop out of school, Domestic Violence (KDRT) and health problems for women ([Nuzula & Rahmatia, 2021](#)). In addition, marriage at a young age with conditions that are still studying causes conflict in marriage. One of them is not getting the blessing of their parents and triggering stress as a result of unstable emotional maturity ([Hanun & Rahmasari, 2022](#)). The disapproval of the relationship between the two partners by their parents is one of the most crucial problems. The reason he doesn't approve is sometimes because the two lovers who want to attract are underage and are even still in the process of pursuing junior high and high school level education who are not old enough ([Muhsinin et al., 2022](#)).

Pisuke in the wedding tradition of West Lombok is a part of local wisdom and is generally accepted by the community. It relates a monetary amount given from the male family to the female's family. The determination/negotiation of *pisuke* amount should be considered fairly and evenly to avoid problems and agreements that can harm one party. ([Sahibuddin & Junaidi, 2022](#)) found that the amount of *pisuke* in weddings in West Lombok is influenced by factors such as the education, profession, and economic ability of the groom. *Merariq's* negative impact also led to prolonged conflicts between men and women, one of which was due to the marriage not being approved by the woman's family, or different class differences where women came from nobility while men came from ordinary society ([Haslan & Dahlan, 2022](#)). If the groom cannot fulfill the requested amount, the position of the bride's family can become stronger in negotiations. However, the practice of eloping can weaken the position of the bride's family and decrease the value of the offer. If the situation is a marriage by way of elopement or without the approval of the families, both sides will feel unsatisfied and anxious. The bride's family will feel more vulnerable and have weaker negotiation power, exacerbating their position ([Sahibuddin & Junaidi, 2022](#)).

In *merariq* households, obstacles in family culture and communication stem from forced marriages, immaturity of couples, and conflicts arising during the *merariq* process. The tradition, deeply rooted in Sasak culture, involves eloping, dowry negotiations, and cultural-religious disparities, leading to family tensions. Early marriages resulting from *merariq kodeq* contribute to issues like premature pregnancies, school dropouts, domestic violence, and mental health challenges. The practice also triggers conflicts between parents and young couples due to age and educational differences. This study answers questions regarding the relationship between culture and family communication, how conflict occurs in the family, the emotion of conflict expressed in early marriage, as well as the obstacles in family culture and communication and the solutions.

METHOD

This qualitative study adopts a case study approach, incorporating a phenomenological perspective within the Social Penetration theory framework to comprehensively investigate the dynamics of interpersonal communication in the context of Merariq. The research design combines qualitative methods, emphasizing in-depth exploration of social and humanitarian aspects related to Merariq ([Creswell & Creswell, 2018](#)). Conducted in Nyurlembang Village, West Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara, the research involves five Merariq wives with a decade or more of marriage experience, along with one parent unaware of the kidnapping process. Purposive sampling selects 10 informants based on specific criteria.

Semi-structured interviews are used to explore the complex dynamics of interpersonal communication during Merariq conflicts. The triangulation technique enhances data validity by providing a holistic perspective. In this study, the collected data are analyzed using NVivo. The analysis involves three key stages—data collection, condensation, and presentation. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents are meticulously examined. The condensation phase involves organizing information to derive conclusions aligned with research objectives, presented categorically for validation ([Miles et al., 2014](#)). Six sources guide the data collection process, including documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, and participant observation. The case study process encompasses defining and designing the study, preparing, collecting, and analyzing data. Semi-structured interviews, facilitating open exploration, are used to gather detailed insights. The collected data are analyzed to examine and revisit existing concepts or theories established in the initial research phase ([Miles et al., 2014](#); [Moleong, 2017](#); [Sugiyono, 2019](#)).

