

Andhita Risiko Faristiana

Intergenerational Social Conflict in Indonesian Migrant Worker Families

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Intergenerational Social Conflict in Indonesian Migrant Worker Families

Andhita Risko Faristiana¹ Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Ageng Muhammad Besari Ponorogo**ARTICLE INFO****Article history:**

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Keywords:Conflict Resolution, Cultural Value
Transmission, Family Dynamics,
Indonesian Migrant Workers,
Intergenerational Conflict*This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](#) license.***ABSTRACT**

Intergenerational social conflict in Indonesian migrant worker families represents a critical yet underexamined structural phenomenon that fundamentally disrupts family functioning, individual well-being, and cultural value transmission across multiple generations. This systematic literature review aims to comprehensively synthesize empirical evidence on the causal determinants, manifestation patterns, multidimensional impacts, and resolution strategies of intergenerational conflicts in Indonesian migrant worker families between 2020-2025. Following PRISMA guidelines, literature searches were conducted across Scopus, Web of Science, ProQuest, JSTOR, ScienceDirect, and Indonesian repositories (Garuda, Indonesia OneSearch). Initial identification yielded 309 articles; after duplicate removal, screening, and quality appraisal using CASP criteria, 28 high-quality peer-reviewed articles were systematically analyzed using NVivo 12 thematic analysis. Results reveal that conflicts emerge from boundary ambiguity caused by

parental absence, communication disruptions intensified by Indonesian "halus" communication styles, and economic tensions reflecting divergent generational worldviews shaped by distinct historical experiences. Conflicts manifest through explicit financial disputes and latent role ambiguities, systematically undermining family resilience across legal-integrity, physical, socio-psychological, and socio-cultural dimensions while disrupting traditional value transmission and creating "intimate isolation" despite physical family proximity. Families employ culturally-specific adaptation strategies including accommodation approaches, spirituality-based coping through Islamic values, and economic diversification, though structural barriers limit effectiveness. Two critical interventions are recommended: developing holistic, culturally-sensitive migrant worker protection policies incorporating pre-departure family preparation programs, accessible remittance frameworks, and gender-specific provisions; and strengthening community-based family counseling services through culturally-appropriate conflict mediation training, intergenerational financial literacy programs, and accessible legal aid addressing migration-related disputes.

*Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: andhitarisko@uinponorogo.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesian labor migration has evolved into a cornerstone of national economic policy, positioning Indonesia as Southeast Asia's largest source of migrant workers with annual remittances reaching billions of US dollars and involving millions of workers deployed across multiple destination countries. While these macroeconomic indicators reflect apparent success in leveraging labor mobility for development and poverty reduction, this economic narrative obscures profound social transformations occurring within migrant-sending households. At the epicenter of these transformations lies a critical yet underexamined phenomenon: intergenerational social conflict emerging from prolonged family separation, role reconfigurations, and value system disruptions that fundamentally reshape family dynamics across multiple generations (Anggara et al., 2024).

The structural separation inherent in labor migration creates complex ripple effects that extend far beyond the migrant-child dyad, encompassing three-generational family systems where grandparents, migrant parents, and children navigate competing expectations, divergent value systems, and contested authority structures. Research by Susilo et al. (2024) demonstrates that parental migration, particularly maternal absence, significantly undermines children's educational participation while accelerating premature labor force entry, indicating fundamental disruptions in intergenerational role transmission and developmental trajectories. These disruptions transcend temporary adjustment challenges, manifesting as structural reconfigurations of family hierarchies and intergenerational obligations that generate persistent tensions and conflicts across the family life course. Graham et al. (2023), examining Javanese migrant families through the lens of intergenerational care circuits, reveal how parental migration necessitates wholesale renegotiation of caregiving arrangements, thrusting grandparents into primary caregiver roles for which they are often materially and psychologically unprepared. This involuntary role assumption creates fertile ground for intergenerational friction as grandparents apply parenting philosophies rooted in their own historical contexts while managing grandchildren socialized under vastly different socioeconomic conditions and exposed to transnational influences through maintained parental contact.

