

## Family Communication In Conflict: Analysis Through Robert Bales' Theory

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**Abstract** - The divorce rate in 2023 was 463,654 cases in Indonesia. This research aims to analyze family communication in conflict as it is believed to be linked to the divorce rate in Indonesia. This research uses Robert Bales' Theory, with 6 assumptions that serve as the guide in this study. This theory explains the types of messages exchanged within a group and how these messages shape the roles and personalities of group members, as well as influence the overall character or nature of the group. The paradigm used is Phenomenology, to understand the experiences of each individual. This study analyzes 4 families in conflict, with 6 informants. To maintain family confidentiality, the informants are symbolized as: A, B, C, and D, consisting of a child and one parent. The families analyzed are those who were once married and have since divorced, but must continue to communicate due to the presence of children. The research was conducted through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The research results show that each family has its own way of resolving communication conflicts. Family A is committed to maintaining communication between the child and the separated parents; families B and C experience poor communication situations, which affect the child's adaptation difficulties and various emotional disturbances. The research results show that 2 families experience problems in communication, evaluation, supervision, tension, and cohesion, 1 family experiences problems in communication, evaluation, and supervision, and 1 family can maintain communication, share in evaluation, supervision, and maintain cohesion for the sake of their child even though they have separated as a couple.

**Keywords:** *Family Communication, Conflict, Robert Bales, Interaction Process Analysis Theory.*

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### Introduction

Miller-Day (2017) states that family communication is the foundation of family life and function. Family communication is the place where family members learn to manage meaning, build family relationships, and create a system that is greater than the sum of its family members. In this system, families communicatively navigate cohesion and adaptability; create images, themes, stories,

rituals, rules, and family roles; manage power, intimacy, and boundaries; build and share symbols (Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1993) and participate in the interactive process of meaning-making, producing mental models of family life that endure over time and across generations.

Family communication patterns are intentional and meaningful message delivery patterns among individuals who have biological, legal, or commitment-based relationships such as marriage to nurture and control each other (Mustary et al., 2023). The family is a primary institution that is very important in human life, both as individuals and as a society. Families are formed from units that have a minimum size, especially the parties that initially establish a bond (Khairuddin H, 1985). The family is also viewed as an institution with strong resilience due to its ability to continuously control individuals. This is important considering that each family functions as a conduit to the larger society and a link between individuals and the larger social structure (Wongpy & Setiawan, 2019).

Conflict between husband and wife couples is often found to end in divorce. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows that the number of divorces in 2023 reached 463,654 cases, as illustrated in Figure 1 below:



**Figure 1.** Number of Divorce Cases in Indonesia, 2016-2023.

Source: Katadata, 2023

Divorce cases in Indonesia decrease in 2023, first time since the pandemic. Figure 1 shows that divorce cases in Indonesia in 2023 decreased by 10.2% compared to the previous year, with a total of 516,344 cases in 2022. Some of the reasons include; economic factors, disputes, quarrels, and one party leaving (Rizaty, 2024). Family conflicts can have both positive and negative impacts depending on the way, attitude, and mindset in managing them. Family conflicts, in whatever form, must be faced, resolved, and solutions must be sought.

Negative family conflicts, if not addressed promptly, can worsen family relationships (Sayed & Sinha, 2024); therefore, strategies need to be implemented to resolve conflicts through conflict resolution (Leuchtmann, et al., 2018; Susilowati & Susanto, 2021). Conflict resolution is an effort to address the causes of conflict and strive to build new relationships that can endure over time within groups experiencing conflict (Mustary et al., 2023). Meanwhile, according to Weitzman in Morton and Coleman and Ruppel, et al., (2021), conflict resolution is defined as a joint problem-solving action (solve a problem together). This research aims to analyze family communication in conflict as it is believed to be linked to the divorce rate in Indonesia.

## Theoretical Framework

### *Theory of Interaction Process Analysis*

Interaction Process Analysis Theory (Keyton, et al., [Eds.] 2018), developed by Robert Bales (1950). This theory explains the types of messages exchanged within a group and how these messages shape the roles and personalities of group members, as well as influence the overall character or nature of the group (Littlejohn, 2019). Robert Bales, (in Littlejohn 2019), stated that there are 12 types of messages in group communication that can be simplified into four messages, namely: positive actions, questions, attempts at answers, and negative actions.

According to Bales, the analysis of the interaction process in groups consists of six categories: (1) If each group member does not share information with one another, the group will experience

"communication problems"; (2) If each group member does not share their opinions with each other, the group will experience "evaluation problems"; (3) If each group member does not ask each other questions and give suggestions, the group will experience "supervision problems"; (4) If each group member cannot reach an agreement, they will face a "decision problem"; (5) If there is not enough "dramatization" in the group, then "tension problems" will arise; (6) If group members behave unfriendly, there will be reintegration problems, meaning the group will not be able to build cohesiveness within the group.