Table 1
Results of interviews with brides and parents

No.	Aspect	Finding or Observation
1.	Impact of Merariq Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Conflict arises due to <i>merariq</i>, causing helplessness under custom tradition and deteriorating relationships.b) Parents express anger over forced marriages, leading to ongoing conflicts.c) Communication issues within <i>merariq</i> couples contribute to early family conflicts.
2.	Communication Patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Interpersonal communication processes differ among participants.b) Small talks play a role in rebuilding relationships, especially between parents and the couple.c) Lack of communication, suppressed emotions, and absence of conflict resolution contribute to family conflicts.
3.	Social Penetration Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Relationships improve as discussions become deeper and more conical, supported by feedback.b) Openness takes longer than conflict resolution, with individuals fully opening up after significant time, often related to life milestones like pregnancy or childbirth.
4.	Cultural Conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Merariq is considered a common practice in Nyurlembang village, passed down through generations.b) Conflicts arise between parents and the couple due to cultural differences in marriage practices.c) Reconciliation periods vary between parents and their son-in-law or daughter, influenced by cultural norms and emotional dynamics.

In this research, the utilization of NVivo as a qualitative data analysis tool enhances the efficiency and rigor of the analysis process, allowing for a nuanced exploration of the complexities inherent in the Merariq tradition.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In Nyurlembang village, the largest population is the Sasak tribe, which makes up 98.4% of the total population in Nyurlembang village. The Sasak people who live in Nyurlembang village adhere

to 3 religions namely Islam, Hinduism and Christianity, with the majority being Muslim. The comparison of the population in Nyurlembang Village, where the majority of the population are Sasak and Muslim, is one of the factors that greatly influences the persistence of the *Merariq* practice because unmarried men and women cannot gather under one roof. As has developed into a belief passed down from generation to generation by the Sasak people, women who have been abducted are not allowed to return to their parents' homes because they are considered inappropriate and taboo. Therefore, *Merariq* continues until the traditional procession is over.

The research revealed issues contributing to conflict caused by *merariq*, particularly caused by helplessness under custom tradition, this deteriorated relationship and the research participants chose silence as emotional avenue. It was also identified that interpersonal communications processes were different among the research participants. However, it was common that small talks contributed to rebuilding the relationship although reconciliation time was varied between the parents with their own daughter and son-in-law.

Impact of Merariq on Interpersonal Communication

The research results demonstrate that the *Merariq* practice has a substantial impact on interpersonal communication within family settings. Discrepancies in perspectives on *Merariq* give rise to conflicts and tensions, leading to the development of misunderstanding and emotional isolation.

...I feel that merariq was indeed a common practice when I was young, so I feel that kidnapping other people's children is normal (Mr. BD, 48).

...because people in the village and my parents also did it (Mrs. MN, 43).

...people in my village were used to merariq, there was nothing wrong with it (Mr. MW, 46).

A similar perspective was also shared by the parents-in-law that also justified the existence of *merariq* because it was customary.

...it was customary, all people here did merariq (Inaq SR, 62).

...it was normal because it was a custom here (Amaq SL).

One research participant considered that *merariq* was no longer relevant in the present day.

...if it's done nowadays, maybe it's not permissible, but in the old days it was normal (Mrs. HW, 41).

The wives also shared a similar perspective that *merariq* was a custom tradition. They perceived that when a girl was successfully kidnapped by her suitor, it was mandatory for her to marry the man. In addition, although they knew that *merariq* is a tradition, they also felt scared and somewhat felt they did not have the power to reject the marriage. These perceptions and feelings were uniform among all the research participants who were kidnapped and married under *merariq*.

...It was customary for our elderly people to do it, so I think it was normal. But when I experienced merariq, I was afraid (Mrs. SU, 37).

...at that time I didn't know that I was going to be taken for merariq, because he had already kidnapped me, so I had to marry him (Mrs. SU, 37).

...because I had been kidnapped so I had to marry, even though I was afraid, but I had to follow the tradition (Mrs. HW, 41).

...it was customary, then I was kidnapped so inevitably I had to get married (Mrs. NH, 36).

One participant mentioned that the scared feeling was also triggered by the fear of rejection by their parents towards the marriage considering that she was still underage.