The complexity of intergenerational conflict in migrant worker families stems from multiple intersecting dimensions that operate simultaneously across structural, cultural, and individual levels. Anggraini (2024) identifies through quantitative-descriptive analysis that family resilience in migrant worker households depends critically on the interplay between communication quality, economic adaptation capacity, and available social support systems, with deficiencies in these domains precipitating both acute conflicts and chronic relationship deterioration across generational lines. The communication dimension proves particularly problematic as geographical distance, time zone disparities, and technological access inequalities distort intergenerational exchanges, transforming communication from a conflict resolution mechanism into a conflict generation source. Fitranita et al. (2021) document through longitudinal investigation how fundamental misunderstandings regarding remittance allocation, divergent expectations about sacrifice and reciprocity, and incompatible perceptions of family obligations fuel persistent intergenerational tensions in female migrant worker families. Their research reveals that migrant worker children develop distinct identity formations and maintain fundamentally different conceptualizations of family, tradition, and aspiration compared to their migrant parent generation, creating value system incompatibilities that manifest as overt conflict during critical family decisions and life transitions.

Beyond communication and value conflicts, the human security vulnerabilities experienced by Indonesian migrant workers in destination countries generate cascading effects that destabilize entire family systems across generations. Maksum (2021) demonstrates that precarious working conditions, legal vulnerability, and exploitation risks facing migrant workers produce chronic anxiety and stress that permeate family relationships, with different generations perceiving and responding to these security threats through incompatible frameworks that intensify intergenerational discord. This security dimension intersects with psychosocial impacts documented by Suryadi et al. (2022) in their

Ponorogo Regency case study, which identifies maladaptive behavioral patterns among children responding to prolonged parental absence. These behavioral manifestations—including academic disengagement, premature autonomy assertion, and attachment difficulties—trigger intergenerational conflicts as grandparent caregivers and absent parents employ divergent diagnostic frameworks and intervention strategies rooted in their respective generational worldviews. The study underscores that abandoned families navigate broad psychosocial issue spectrums where intergenerational conflict represents not merely a peripheral symptom but a central organizing dynamic shaping family functioning and individual wellbeing outcomes.

Despite growing scholarly attention to Indonesian labor migration impacts, existing research exhibits critical limitations in addressing intergenerational social conflict as a distinct, systematic phenomenon requiring dedicated analytical focus. Previous studies have predominantly emphasized economic dimensions of migration, child welfare indicators, individual psychological impacts, or macro-policy frameworks, while treating intergenerational conflict as an incidental byproduct rather than a central analytical object warranting comprehensive investigation. Fatimah and Kofol (2019) touch upon three-generational value conflicts in migration contexts, yet their analysis remains embedded within broader family dynamics discussions without systematic elaboration of conflict causation, typology, developmental trajectories, and resolution mechanisms. Similarly, while Safitri and Wibisono (2023) discuss intervention implications for migrant families and Hartanto (2022) examines community empowerment in migrant-sending areas, neither provides integrated analysis connecting conflict determinants, manifestation patterns, impact pathways, and strategic responses within a unified conceptual framework. This fragmented knowledge landscape leaves unaddressed fundamental questions regarding how structural migration conditions interact with cultural value systems and individual psychological processes to generate specific intergenerational conflict types, how these conflicts evolve across family life stages and migration cycles, and what culturally grounded intervention strategies prove effective in preventing or resolving such conflicts within Indonesian sociocultural contexts.

This systematic literature review addresses these critical gaps by providing the first comprehensive, thematic synthesis of intergenerational social conflict in Indonesian migrant worker families. Unlike previous studies that address conflict tangentially within broader migration impact assessments, this review positions intergenerational conflict as the primary analytical focus, systematically examining the full complexity of causal drivers, conflict typologies, manifestation patterns, developmental mechanisms, impact dimensions, and resolution strategies specific to Indonesian migrant family contexts. The review's original contribution lies in integrating fragmented insights across disciplinary boundaries—including sociology, psychology, family studies, and migration studies—into a unified analytical framework that traces intergenerational conflict from structural and cultural determinants through varied manifestation forms to multidimensional consequences and evidence-based intervention approaches. By synthesizing existing knowledge through this integrative thematic lens, the review generates actionable insights for developing targeted, culturally sensitive intervention programs that social practitioners, family counselors, and social workers can deploy to strengthen intergenerational relationships in migrant families. Furthermore, the systematic identification of conflict drivers and effective resolution strategies provides evidence-based foundations for policy reforms that embed family protection mechanisms within Indonesia's migrant worker governance frameworks, ensuring that migration's economic benefits are not achieved at the cost of irreparable intergenerational ruptures that undermine family cohesion and social stability in migrant-sending communities.

