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FAMILY RESILIENCE IN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION IN INDONESIA: A CRITICAL SYNTHESIS OF FAMILY RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK AND COMMUNICATIVE RESILIENCE

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Abstract

Family resilience is a strategic issue in agricultural and rural development in Indonesia, particularly amidst economic vulnerability, livelihood uncertainty, and limited access to resources. The family serves as the basic social unit that supports the sustainable well-being and adaptation of rural communities. However, development communication studies still show theoretical fragmentation and minimal attention to communication as a core mechanism of resilience. This paper aims to critically review the Family Resilience Framework (Walsh) and Communicative Resilience (Buzzanell), and compare them with Sensemaking Theory (Weick), to assess their relevance and limitations in the Indonesian development context. The review was conducted through a systematic narrative approach to Scopus-indexed journal articles that empirically apply resilience theory. The results of the study indicate that Walsh's theory effectively explains the internal adaptive capacity of families, while Buzzanell emphasizes communication as a process of negotiating meaning and identity in crisis situations. However, both theories remain inadequate in explaining power relations, structural barriers, and the institutional context of rural development. This paper offers a theoretical synthesis that integrates systemic, communicative, and sensemaking approaches to understand family resilience contextually. The research implications emphasize the importance of empirical studies based in rural communities and the design of culturally sensitive, participatory, and ethical development communication interventions.

Keywords: *Family resilience, development communication, rural development, family resilience theory, communicative resilience*

Abstrak

Resiliensi keluarga merupakan isu strategis dalam pembangunan pertanian dan perdesaan di Indonesia, terutama di tengah kerentanan ekonomi, ketidakpastian penghidupan, dan keterbatasan akses sumber daya. Keluarga berperan sebagai unit sosial dasar yang menopang keberlanjutan kesejahteraan dan adaptasi komunitas perdesaan, namun kajian komunikasi pembangunan masih menunjukkan fragmentasi teoretik dan minimnya perhatian terhadap komunikasi sebagai mekanisme inti resiliensi. Paper ini bertujuan meninjau secara kritis Family Resilience Framework (Walsh) dan Communicative Resilience (Buzzanell), serta membandingkannya dengan Sensemaking Theory (Weick), untuk menilai relevansi dan keterbatasannya dalam konteks pembangunan Indonesia. Peninjauan dilakukan melalui pendekatan naratif sistematis terhadap artikel jurnal terindeks Scopus yang menerapkan teori resiliensi secara empiris. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa teori Walsh efektif menjelaskan kapasitas adaptif internal keluarga, sementara Buzzanell menekankan komunikasi sebagai

proses negosiasi makna dan identitas dalam situasi krisis. Namun, kedua teori masih kurang memadai dalam menjelaskan relasi kuasa, hambatan struktural, dan konteks institusional pembangunan perdesaan. Paper ini menawarkan sintesis teoretik yang mengintegrasikan pendekatan sistemik, komunikatif, dan sensemaking untuk memahami resiliensi keluarga secara kontekstual. Implikasi penelitian menekankan pentingnya studi empiris berbasis komunitas perdesaan serta perancangan intervensi komunikasi pembangunan yang sensitif budaya, partisipatif, dan etis.

Kata Kunci: Resiliensi keluarga, Komunikasi pembangunan, Pembangunan pedesaan, Family Resilience Theory, Communicative Resilience

I. INTRODUCTION

The family is a fundamental social unit in human development, playing a crucial role in shaping the values, norms, and adaptive capacities of individuals across generations. In the context of Indonesian development, the family functions not only as a social institution but also as a strategic actor in maintaining sustainable well-being, social cohesion, and community resilience. However, rapid social changes such as urbanization, economic inequality, digital disruption, and the post-pandemic impact have increased family vulnerability, particularly among low-income groups and peri-urban areas.

Various studies indicate that family challenges in Indonesia are increasingly complex, encompassing economic instability, parenting stress, changes in family relationships, and increased risky behaviors in adolescents. A study by Ritanti et al. (2018) confirmed that weak family function and resilience contribute significantly to adolescent risky behavior, demonstrating that family resilience is a structural and communicative issue that directly impacts social development. Globally, the study of family resilience has developed as a cross-disciplinary concept related to social capital, relationship networks, and communication practices in crisis management. However, it remains dominated by the context of developed countries, while contextual studies in developing countries like Indonesia are relatively limited (Mardiansyah, 2024).

At the national level, the issue of family resilience has become a development agenda, but the implementation of family strengthening policies and programs still tends to emphasize structural and administrative aspects. Dimensions of family communication, such as shared meaning-making, dialogue, role negotiation, and conflict management, have not been a primary focus, even though research by Meitasari et al. (2023) shows that family belief systems and communication patterns play a crucial role in building resilience in low-income families in Indonesia.