...I was afraid of not being approved, especially since I was still in junior high school (Ms. HW, 41).

In Mr. BD's case, he assumed that he knew the future parents-in-law well enough. This made him brave enough to kidnap Mrs. MN. However, because there was no communication prior to the kidnap, his relationship with his parents-in-law became poor.

...The relationship with the future in-laws was mediocre, not bad but not really good either, so it was average because we weren't too close (Mr. BD, 48).

It was later found that although Mrs. MN's parents considered that *merariq* is a tradition, they did not agree when their daughter was kidnapped. This changed their relationship dynamic. In the early time of marriage, Mrs. MN felt completely uncomfortable with the relationship between his husband and her parents. Meanwhile, Mr. BD felt that his relationship with his parents-in-law was cold as if he wasn't accepted, even to talk also felt awkward.

...in the early days of my marriage, my relationship with my parents was fine, but my husband was not, so I felt uncomfortable (Mrs. MN, 43).

...the relationship with MN's parents was cold, sometimes I felt like I wasn't accepted. In the early days of marriage, that's how I felt, we didn't really talk (Mr. BD, 48).

Particularly Mr. MW's case, he convinced himself to kidnap Mrs. HW because he felt that his relationship with Mrs. HW's parents was fairly good because they were distant families. However, a misunderstanding occurred because there was no previous communication, it turned out that the woman's family did not agree for her children to be taken for *merariq*.

...I had a good relationship, we knew each other close because my family was still distant relatives, that's why I dared to do Merariq (Mr. MW, 46).

Communication Patterns Between the Prospective Spouse and Parents

Communication dynamics between the potential spouse and parents are adversely influenced, resulting in impediments such as emotional constraints and limited bidirectional communication. The anger persisted even though the parents had previously known the man, and it was severe when they did not know the man previously. Mr. MW and Mrs. HW have an age gap of 5 years, at which time Mrs. HW was still 15 years old when Mr. MW kidnapped her. Mrs. HW being underage became the problems of the *merariq*.

...before I was taken for merariq the relationship was fine, but after finding out that I was kidnapped and at that time I was still underage, my parents were angry and didn't want me to get married (Mrs. HW, 41).

...because we already knew each other closely and had a family relationship, I thought they would allow, but it turned out that her parents were angry because I kidnapped him when I was in junior high school (Mr. MW, 46)

...we were very angry at that time, she should have finished school first. If she had finished school it was okay (Inaq MA, 65).

Mrs. HW's parents did not approve of her daughter getting married when she was 15 years old, but because they must follow traditional customs, they had no choice but to marry her daughter. The misunderstanding continued during the first year of marriage.

...because I had brought their daughter with me and the parents must marry off her, so they did not speak to me, not invited to talk or negotiate. So the conflict was this silent conflict (Mr. MW, 46).

...I was also silenced because I had not finished school (Ms. HW, 41).

Meanwhile Mr. WS considered his relationship with his future in-laws before marriage was good because he often visited Mrs. SU's house.

...it was fine (before), I often went to SU's house, so the parents already knew me (Mr. WS, 41).

...it was fine, he often came to our house (Inaq SR, 62).

However, just like the previous case, parents did not agree that their daughter was kidnapped because she was underage. Mrs. SU's statement explained that after the marriage took place, her relationship with her parents became poor because they did not receive approval and at that time she had not yet graduated from high school.

...after I was taken for merariq, at first my parents disapproved and got angry because I was still 17 years old and had not graduated from high school. It was 3 months before exams when I was taken by merariq,

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so my parents were angry. Then my parents were also angry because my future husband didn't have parents, so my relationship was not good after merariq (Mrs. SU, 37).

It was also not possible for two-way interpersonal communication between Mr. WS and his parents-in-law. The existence of conflicts that occurred in the early days of marriage caused the subject to lack communication with him and his parents-in-laws.

...in the past I was scolded and my parents-in-law didn't speak to me because I kidnapped their daughter when she was about to take a high school exam, then I also didn't have parents. So my relationship with my parents-in-laws at that time was not good (Mr. WS, 41).