2. METHOD

This study employs a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology following PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines (Page et al., 2021) to

comprehensively analyze intergenerational social conflict dynamics in Indonesian migrant worker families. The SLR approach was selected for its capacity to systematically identify, appraise, and synthesize empirical evidence while maintaining methodological rigor and transparency (Snyder, 2019). Literature searches were conducted across multiple national and international academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, ProQuest, JSTOR, ScienceDirect, and Indonesian repositories such as Garuda (Garba Rujukan Digital), Indonesia OneSearch, and Portal Publikasi Ilmiah Indonesia. Search strings combined Boolean operators with Indonesian and English keywords: "intergenerational conflict," "Indonesian migrant workers," "migrant worker families," "family dynamics," and "left-behind families."

Inclusion criteria specified peer-reviewed articles published between 2020-2025, focusing on Indonesian migrant worker family contexts or comparable Southeast Asian populations, examining intergenerational relationships or family dynamics within migration frameworks, and indexed in Sinta-accredited or internationally recognized journals. Exclusion criteria eliminated studies addressing solely economic dimensions without family social aspects, research lacking intergenerational perspectives, and grey literature including conference proceedings or technical reports. The screening process involved three sequential stages: initial title-abstract review for relevance assessment, full-text evaluation against inclusion-exclusion criteria, and systematic quality appraisal using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist adapted for qualitative and mixed-methods family-migration research (CASP, 2018). Each article received independent quality scoring by two reviewers, with discrepancies resolved through consensus discussion. Studies scoring below 70% on CASP criteria were excluded, ensuring methodological rigor. A sensitivity analysis was subsequently performed by temporarily excluding borderline-quality studies (70-75% scores) to assess thematic stability and interpretation robustness. This iterative refinement process yielded a final corpus of 30 high-quality peer-reviewed articles meeting all inclusion and quality thresholds.

Data analysis employed systematic thematic analysis using NVivo 12 software to facilitate rigorous coding, pattern recognition, and theme development (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The coding process proceeded inductively through familiarization with texts, generating initial codes, identifying patterns, reviewing themes, defining subthemes, and synthesizing findings. Validity and reliability were strengthened through source triangulation, systematic cross-study comparison, and iterative peer debriefing to ensure interpretive consistency and analytical depth (Creswell & Poth, 2021). This comprehensive methodological framework enabled robust identification and synthesis of intergenerational conflict dynamics within Indonesian migrant worker family contexts.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