In development communication studies, family resilience cannot be separated from the communication processes that shape the meaning of crises, trust between family members, participation in decision-making, and internal family power relations. Walsh's Family Resilience Framework theory emphasizes belief systems, organizational patterns, and communication as pillars of resilience, while Buzzanell's Communicative Resilience theory views resilience as a dynamic communication process in building meaning, relationships, and identity. However, both approaches still have limitations in explaining the cultural context, structural inequalities, and relationship hierarchies unique to Indonesian families. This theoretical, empirical, and practical gap indicates the need for integration of family resilience perspectives that place communication as the core of family adaptation in the context of Indonesian social development.

This paper makes significant theoretical and practical contributions to the study of family resilience and development communication. Theoretically, this research synthesizes two parallel traditions: the Walsh Family Resilience Framework and Communicative Resilience (Buzzanell), demonstrating that family resilience is not merely a structural or psychosocial capacity, but also a dynamic communicative process in which family meanings, identities, and relationships are continually negotiated in crisis situations. This research also expands the applicability of both theories by placing them in the Indonesian socio-cultural context, requiring reinterpretation of assumptions about open communication, relational equality, and individual autonomy in families influenced by collectivist values, age and gender hierarchies, and structural inequalities. Based on this synthesis, this paper offers an integrative framework for family resilience based on development communication that explains the role of communication as a link between family structure, crisis experiences, and social development outcomes, and opens up space for further empirical testing in developing country contexts.

Practically, this paper emphasizes that development communication interventions need to be oriented toward the family communication process, rather than simply conveying normative messages or one-way education. Family strengthening programs need to be designed to facilitate internal dialogue, shared meanings of the crisis, and role negotiation that aligns with the local cultural context. This research also emphasizes the importance of ethical sensitivity in the design and implementation of interventions, taking into account power relations, cultural norms, and structural vulnerabilities to avoid reinforcing domination

or blaming families for structural issues. Thus, this paper provides a conceptual foundation for governments, NGOs, and communication practitioners to design contextual, participatory, and sustainable family strengthening programs, emphasizing communication as a primary instrument of social development.

The research roadmap is structured sequentially, beginning with a discussion of the urgency of family resilience and the theoretical-empirical gap in the Indonesian development context, followed by a critical examination of Walsh and Buzzanell's theoretical framework in non-Western contexts. Next, the paper presents a synthesis of the literature, empirical evidence, and case studies in Indonesia to demonstrate how family resilience is constructed through everyday communication practices, before concluding with a discussion of theoretical contributions, practical implications, and recommendations for future development of development communication theory and interventions.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

The literature review in this study employed a narrative-critical literature review approach, focusing on the integration of family resilience and communication theories within the context of social development. The literature search was conducted in the Scopus and Sinta databases to ensure the quality and traceability of the sources, using a combination of keywords related to family resilience, the Walsh Family Resilience Framework, communicative resilience, family communication, social development, and the context of Indonesia and the Global South. Articles searched were limited to publications published between 2020 and 2025, while primary theoretical works served as supporting conceptual references.

Literature selection was based on inclusion criteria: Scopus-indexed journal articles that focused on family resilience or resilience communication, used an empirical approach, and contained an explicit theoretical framework. Non-peer-reviewed articles, conceptual studies without empirical support, and studies not directly related to families or communication were excluded. From the search results, core articles were identified based on the empirical application of Walsh or Buzzanell's theories, the direct link between the theoretical framework and field findings, and their relevance to the context of families, communities, or vulnerable groups in social development. Supporting articles were used to enrich the discussion and map trends, while in-depth analysis focused on the core articles.

The analysis was conducted by comparing the theoretical assumptions, main propositions, and research contexts of the key studies. Mardiansyah et al.'s study views resilience as a multidimensional concept evolving across disciplines, with an emphasis on social capital in a global context, without positioning the family as the primary unit of analysis. In contrast, Meitasari et al.'s study positions the family as an adaptive system that builds resilience through belief systems, organizational patterns, and communication processes, aligning with Walsh's framework and relevant to the context of low-income families in Indonesia. Meanwhile, Ritanti et al.'s study views resilience and family functioning as protective factors correlated with adolescent risk behavior, using a quantitative approach and an emphasis on psychosocial variables.

A comparison of the three studies reveals differences in ontological assumptions and analytical approaches, ranging from macro-structural and meta-analytical perspectives, to process-oriented systemic-relational perspectives, to outcome-focused relational-quantitative perspectives. This difference demonstrates conceptual fragmentation in resilience studies, while also emphasizing the importance of an integrative framework that is able to link social structures, family communication dynamics, and cultural contexts in understanding family resilience in Indonesia.