...not good because I was angry that he had not graduated from high school (Inaq SR, 62).

Mr. HH and Mrs. NH have an age gap of 6 years, at which time Mrs. NH was still 17 years old when her husband kidnapped her. Mrs. NH at that time had not graduated from high school and had become a problem for *Merariq*. Mr. HH had not known his future father-in-law at all, and vice versa. The conflict occurred because there was no blessing from the future in-laws, and also Mrs. NH was underage at that time. Mrs. NH was also afraid because her parents did not know that she was dating a man and was suddenly taken for *Merariq*.

...my relationship with my parents was fine before, never had a fight either. But I was scared because my parents didn't know I was kidnapped. I was scared to tears (Mrs. NH, 36).

...not good because I didn't know her parents (Mr. HH, 42).

...I was good with my daughter, but my son-in-law was not because I had never met him (Amaq SL).

Mrs. NH's relationship with her parents was initially good, but turned sour after *merariq*. Mrs. NH's family did not agree with her daughter getting married when she was 17 years old and still in high school. In addition, they did not accept that their child was kidnapped by someone they had never met before. But they married her anyway to follow the custom. Hence, even when they got married, the parents were still angry.

...my parents were disappointed because I was underage and they didn't know that I was dating because I only dated for 50 days (Ms NH, 36).

...because we had not known each other before, the relationship was not good at the start, so it got worse (Mr. HH, 42).

...after they got married I was angry with my daughter, especially with my son-in-law because I never heard his name before. Suddenly my daughter was kidnapped, how can I not be angry (Amaq SL).

Implementation of Social Penetration Theory

The conceptual framework of the study incorporates the Social Penetration Theory to elucidate the difficulties in interpersonal communication, societal perceptions, and familial customs within the Merariq tradition.

In the case of Mr. BD and Mrs. MN, the conflict occurred with the parents because of a lack of closeness between the future son-in-law and the future parents-in-law, so that when he kidnapped their daughter, the parents felt uncomfortable but chose not to discuss it, creating a conflict within the family. Further, misunderstanding arose between the couple and the parents because there was an obstacle to communication and there was no desire to accept the message from the other person.

...we just kept quiet and didn't speak with each other (Inaq RN, 60).

...usually there were misunderstandings because they didn't really want to listen to me, because when they talked to me it was unpleasant. Usually when I wanted to offer help, it was as if my efforts were of no value. Starting from this feeling of not being appreciated, conflict arose (Mr BD, 48).

Meanwhile Mr. MW had tried to communicate with his parents-in-law, but no feedback was received, so the communication process was ineffective.

...how to have a conversation, we were not invited to talk (Mr. MW, 46).

...eventually my relationship was better, but I didn't dare to have discussion because I was afraid to be scolded (Ms. HW, 41).

...no one spoke to each other (Inaq MA, 65).

In Mr. WS's case, the conflict began because there was no blessing from the parents-in-law, however they did not want to open the two-way interpersonal communication.

...got scolded, but didn't turn into a fight. I couldn't defend myself either, so there was nothing to say at that time, so I didn't speak (Mr WS, 41).

...I was ignored by my parents (Mrs. SU, 37).

...no arguments, just kept silent (Inaq SR, 62).

Similar situation happened in Mr. HH's relationship with his parents-in-law.

...I was silent because I was angry, no one dared to speak to me (Amaq SL).

...we kept silent and didn't speak to each other. My parents-in-law were very cold, I was becoming the subject of the talk of the whole family, but we never got into argument let alone hit each other (Mr. HH, 42).

After conflicts and misunderstandings occurred, there was no intention from both parties to resolve and discuss their problems in depth, therefore, conflict happened because there was no interpersonal communication. Communication processes that should have occurred starting from interpretation, encoding, sending, traveling, receiving, feedback, interpretation did not happen.