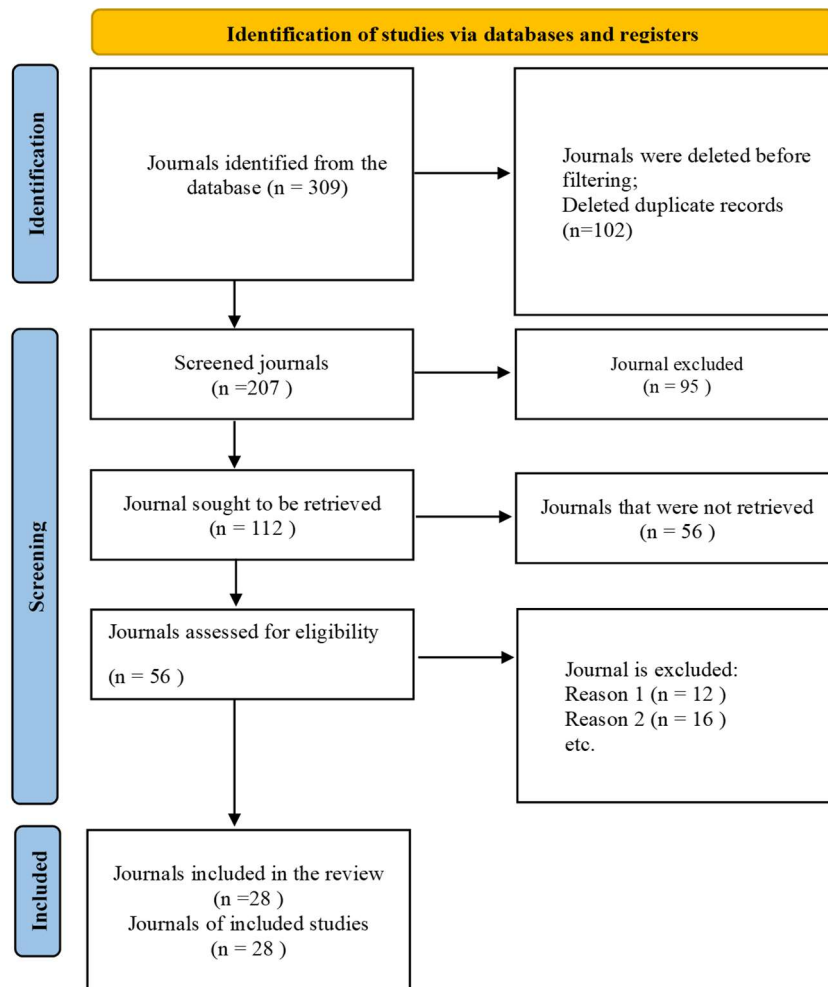


Figure 1. Flowchart PRISMA

The literature selection process in this study follows the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines to ensure the transparency and reproducibility of the research methodology. The identification stage began with a comprehensive search through databases and academic registers that yielded 309 journals that are potentially relevant to the topic of intergenerational social conflict in the families of Indonesian migrant workers. After going through the duplicate elimination process, as many as 102 journals with the same record were deleted, leaving 207 journals for the next stage. In the screening phase, all 207 remaining journals underwent evaluation based on previously determined inclusion and exclusion criteria. This screening process resulted in 95 journals being excluded because they did not meet the relevant research parameters, so that 112 journals were considered suitable for the retrieval stage. However, literature access constraints caused 56 journals to be unable to be obtained in full, leaving 56 journals that were successfully accessed for further feasibility assessment.

The final stage involves an eligibility assessment of the 56 available journals, in which various criteria of methodological quality and substantial relevance are strictly applied. These evaluations resulted in additional exclusions based on a variety of methodological and substantive reasons, including inconsistencies in research focus, inadequate methodological quality, or limited empirical data. This

systematic and gradual selection process finally resulted in 28 high-quality journals that meet all research criteria and deserve to be integrated in a comprehensive analysis of the dynamics of intergenerational social conflict in the context of Indonesian migrant worker families.

Table 1.

Journal synthesis related to intergenerational social conflict in Indonesian migrant worker families

N o.	Journal Title	Author & Year	Method	Intergenerational Conflict	Family Dynamics	Indonesian Labor Migration	Findings	Implication
1	Power Struggles and Social Dynamics: Understanding New Perspectives	(Ibnu, 2024)	Descriptive qualitative	Technology creates a generational gap in access to information and control of power	Globalization affects family structures and widens economic disparities	International organizations play a role in global politics that affect migration	Technology is changing the way power is obtained and gives voice to minority groups	An understanding of power dynamics is needed to direct social change
2	The Existence of Madrasahs in Social Mobility	(Nurbuana et al., 2024)	Literature studies	Madrasahs combine religious and modern values, creating potential intergenerational conflicts of values	Madrasah education forms individuals with spiritual and worldly competencies	Not directly related to labor migration	Madrasahs contribute to social mobility through the integration of values	Madrasahs need to be developed as dynamic educational institutions
3	Social Disorganization of Vietnamese Labor in Japan	(Ayyub, 2023)	Descriptive qualitative with literature study	The mental immaturity of the younger generation and the difference in norms create social disorganization	Vietnamese-Japanese sociocultural differences affect family adaptation	Japanese companies' investment in Vietnam drives labor migration	Economic instability and cultural differences fuel criminal acts	Need for mental maturity and cultural adaptation for migrant workers
4	Migration and Mobilization: Efforts of the Sumenep Madura Community to Preserve	(Damanhuri & Rahayuni, 2023)	Qualitative with a descriptive-critical approach	The pressure to maintain family prestige creates generational value conflicts	Migration mobilization as a strategy to maintain family dignity in society	New economic factors and traditions are driving migration as a solution	Migration is a mechanism to avoid social ostracism due to economic problems	Need to strike a balance between local traditions and family financial capabilities