The Theory of Interaction Process Analysis is the fundamental source of group communication, where a group is certainly composed of group members, and each individual has different personalities. With the presence of a self-formation group that initially is negative but becomes positive, this can also happen if the role of the group gives significant meaning to the members of the group. The Interaction Process Analysis Theory is related to this research to understand communication interactions in families that are in conflict due to divorce.

### *Generation Z*

Generation is defined as a group of individuals who share the same historical and sociocultural context at a certain stage of development (Lyons & Kuron, 2013). Generation Z is the most dominant group in various generational categories, reaching 26.4% in Indonesia (BPS, 2024) and in other parts of the world (Spitznagel, 2020). They are known as the digital native generation, who have been familiar with technology such as gadgets since childhood (Roberts et al., 2014). This generation has the ability to express their identity both in the real world and in the virtual space. One of their advantages compared to the millennial generation is their ability in collaboration and co-creation (Gentina, 2020).

Research by Broadbent, et al (2017) shows that the values of Generation Z are socialized and influenced by parents (89%), friends (78%), teachers (70%), celebrities (30%), and politicians (17%). A research finding emphasizes the importance of the family's role, especially parents, in the function of socialization, alongside four other functions: reproduction, economic support, social support, and social roles (Lestari, 2012). The process of value socialization between parents and Gen Z occurs in various ways. Bao, et al (in Gentina, 2020) identify unilateral socialization, through direct requests and persuasion, as well as bilateral socialization involving negotiation and reasoning.

According to Stillman and Stillman (2017), there are seven ideal characteristics of Generation Z found in America and other countries, namely: (1) Digital; (2) Hyper-customization; (3) Realistic; (4) Fear of Missing Out (FOMO); (5) Weconomist; (6) Do It Yourself (D.I.Y.); (7) Driven.

### *Family in Conflict*

Conflict between husband and wife couples is often found to end in divorce. The reasons for divorce are caused by various factors, including economic factors, disputes or arguments, and one party leaving (Rizaty, 2024). In families that have divorced and have children, communication patterns become one of the crucial factors that affect the mental health, learning abilities, and future of the children. Divorce often brings significant changes in family dynamics, such as adjustments to new routines, scheduling time with both parents, and different roles and responsibilities.

When communication in a divorced family does not go well, children can feel neglected or confused by the situation they are facing. The lack of effective communication can increase the risk of stress, anxiety, and feelings of insecurity in children. They may have difficulty expressing their feelings, which can affect their mental health. Children who feel caught in the middle of parental conflicts or become victims of poor communication tend to show signs of emotional and behavioral disturbances, which can hinder their ability to learn and develop optimally.

### **Material and Methodology**

The object of this research is Family Communication in Conflict, analyzed based on Robert Bales' Theory. According to Samatan (2018), subjects in qualitative research are referred to as informants, which are individuals who provide information regarding the data desired by the researcher related to the ongoing study. This information can include the situation and conditions of the research background (Samatan, 2017). The subjects in this study are divorced parents with

children in the Generation Z age category (the generation born between 1997-2012, which is ages 12-27). The research will take place throughout the year 2023-2024.

This research uses descriptive qualitative methods, expected to explain family communication in conflict. The paradigm in this research is phenomenology, which emphasizes the individual's experience of what happens around them (Cresswel 2013, in Samatan, 2018). The interview was conducted in-depth with several face-to-face meetings.

The criteria for selecting informants are parents who have divorced with Gen Z children. This research observes and interviews 4 families that have divorced, each consisting of one parent and a Generation Z child. The informants, children of divorced parents, were chosen from among university students with the assumption that they could understand the questions and provide accurate explanations.

To maintain the informants' privacy, all informants use the identities A, B, C, D. The identities of the informants are as follows:

**Table 1.** Identity of Informant A

No	Name of Informant (Code)	Position	Profile of Informant
1	A1	Child	Age: 22 years old Status: Student Education: Currently pursuing studies at one of the universities in Jakarta. Family Background: A1 lives with his mother (A2) after his parents' divorce 11 years ago. His father has remarried.
2	A2	Mother	Status: Single Parent Job: Working at a catering company in Bogor. Family Background: A2 chose to become a single parent after the divorce 11 years ago. A1's father has remarried, while A2 remains focused on her role as a single mother and ensuring A1's well-being and education.

Source: Research Data Processing Results

The divorce in this family occurred 11 years ago due to a lack of communication between the two parents. Custody of A1 was granted to A2. Although they have divorced, this family continues to strive to provide the best parenting for A1. A1 lives with A2. Currently, A1's father has remarried and has a new family.

**Table 2.** Identity of Informant B

No	Name of Informant (Code)	Position	Profile of Informant
1	B1	Child	Age: 22 years old Status: Student Education: Currently pursuing university studies in Jakarta Side Job: Besides being a student, B1 also works as a barista at a coffee shop. Family Background: B1 comes from a family whose parents divorced when he was in high school. B1's mother has remarried

2	B2	Father	<p>Status: Remarried            Job: B2 is a Civil Servant, assigned to a junior high school.            Family Background: After divorcing B1's mother, B2 remarried and now has a new family. Nevertheless, B2 continues to try to maintain a relationship with B1.</p>
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Source: Research Data Processing Results

The divorce in this family has been ongoing for 19 years. The cause of the divorce was his father's behavior of gambling and drinking, which led his mother (C2) to decide to divorce when they already had three children. Currently, only C2 works to support the family. C2 works as a Civil Servant (PNS).