Relations between research participants began to improve over time from small talks persistently initiated by one of the family members. In the case of Mr. BD's family, it was the parents-in-law who initiated the discussion so that the processes and stages of communication were formed as they should. The process started when the parents-in-law invited him to have a small talk, from there, a comfortable feeling for in-depth discussions began to form.

...after a while out of pity, they started talking to me and asking how I was feeling. It was from there that I began to be honest and open about what was bothering me (Mr. BD, 48).

...I once tried to ask my parents what was really wrong, but never really got an answer, until they finally started to talk to my husband (Mrs. MN, 43).

As time went by, interpersonal communication was established to listen to each other, with which conflicts started to resolve.

...if I wasn't spoken to, maybe until now I haven't reconciled with my parents-in-laws (Mr BD, 48).

This was similar to Mrs. WS's case. At first the parents-in-law refused to establish communication, but eventually they started to start conversation. Over time, after interpersonal communication took place in two directions between the communicator and the communicant, the conflict was dissolving.

...if I wasn't invited to talk by my parents-in-law, it was impossible for me to make up until now, because I was also afraid to talk first (Mr. WS, 41).

...we became aware of what we have been holding up (Inaq SR, 62).

Unlike Mr. BD, Mr. MW was the one who started to initiate the conversation, until eventually his parents-in-law started to respond.

...I tried to talk many times, at first they were silent, but because they were parents so couldn't bear to be angry for long, finally when I spoke again, they answered (Mr. MW, 46)

...because they were dared to talk to me, it became normal (Inaq MA, 65)

Conflict in Mr. MW's family occurred because one of the parties did not want to participate in the conversation. However, when interpersonal communication was initiated, their conflicts and problems slowly dissolved.

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...if I don't have the courage to talk to my parents-in-law, it won't get better (Mr MW, 46).

...if we didn't talk, we would not know why they were angry with my husband and me at that time (Ms. HW, 41).

...so I knew the background story, previously I didn't know (Inaq MA, 65).

In Mr. HH's case, his wife started to talk with her parents. Improvement of the relationship between the two parties began when one party started to initiate interpersonal communication. With the creation of two-way communication, the misunderstandings that occurred were gradually improving.

... it was not comfortable that we were already a family but were silent to each other, my wife finally started talking to her parents (Mr. HH, 42).

...we made up because we discussed the previous problem. After a while my parents forgave my husband too (Mrs. NH, 36).

The conflict that occurred between the son-in-law and the parents-in-law was due to the lack of communication regarding the problem and anger that was retained after the marriage, the conflict occurred because one or both parties did not want to talk. Therefore, after interpersonal communication began, their conflicts and problems slowly improved.

...since I started talking to and getting to know my son-in-law, I understood his character, back then I didn't like him because I didn't know him (Amaq SL).

Poor interpersonal communication that occurred between *merariq* couples with the wife's parents only occurred in less than one year of marriage. There were different reconciliation periods between parents with their son-in-law and their daughter.

With the daughter, the difficulty of communication happened for a period of one month or even less due to greater feelings of affection than anger. It was also identified that the period of openness to establish a deeper relationship for each person was different. Improving relationships took time where it required trust and comfort.

...because I'm their daughter, I was spoken to after a week, but I was still scared. But in the end, it took about 5 months to be open again (Ms. HW, 41).

...I only had one or two weeks, my parents couldn't bear to ignore their own daughter. After that I started talking, but it was still uncomfortable because I was previously ignored. They finally started to be open again when I was pregnant (Mrs. SU, 37).

...starting to be better maybe in 10 months, they had been open since I had a child (Mrs MN, 43).

...It was fast for me to reconcile, but I forgot how long. I wasn't that open with my parents even before I got married, but we started to share stories when my child was a toddler (Mrs. NH, 36).

Meanwhile for the sons-in-law, the average period of conflict was three to ten months. This poor interpersonal communication also occurred because there was no effort to initiate conversation and there was one party who did not want to communicate interpersonally so there was no common ground to resolve problems.