III. RESEARCH RESULTS

Family Resilience Framework in the Context of Development

The Family Resilience Framework developed by Walsh views the family as an adaptive system that actively responds to stress and crises through three main pillars: family belief systems, organizational patterns, and communication processes. Within this framework, resilience is not understood solely as an individual characteristic, but rather as a relational and systemic capacity that enables families to interpret crises, reorganize roles, and maintain their social function in conditions of uncertainty. Belief systems play a role in shaping how families interpret crises, whether they are perceived as threats, challenges, or opportunities for change, while organizational patterns determine the flexibility of the family structure in distributing roles, resources, and responsibilities. Communication processes serve as the primary medium enabling the exchange of meaning, emotional expression, and coordination of actions among family members.

In the context of development, Walsh's framework excels in explaining how families function as adaptive units that support well-being and social resilience, especially amidst

limited resources and structural pressures. This framework is relevant for understanding families as crucial actors in human development, emphasizing the family's internal strengths, relationships among members, and the ability to learn from crisis experiences. However, when applied in a non-Western context like Indonesia, this approach has the potential to be normative if not accompanied by a critical examination of broader social structures. Assumptions about open communication, family cohesion, and role flexibility can obscure internal family power relations, gender and age hierarchies, and structural inequalities that limit family adaptive choices. Therefore, while the Family Resilience Framework provides a strong systemic foundation, it requires enrichment with contextual perspectives to be more sensitive to the dynamics of development in developing societies.

Communicative Resilience as a Process of Negotiating Meaning

In contrast to Walsh's systemic approach, Buzzanell views resilience as an ongoing communication process, in which individuals and families actively construct, maintain, and negotiate meaning, identity, and social relations in crisis situations. Resilience, in this perspective, is not an end state, but rather a discursive practice that enables families to create a "new normal" amidst disruption and uncertainty. Through communication, family members articulate crisis experiences, manage emotions, maintain relationships, and activate social support networks both within and outside the family.

The key strength of Communicative Resilience lies in its sensitivity to context, the dynamics of meaning, and the voices of vulnerable or marginalized groups. This approach opens up space to understand how resilience is constructed situationally, not always harmoniously, and often fraught with negotiation and tension. In a development context, Buzzanell's perspective is relevant for examining how families respond to policies, programs, or social crises through everyday communication practices. However, the strong focus on the discursive dimension makes this theory relatively inattentive to the material conditions of families, their internal organizational structures, and the structural constraints that shape the communication space itself. Without linking them to the family structure and political-economic context, the communication process risks being understood as if it takes place in a space of equality and freedom from inequality.

Theoretical Synthesis

The synthesis of the Family Resilience Framework and Communicative Resilience suggests that family resilience is formed through the dynamic interaction between the

structure of the family system and everyday communication practices. Family structure—including belief systems and organizational patterns—provides the basic framework for families to respond to crises, while communication serves as a connecting mechanism that enables shared meaning-making, role negotiation, conflict management, and relationship adjustment. Thus, communication is understood not merely as one component of resilience, but as a core process that bridges the experience of crisis with family adaptation.

This integrative approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of family resilience, particularly in the context of Indonesian development, which is characterized by cultural diversity, structural inequality, and complex power relations. This synthesis also emphasizes that family resilience cannot be separated from the broader social and institutional context, and therefore requires analysis as a systemic, communicative, and contextual process. By combining the strengths of both theories, this framework opens up opportunities for developing an analysis of family resilience that is more sensitive to the realities of developing societies.

Implications for Development Communication

Theoretically, this synthesis broadens the study of development communication by positioning families as communicative actors actively interpreting crises and development, rather than simply as policy targets or program recipients. This approach enriches the perspective of development communication by integrating analysis of family systems, communication practices, and socio-cultural contexts.

Practically, these findings emphasize that development communication interventions need to be designed to facilitate internal family dialogue, shared meaning-making, and role negotiation that is sensitive to culture, power relations, and structural vulnerabilities. Development programs that ignore the communication dimension risk failure or even reinforcing existing inequalities. Therefore, communication needs to be positioned as a strategic instrument in participatory, equitable, and sustainable social development.

IV. CONCLUSION

Family resilience in the context of Indonesian development cannot be understood solely as an internal family capacity or as a result of structural policies and interventions, but rather as a dynamic communicative process that occurs and is negotiated within specific social, cultural, and structural contexts. Families do not simply respond passively to crises but actively make sense of their experiences, negotiate roles and relationships, and develop

adaptation strategies through everyday communication practices. The integration of the Family Resilience Framework and Communicative Resilience offers a more comprehensive analytical framework for understanding these dynamics, linking family system structures, meaning-making processes, and communication practices in the face of social change.

Through this synthesis, this article emphasizes that communication serves as a connecting mechanism between crisis experiences, family structures, and social development outcomes, while highlighting the importance of sensitivity to power relations, cultural norms, and structural vulnerabilities that shape family resilience practices in Indonesia. Therefore, strengthening family resilience within the development agenda requires a contextual, participatory, and equitable communication approach. Further research needs to test and enrich this integrative framework through empirical studies in various community contexts in Indonesia, in order to produce a deeper understanding and a strong foundation for the development of development communication theory and practice in the future.

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