**Table 4.** Identity of Informant D

No	Name of Informant (Code)	Position	Profile of Informant
1	D1	Child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Age: 21 Years</li> <li>- Status: Student</li> <li>- Family Background: D1 comes from a family whose parents divorced 13 years ago due to religious differences. D1 alternates living between D2's house and his father's house, enjoying support and affection from both families.</li> <li>Family Relationship: The relationship between the two new families is very good.</li> </ul>
2	D2	Mother	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Status: Remarried</li> <li>- Occupation: Entrepreneur in the hospitality industry.</li> <li>- Family Background: D2 is the mother of D1 and has been divorced from D1's father for 13 years. After the divorce, D2 remarried and started a new family.</li> <li>Family Relationship: D2 has a harmonious relationship with her husband's new family and often participates in family activities together.</li> </ul>

Source: Research Data Processing Results

The divorce in this family has been ongoing for 13 years. The cause of the divorce is the religious difference between D2 and D1's father. They found it very difficult to maintain a household with different beliefs, so they decided to separate. Currently, both D2 and D1's father have new families.

## Result and Discussion

### *Sharing Information in a Separated Family*

Good communication is the main foundation in maintaining harmonious relationships, especially in families that have experienced divorce. Divorce not only brings a change in status but also alters the dynamics of relationships among family members. When parents separate, children and other family members often find themselves caught in situations filled with uncertainty, confusion, and complex emotions.

A1 explains how his experience communicating with the family:

"In my opinion, maybe try to have heart-to-heart conversations more often, listen to each other's opinions without judging. Then, don't hesitate to be honest about your feelings or frustrations. Sometimes, setting aside special time for family gatherings can also help strengthen relationships and reduce conflicts." (A1, online interview on 2024 August 13<sup>th</sup> via Google Meet).

A1 emphasizes the importance of heartfelt communication within the family, where each member listens to one another without judgment and is honest about their feelings. A1 also believes that spending time together can help reduce conflicts and strengthen family bonds. Meanwhile, B1 shared their experience as follows:

"From my experience of not talking much with my parents anymore, I think the key is that we have to be brave enough to initiate communication first. Try sending a message or inviting them to meet in a neutral place. When talking, listen to their feelings first without blaming them. It's also important to manage emotions so things don't get more complicated. The point is, everyone needs to make an effort to be honest and find a solution together, not just look for who is at fault. If everyone is willing to open up, conflicts can be resolved more quickly." (B1, interview on August 16, 2024, in Depok).

B1 emphasizes the importance of initiative in communication, especially in strained relationships. According to him, maintaining emotions and listening without blaming is very important for finding a solution together. B1 believes that openness and joint efforts can expedite conflict resolution. Meanwhile, C1 conveyed the following:

"In my opinion, to improve communication in our family, first we need to try to be more open with each other. I know Mom is really busy, but maybe we can set aside some time to chat together, like having dinner together or sitting casually in the living room. So, we can share stories about what we're feeling or experiencing, without fear of being judged. Then, if there are problems or differences of opinion, we try to be more patient and listen to each other's perspectives first. Don't get angry right away or give the silent treatment, because that will only make the situation worse. We can also invite the younger siblings to chat or play together more often, so they feel heard and not lonely. If Mom can't always be around, maybe we can create some kind of routine or special time for family gatherings, so we can stay close even though our schedules are different..." (C1, online interview on August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024, via Google Meet).

C1 emphasizes the importance of openness and taking time to talk within the family. He also emphasized the importance of patience in listening to others' views and avoiding the silent treatment. C1 believes that family routines can strengthen communication and prevent prolonged conflicts. Meanwhile, D1's experience is as follows:

"In my opinion, we should talk more often and be more open. Maybe we could set aside time to meet more often as a trio or go on vacation together with both families, so if there are any issues, we can discuss them right away. We also need to be more patient in listening to each other's perspectives, don't get angry right away or give each other the silent treatment". (D1, online interview on August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024, via Google Meet).

Family communication in conflict, it is important to approach every problem or difference of opinion with a patient and open attitude, rather than responding immediately with anger or silence. This can prevent the situation from becoming more complicated. In this case, A1 conveyed that communication is very important to defuse conflicts, as explained by A1 below:

"I don't really know about this, because I always communicate with both of my parents." But in my opinion, it seems that the less able we are to share information, the longer the conflict will be." (A1, online interview on August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024, via Google Meet).