In Mr. MW's case, poor interpersonal communication with his parents-in-law did not last more than a year. For Mr. BD's case, a more open and in-depth interpersonal communication began within two years of marriage. Meanwhile in the case of Mr. WS, in-depth interpersonal communication had only occurred in about five years. The same situation was experienced by Mr. HH. He improved relationship with his parents-in-law in three months, but for openness it took much longer, more than five years.

...If I was not mistaken, it was only one year. In that year we started to chat, but not yet fully open with parents-in-law (Mr. MW, 46).

...probably less than a year. But that was only greeting each other. Opening up maybe after 2 years of marriage when I had a child (Mr BD, 48).

...Just a few months, less than a year. It took a very long time to open up because it was also difficult for us to tell stories to my parents-in-laws, maybe more or less when my child was 5 years old, then we started to talk a lot (Mr WS, 41).

...It didn't take long to make up, maybe 3 months. But it took a long time to open up, maybe more than 5 years because we rarely talked (Mr. HH, 42).

Cultural Conflict Challenges

This research extensively outlines the cultural conflicts inherent in the Merariq tradition, emphasizing the tensions arising from the clash between traditional values and the influences of globalization.

Based on the theory used by researchers, namely the theory of social penetration, communication issues caused by *merariq* custom can improve, particularly due to communication and acceptance from superficial communication processes towards more intimate communication. Based on the data collected, research subject relationship began to improve when it was felt that the topics of discussion were getting deeper and more conical and supported by feedback from the communicant. It was because of the deep communication established that allowed the son-in-law to feel that he was able to know his father-in-law better and felt accepted, as the concept of social penetration theory states that an increasingly intimate relationship will eventually give breadth of understanding of one another.

The practical implications derived from the study are multifaceted. Firstly, there is a pressing need for an educational approach aimed at heightening awareness regarding the repercussions of Merariq. Secondly, the study underscores the paramount importance of fostering open dialogue and mutual understanding as essential elements for enhancing interpersonal communication. Lastly, it advocates for the development and implementation of socialization programs geared towards instilling the significance of adequate preparation and maturity before marriage. These measures are envisioned to act as preventive measures, mitigating tensions within family relationships.

CONCLUSION

The research findings indicate a decrease in the effectiveness of interpersonal communication between the son-in-law and his parents-in-law following the Merariq tradition. While parents on the female's side may not have concurred with the suitor who abducted their daughter, they felt compelled to adhere to the Merariq custom. This disagreement, compounded by the daughter's youth and enrollment in school, strained the relationship between the daughter and her parents, resulting in family tensions.

For the son-in-laws, the strained relationship with their parents-in-law deteriorated due to the lack of consent to marry the daughters and the absence of dialogue to address the issue. Consequently, ineffective interpersonal communication prevailed within the family. The communication gap between parents-in-law and the son-in-law post-marriage was attributed to the parents' overwhelming emotions, impeding communication and hindering a satisfactory resolution.

([Nuzula & Rahmatia, 2021](#)) underscored the significance of open communication and mutual understanding to alleviate tension. Transparent dialogues and respectful discussions were deemed effective in reducing tension and finding satisfactory solutions for all parties. Moreover, an educational and socialization approach, highlighting the importance of preparation and maturity before marriage, could be implemented to prevent early marriages that might lead to tension within family relationships.

Despite the conflict not escalating into physical altercations due to the lack of contact, the initiation of personal conversations facilitated the gradual resolution of the issues. The study concludes that the phases of openness vary for each person, and improvement occurs when both parties are willing to engage in dialogue, promoting effective interpersonal communication.

In summary, the research underscores the importance of an educational approach, open dialogue, and socialization programs in addressing the challenges associated with the Merariq tradition. These insights emphasize the need for concrete efforts and initiatives to foster harmony, understanding, and effective communication within the distinctive dynamics of Merariq practices. Implementing these practical steps is crucial for promoting positive family dynamics within the cultural framework of Merariq, as discussed in preceding sections.

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