B1 agrees that the less communication there is in the family, the greater the distance and conflicts that will arise. Although there is no specific family strategy, he feels the negative impact of the lack of communication. C1 provided an explanation regarding this based on their experience:

"In my experience, if we can't share information or be honest about our feelings, conflicts can get worse and last a long time." For example, if someone feels unheard or there is a misunderstanding that is not expressed, the problem becomes more complicated and can drag on for a long time. The inability to communicate clearly increases tension, and ultimately the conflict can become never-ending. So, if you want the conflict to be resolved quickly and not get worse, it's really important to be able to share information and feelings honestly". (C1, online interview on August 18, 2024, via Google Meet).

C1 argues that the inability to share information or feelings can exacerbate conflicts and make them prolonged. Honest and open communication is considered important for addressing problems quickly and effectively. D1 explained his experience:

"In my experience, if we can't be honest or share information, conflicts can get worse and last a long time. Sometimes, a small problem can become big just because of a misunderstanding or no one wants to talk about their feelings. So, it's really important to talk about everything clearly so that conflicts can be resolved quickly". (D1, online interview on August 19, 2024 via Google Meet).

All informants agreed that a lack of openness and information sharing could turn small conflicts into large and prolonged ones. Open and honest communication is considered important to expedite the resolution of conflicts in separated families.

#### *Overcoming Differences of Opinion and Evaluation in a Separated Family*

Here is A1's response when asked about the steps taken by their family to address differences of opinion and achieve an objective evaluation:

"... My family usually has a few steps. First, we always start by listening to each other without judging. My mom, A2, often emphasizes the importance of listening to everyone's perspective before making a decision. She likes to invite us to take turns speaking, so everyone feels heard. Second, we try to stay focused on the facts and avoid discussing problems with excessive emotions... Third, we try to find a solution that can be accepted by all parties. My dad, even though he doesn't live with us, often helps find a fair compromise. He always tries to ensure that every decision made takes into account everyone's interests, especially mine as a child". (A1, online interview on August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024 via Google Meet).

A1 explains that their family resolves differences of opinion by listening to each other without judgment, focusing on the facts, and seeking solutions that are acceptable to all parties. Even though there are challenges like distance because their father lives apart, they still communicate openly to maintain family harmony. A2 explained

"..To address differences of opinion and achieve an objective evaluation, our family always prioritizes honest and open communication. I ensure that every family member has the opportunity to express their views without feeling judged. We discuss issues calmly and try to see the situation from each other's perspectives. We also strive to focus on the facts and find a solution that can be accepted by all parties. With this approach, we can reach a fair decision and maintain harmony within the family". (A2, online interview on August 13 via Google Meet).

Meanwhile, B1 explained the steps taken by their family to address differences of opinion and achieve an objective evaluation, namely:

"Step? It seems like there aren't any specific steps. If there are differences of opinion, usually they just let it be until everyone forgets. Nothing is really discussed or evaluated objectively. Dad also has a new family now, he's busy too. I'm also busy with college. So, yeah, everyone just goes their own way, no one really thinks about finishing or finding a solution together. (B1, interview on August 16 in Depok).

B1 stated that his family does not have any specific steps to address differences of opinion. Usually, conflicts are left until they are forgotten, communication rarely occurs due to the busyness of each family member. In response to this question, B2 provided the answer:

"I usually always listen to my child's protests, but he rarely protests as well." So, our step to address the differences of opinion is to listen to what he says, even though it doesn't happen very often. We are more inclined to let the situation run its course and avoid deeper conflicts. (B2, interview on August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024, in Depok).

B2 explained that they tend to let situations unfold and avoid deeper conflicts, without conducting a thorough evaluation. Meanwhile, C1 explains what their family does to address differences of opinion and achieve an objective evaluation:

"If we have different opinions, we usually try to listen to each other openly. We sit together and talk about what is important to each of us, without hurting anyone's feelings. We look for a solution that works for everyone, whether it's me, mom, or the younger siblings. So, even though there are differences, we still focus on finding a middle ground that everyone can accept". (C1, online interview on August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024, via Google Meet).

C1 expressed that their family resolves differences of opinion by listening to each other openly and seeking solutions that are acceptable to all parties. They strive to focus on a joint solution so that no one feels neglected. C2's explanation about this issue was conveyed to the researcher:

"If there are differing opinions, I try to sit down together and listen to each other's opinions. I invite the children to find a solution together that everyone can accept, so that no one feels unheard or ignored". (C2, online interview on August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024, via Google Meet).

C2 explained that when there are differences of opinion, their family sits together to listen to each other's views and find a solution that can be accepted by all parties, in order to maintain family harmony. Informant D1 provided the following explanation:

"Actually, conflicts due to differences of opinion are quite rare. But if there are differences of opinion, we will discuss and find a middle ground. All options will be heard". (D1, online interview on August 19 via Google Meet).

D1 explained that although conflicts due to differing opinions are rare, if they do occur, they will discuss to find a middle ground. All options are considered, and everyone is given the opportunity to be heard. In every family, evaluation and good communication are key to overcoming differences of opinion and maintaining harmony. Related to this, A1 explains the process of family members communicating with each other:

"When there's a conflict, we usually communicate in a calm manner and without excessive emotions. We try to listen to each other first, so that everyone feels heard. Then, we take turns speaking, so no one interrupts each other. We also try to focus on the problem, not blame the person. If there are differing opinions, we try to find a middle ground that everyone can accept. In essence, we strive to stay calm and find solutions together". (A1, online interview on August 13, 2024 via Google Meet).

In the process of family evaluation, it is important to understand the challenges that often arise when trying to resolve conflicts. Regarding this matter, A1 explained as follows:

"One of the challenges my family often faces when trying to resolve conflicts is the distance that separates us from Dad. Because Dad doesn't live with us and only comes on weekends, it's sometimes hard to resolve conflicts directly and on time. Sometimes, the issues that arise between us have to wait until the weekend to be discussed, which makes the uncomfortable feelings linger longer. Besides that, because Dad has a new family, sometimes communication becomes more complicated because we have to consider different schedules and interests. This can make the process of resolving conflicts slower or less effective ..." (A1, online interview on August 13 via Google Meet)

A1 explains his family's challenges in resolving conflicts, especially due to the distance and different schedules with his father who does not live with them. However, they try to maintain open communication through phone calls or chats to stay involved in the conflict resolution process and to preserve family harmony. The answer was also provided by A2:

"One of the challenges our family often faces when trying to resolve conflicts is the distance from my child's father. Because her father does not live with us, it is sometimes difficult to immediately discuss and resolve issues at that moment. Additionally, differing viewpoints can also be a challenge,

especially when we have different perspectives. However, we always strive to overcome this by maintaining good communication and finding time to discuss together". (A2, online interview on August 13 via Google Meet).

A2 stated that the main challenge they face is differing viewpoints, especially when having different perspectives in resolving conflicts. Informant B1 explained the challenges in their family when trying to resolve conflicts:

"... Because we are no longer dealing with conflicts, there are actually no challenges. But you know, I haven't told dad anything since he started his new family. Wanting to share is pointless, Dad is busy with his new family. The challenge is that, the new family. That's why I chose to stay silent, and dad also chose to stay silent. Just assume the problem will resolve itself". (B1, interview on August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024, in Depok).

B1 explained that the biggest challenge in his family is his father's new family, which makes him feel that talking about conflicts is pointless. B2 provides the following explanation:

"The main challenge we often face is that we tend to avoid deep discussions about conflicts." We prefer to forget the problem and not discuss it further. This causes us to often not really resolve the issues, so conflicts are often left without a clear resolution. (B2, interview on August 16 in Depok).

B2 stated that the main challenge is the tendency to avoid deep discussions about conflicts, so problems are often left unresolved. Informant C1 explained the challenges that arise in their family when trying to resolve conflicts:

"The challenge our family often faces in resolving conflicts is that mom is busy, so there are many tasks I have to handle on my own, which makes me tired." (C1, online interview on August 18, 2024, via Google Meet).

C1 stated that the main challenge is his mother's busyness, which makes him have to handle a lot of work on his own. Meanwhile, C2 explained that:

"The biggest challenge is time. Because I am busy with work, many responsibilities fall on C1. This sometimes makes C1 feel burdened and more sensitive, while I also feel guilty for not always being there. (C2, online interview on August 18, 2024 via Google Meet).

The challenge for D1 is:

"The biggest challenge is because I live in two houses, so sometimes communication can be cut off if I'm not in the same place." But mom and dad always try to stay connected and keep open communication so that problems can be resolved. (D1, online interview on August 19 via Google Meet).

Each child's challenges differ based on their family's context, some due to being busy, separated by distance because they live in more than one house, and there are also those who think there is no conflict, even though conflicts are happening right in front of them.

#### *Reaching a Mutual Agreement in a Separated Family*

When parents no longer live together, communication becomes more limited, and the opportunities for direct discussion decrease. This can lead to misunderstandings or tension in the decision-making process. In addition, children may feel caught in the middle, trying to balance the needs and desires of both parents, which may be different or conflicting. In such conditions, poorly managed decisions can lead to prolonged conflicts and damage relationships within the family.

A1 explains how his family reaches an agreement when there are differences of opinion:

"If there is a difference of opinion about a decision, our family usually tries to sit down together and discuss the issue." We all share our perspectives and ask for each other's opinions so that everyone can

feel heard. Mom often suggests that we focus on what is best for everyone, not just for one person. We also try not to take things personally and stay relaxed during discussions. If someone disagrees, we try to understand the reasons behind their opinion and find a middle ground that can be accepted by all parties. Usually, after an honest and open discussion, we can reach an agreement that makes everyone feel satisfied and valued. (A1, online interview on August 13 via Google Meet).

Meanwhile, A2 states as follows:

"When there is a difference of opinion about a decision, our family usually reaches an agreement by discussing openly and listening to each family member's opinion." We strive to understand each other's perspectives and find a middle ground that can be accepted by all parties. If necessary, we also make compromises to ensure that the final decision reflects the interests and needs of the entire family..." (A2, online interview on August 13, 2024 via Google Meet).

According to B1, in his family, there is no special strategy for reaching an agreement when there are differences.

"Usually, there isn't any special agreement when there are differing opinions." We all just go our separate ways, no one really thinks about resolving it. If there are differing opinions, it's just left as it is, no one discusses it further. Because dad is also busy with his new family, and I'm busy with college. So, yeah, we just go our separate ways. (B1, interview on August 16, 2024, in Depok).

B2 gives the following opinion:

"Usually, when there is a difference of opinion about a decision, we tend to avoid lengthy and in-depth discussions." We prefer to let the issue settle and hope that time will resolve it. So, agreements are often reached passively, assuming that differences of opinion will disappear on their own without further debate. (B2, interview on August 16, 2024, in Depok).

C1 explained that when there is a difference of opinion about a decision, his mother has the following strategy:

"Usually, if there is a difference of opinion about a decision, our family will discuss and ask for each other's opinions. We try to find out what everyone wants so that everyone can feel comfortable and good with the decision that is made". (C1, online interview on August 18, 2024, via Google Meet).

C2 explained as follows:

"We usually discuss and find out what is best for everyone. I try not to impose my will and be more open to listening to what they want". (C2, online interview on August 18, 2024 via Google Meet).

Differences in views within the D1 family were resolved by:

"Usually, we discuss together to find a solution that everyone can accept. We try to understand each other's perspectives so that the decisions made can be comfortably accepted by everyone. But living in two different families is definitely a mix of easy and hard, right?" (D1, online interview on August 19, 2024 via Google Meet).

#### *Easing Tensions After a Conflict in a Separated Family*

Tension usually occurs in families that have separated. Various causes can trigger tension, including distance and time, each having their own partners, while they still have to maintain contact due to the presence of children. During this research, the four separated couples had children who still needed financial assistance to continue their education.

A1 explains how his family alleviates tension after a conflict occurs:

"If there's a conflict, usually mom is the mediator. According to mom, communication is very important. So whenever we have a problem, whether it's with my mom or my dad, my mom always

invites us to talk calmly, sit together, and discuss the issue at hand, so that everyone can express their feelings and opinions. Dad also does the same thing when he meets me on the weekend..." (A1, online interview on August 13 via Google Meet).

A2, as A1's parent, explains how their family alleviates tension or lightens the mood after a conflict or difference of opinion:

"To resolve conflicts and restore harmony, our family always relies on open communication. I usually invite family members to sit together, talk calmly, and listen to each other without judgment. We focus on finding a solution together that can be accepted by all parties". (A2, online interview on August 13, 2024, via Google Meet).

B1 shared his family's experience of easing tension or lightening the mood after a conflict occurred.

"We actually never fight, so there's no tension that needs to be resolved. If there are differences of opinion, well, just let it be. There's nothing that needs to be thawed or discussed further, because we all just stay silent and consider the problem solved". (B1, interview on August 16 in Depok).

B2 provided the following answer:

"We actually never fight, so there's no tension that needs to be resolved. If there are differences of opinion, well, just let it be. There's nothing that needs to be thawed or discussed further, because we all just stay silent and consider the problem solved". (B2, interview on August 16 in Depok).

C1 explained his family's strategy for easing tension:

"Usually, I invite them to do activities together, like watching a movie or just sitting and chatting. I try to create a more relaxed atmosphere so that the tension can ease. (C1, online interview on August 18, 2024 via Google Meet). Meanwhile, D1 explained as follows: "We usually gather together to watch or eat out so the atmosphere becomes more relaxed." Mom or Dad like to take me out so we can chat more relaxedly" (D1, online interview on August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024, via Google Meet).

#### *Reintegration and Efforts to Build Unity in a Family that Has Been Separated*

Reintegration within the family after a conflict or difference of opinion is an important process to restore harmony and maintain the integrity of the relationship. When conflicts or unfriendly behavior occur, feelings of hurt, disappointment, and anger can arise among family members. The reintegration process becomes crucial to ensure that each member feels accepted and valued again, despite the differences of opinion in the family that has been separated.

The results of the interview conducted with A1 state that:

"To ensure that every family member feels accepted and valued, even in the face of differing opinions or conflicts, my family usually does a few things. First, we always try to listen to each other's opinions without judging, so everyone feels their voice is important. Then, we try to respect each other's views, even if we don't always agree. We also try not to take things too personally, so conflicts don't strain the relationship..." (A1, online interview on August 13, 2024 via Google Meet).

A1 explains that maintaining good communication is key to ensuring that all family members feel valued and accepted. Meanwhile, A2's response states:

"To ensure that every family member feels accepted and valued despite differences of opinion or conflicts, we always strive to maintain open and respectful communication. I encourage everyone to speak honestly about their feelings and listen without judgment. We also emphasize the importance of understanding each other's perspectives and appreciating the existing differences...". (A2, online interview on August 13<sup>h</sup>, 2024, via Google Meet).

A2 added that open communication and mutual respect are very important to ensure that every family member feels accepted and valued. He also emphasized the importance of emotional support and showing affection to build harmonious relationships. Informant B1 shared their experience as follows:

"We usually don't do much to ensure that every member feels accepted or appreciated. If there are differences of opinion or conflicts, they are just left as they are and each person goes their own way. So, there is no special effort to ensure that everyone feels accepted or appreciated". (B1, interview on August 16, 2024, in Depok).

In line with B1's answer, B2 provided a similar response:

*"Now, I only communicate with my child, and likewise, he only communicates with me." Since his mother remarried, we have not heard from her again. I try my best to listen to and fulfill my child's requests. I strive to ensure that he feels accepted and valued by giving full attention to his needs and supporting him as much as possible."* (B2, interview on August 16, 2024, in Depok).

B2 explained that he focused on communication with his child and tried to meet their needs, but did not attempt to build a more intense relationship with other family members after B1's mother remarried. C1's experience, as described in the following interview results:

"So that everyone feels accepted and appreciated despite differences of opinion or conflicts, our family usually has open conversations and listens to each other. We also often do activities together or joke around to lighten the mood after the tension. So, everyone feels appreciated and involved in finding solutions together". (C1, online interview on August 18, 2024 via Google Meet).

A similar response was given by C2 to the researcher:

"I try to always be open and listen to their opinions. I also invite them to do activities together more often so that they feel valued and accepted". (C2, online interview on August 18, 2024 via Google Meet).

C2 added that he always tries to listen and invite family members to do activities together so that everyone feels appreciated and accepted. Informant D1 shared their experience as follows:

"We often have open conversations and do activities together with mom's and dad's families so that everyone feels appreciated. Mom and Dad also always try to listen to me, so I don't feel neglected". (D1, online interview on August 19 via Google Meet)

Rebuilding trust and unity after a conflict within a family that has separated is a very important step to maintain harmony and stability in the relationships among members. When conflicts or hurtful actions occur, the trust that serves as the main foundation in a family can be shaken, causing emotional distance and discomfort. Therefore, the process of reconciliation and rebuilding trust becomes crucial.

## Discussion

### *Analysis Based on Interaction Process Analysis Theory*

*Assumption 1: Communication within the Family.* Effective communication is the key to maintaining family relationships, especially after a separation. A1, always communicates well with both parents, realizes that the more open the communication, the faster conflicts can be resolved. A2, her mother, also emphasizes the importance of listening and speaking honestly to prevent misunderstandings. On the other hand, B1, who rarely talks to their parents, feels that the lack of communication worsens the conflict. B2 tends to avoid deep conversations, which leaves conflicts unresolved. C1 and C2 argue that, despite their busyness, they try to make time to talk and maintain communication within the family. D1 and D2 emphasized the need to take time to be more open and speak honestly, which makes conflicts resolve more quickly.

**Assumption 2: Evaluation in a Conflicted Family.** Post-divorce evaluation does not only depend on the decisions made, but also on the manner of the evaluation process. Honest communication and active involvement ensure that all family members feel heard and valued, which ultimately strengthens family bonds and helps them face challenges together. A1 stated that their family strives to listen to every viewpoint patiently, especially because A2 always emphasizes the importance of considering everyone's perspective before making a decision. B1, on the other hand, expressed that their family does not have any specific steps to evaluate differing opinions, often letting issues pass by without addressing them.

C1 and C2, despite being busy, still try to find a fair solution for all parties in their family. D1 and D2 always listen to each other and always seek a middle ground, and they do not blame each other. Overall, the differing approaches between A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2, D1, and D2 agree on the importance of evaluation conducted through open communication to maintain balance and stability in family relationships. By taking the time to talk and listen, families can address problems more effectively, build mutual trust, and create a supportive environment for everyone. Without regular evaluations and honest communication, families risk facing prolonged tensions that can damage their relationships and emotional well-being.

**Assumption 3: Supervision in Divorced Families.** Supervision in divorced families often faces unique challenges, especially when communication is maintained. When a family undergoes drastic changes due to divorce, the need to monitor the emotional and physical well-being of family members, especially children, becomes increasingly important.

A1 conveyed that active communication and mutual questioning are key to better understanding the situation within the family. For A1, effective supervision not only involves monitoring daily routines or ensuring basic needs are met, but also includes a deep understanding of the feelings, concerns, and hopes of each family member. A1 believes that through open communication, all family members feel free to express themselves and ask questions, allowing them to avoid misunderstandings and resolve issues before they become more serious. A2, as a parent, is very supportive and actively encourages family members to always ask questions and share information. A2 understands that in a post-divorce situation, it is important to ensure that no feelings are neglected.

B1 describes the supervision in his family as being more limited to practical needs such as finances, without involving deeper discussions. B1 feels that in their family, supervision is conducted minimally, only to ensure that material needs are met, while emotional and psychological aspects tend to be neglected. In this situation, inadequate communication makes supervision superficial and does not address the core of the actual problem. B1 feels that his family is not truly involved in each other's lives, which causes emotional distance and feelings of isolation. Without deep communication, the supervision carried out only serves as a routine, not as an effort to fully support and understand each other. B2, as a parent, also tends not to be emotionally involved in the supervision process.

Informants C1 and C2 show a commitment to actively engage in family communication, especially meetings on weekends when they have free time. For them, the weekend becomes a valuable opportunity to catch up, discuss things that might have been missed during the week, and ensure that everyone feels heard and appreciated.

D1 and D2 also show the same commitment, which is to spend time on weekends when they have free time to share with each other. D2 always makes sure to ask questions while spending time with D1. Overall, although there are different approaches between A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2, D1, and D, they all agree on the importance of active communication in family supervision, especially in post-divorce situations.

**Assumption 4: Decision Making.** The divorces experienced by the four families in this study have their own ways of making decisions that are considered to satisfy both parties, and of course, the presence of children in the marriage. A1 explained that their family strives to reach an agreement through inclusive and compromise-based discussions. In this approach, every viewpoint is listened to seriously, and each family member is given the opportunity to voice their opinions before a decision is made.

A2 supports this approach by emphasizing the importance of compromise to reach a fair decision. As a parent, A2 understands that in post-divorce situations, the interests and needs of each family member may differ and often conflict. Therefore, A2 strives to facilitate discussions that allow

all parties to express their feelings and desires, with the aim of finding a middle ground that is acceptable to everyone.

B1 describes a different situation in his family, where there is no significant effort to reach a mutual agreement. B1 feels that in their family, everyone tends to go their own way, without much effort to communicate or seek a joint solution. In this situation, decisions tend to be made individually, without involving discussions or considering the views of other family members. B2, as a parent, is more focused on making decisions that he believes will please his child, but without much discussion. B2 might feel that he knows what is best for his child and therefore does not see the need to involve his child in the decision-making process.

C1 and C2 emphasize the importance of open discussions to reach decisions that are accepted by all parties. They understand that in a divorced family, every decision made has the potential to affect the overall family dynamics. Therefore, they strive to involve all family members in discussions before making decisions. C1 and C2 believe that by listening to and considering everyone's opinions, they can find a solution that emotionally satisfies all parties involved. D1 and D2 also emphasize the importance of openness with each other and listening, as well as not imposing their will on one another. The experiences of A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2, D1, and D2 highlight the importance of involving all family members in the decision-making process, especially in divorced families.

*Assumption 5: Easing Tension.* Tension in divorced families often arises when conflicts are not resolved well or when emotions are not expressed, causing relationships to become strained and communication to be hindered. A1 conveyed that in their family, they always try to handle tension by speaking openly and seeking solutions together. They believe that this approach helps identify and address problems directly, preventing the accumulation of tension and dissatisfaction. A2 supports this by emphasizing the importance of calm communication and mutual listening. On the other hand, B1 and B2 feel that tension never really arises in their family, as they tend to avoid conflict and choose not to discuss issues further.

Meanwhile, C1, C2, D1, and D2 show that they are trying to ease the tension by engaging in activities together or joking around, creating a more relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere. They feel that positive and interactive activities help reduce stress and strengthen the bonds among family members.

*Assumption 6: Reintegration into a Divorced Family.* Reintegration after conflict in divorced families is an important process that focuses on restoring trust and maintaining the integrity of relationships among family members. A1 explained that in an effort to rebuild trust and improve relationships, their family actively engages in honest and open communication. A2 added that shared activities, such as family dinners or vacations, as well as showing affection through small gestures, are important methods in ensuring that all family members feel valued and accepted.

B1 and B2 state that they tend not to make special efforts for reintegration after conflicts. They may not consider it important to actively repair the relationship after a dispute, so their relationship tends to proceed minimally and does not undergo significant changes in emotional closeness.

Meanwhile, C1 and C2 are trying to speak openly and engage in activities together as part of their strategy to address the tension and rebuild trust after the conflict. They understand that openness in communication and engagement in joint activities are key to resolving tensions and mending relationships. D1 and D2 also agreed to always be open and to always listen to the opinions of every family member. They often engage in activities together so that everyone in the family feels valued and accepted. Apologizing to each other and having heart-to-heart conversations are strategies to address the tension that arises after conflicts.

## Conclusion

The research results show that among the four families that have divorced, they tend to communicate in resolving conflicts that arise post-divorce. Family A is committed to maintaining communication between the child and the separated parents; Families B and C experience poor communication situations, which affect the child's adaptation difficulties and various emotional disturbances.

Ignoring conflicts and pretending they never happened after the conflict is part of their way of mitigating family problems. The analysis results show that 2 families experience problems in communication, evaluation, supervision, tension, and cohesion, 1 family experiences problems in communication, evaluation, and supervision, and 1 family can maintain communication, share in

evaluation, supervision, and uphold cohesion for the sake of their child even after separating as a couple.

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