	the Dignity of the Family							
5	Portrait of Investment Interest of Migration Actors in Makamenggut Village, East Sumba Regency	(Ng & Manu, 2024)	Qualitative	Differences in the views of the older and younger generations on remittance investment patterns	Remittance investment affects the economic and social dynamics of the family	Migration results in remittances being invested in various forms	Migration actors have positive investment interests but are not optimal	Financial literacy and holistic migration planning are required
6	Intergenerational Parenting Strategies: A Study of Child Parenting by the Elderly in Working Single Mother Families	(Fadilah Wahyuni Oktarima & Almaghfiro, 2025)	Qualitative with case studies	Tension of values between the old and young generations in parenting, differences in understanding digital technology	Caring for the elderly creates emotional stability but faces physical challenges	The absence of mothers as migrant workers creates a void in the role of caregiving	Intergenerational parenting forms a foundation of character through the transmission of values across generations	The need for systemic support for families with intergenerational parenting patterns
7	Social Mobility of Immigrant Residents in Kalampangan Village, Sabangau District, Palangka Raya City	(Sriyana, 2024)	Qualitative with descriptive analysis	Horizontal mobility creates a change in status from peasant to informal worker	Adaptation to a new environment affects family relationship patterns	Migration is driven by economic conditions in the region of origin that are less supportive	Social mobility is triggered by the young generation with secondary education and unmarried	The need for policies to support social adaptation and improve the quality of life of migrants
8	Cultural Representation of Multiculturalism in the Moroccan Diaspora in the Netherlands in the Film Meskina (2021)	(Rahimah, 2025)	Qualitative descriptive with semiotic analysis	Changes in cultural values between the first and second generations of the diaspora in marriage and career	The second generation faces the challenge of balancing the culture of origin and the culture of the host	The Moroccan diaspora shows a complex pattern of cultural adaptation	The first generation maintains traditions, the second generation is more integrated with the environment	The importance of supporting cultural integration without losing one's original identity

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9	The Risks of Early Marriage to Family Social Life	(Syaekhu et al., 2022)	Community service with socialization	Lack of intergenerational education about the risks of early marriage	Early marriage affects the stability and dynamics of family social life	Not directly related to labor migration	Inadequate knowledge triggers high rates of early marriage	Prevention of early marriage must start from family education, especially parents
10	Negotiation on Mixed Families: A Study of Stepfamilies	(Syaekhu et al., 2022)	Qualitative with the concept of family practice	Variations in the adaptation process in mixed families require intergenerational negotiation	Blended families require adjustment in aspects of the family	Not directly related to labor migration	The adaptation process occurs holistically, naturally, and is forced by explicit-implicit negotiation	Blended families are influenced by cultural factors in conflict mediation
11	Uncovering America's Gen Z: The Actual Dynamics of Young People's Behavior in a Global Perspective	(Bambang Mudjiyanto et al., 2025)	Qualitative with virtual ethnography and descriptive-interpretive analysis	Gen Z faces negative stereotypes from previous generations but shows idealism	Public stigma affects intergenerational perceptions of Gen Z characteristics	Not directly related to Indonesian labor migration	America's Gen Z shows participation and concern for public issues	It is necessary to have an objective and proportionate understanding of the characteristics of each generation
12	Sasak Migrant Workers: Cultural Integration, Slavery, Social Conflict and Family Life at Home While in the Land of the Region	(Hamdi et al., 2023)	Not explicitly mentioned	Conflict of cultural values between generations in dealing with migration experiences	Family life is under stress due to the uncertainty of long-term communication	Sasak migrant workers face the challenges of cultural integration and slavery in Malaysia	Cultural differences create social conflicts and affect family dynamics	Cultural integration and legal protection programs for migrant workers are needed
13	Disharmony of the Indonesian Migrant Worker	(Fidyawati & Ardi, 2024)	Descriptive qualitative with a field	Inequality in family structure and function	Family disharmony due to the loss of the head of	Labor migration leads to role imbalance	The absence of migrant workers creates a dysfunction	It is necessary to reconstruct the role and function of

	Family (PMI) Tulungagung in the Perspective of Emile Durkheim's Functional Structural Theory		approach	due to the absence of family members	household and ineffective communication	s in family structures	of the family system	the family to create a structural balance
14	Balanced Communication Patterns of Families of Female Migrant Workers in Building Harmonization	(Rosida, 2022)	Qualitative descriptive with purposive sampling	Generational conflicts are minimized through open and balanced communication strategies	Family harmony is built through effective interpersonal communication	Female migrant workers use communication strategies to maintain family cohesion	Interpersonal group communication is the key to conflict resolution in the family	The importance of effective communication education for families of female migrant workers
15	Analysis of Family Resilience Factors in Indonesian Migrant Worker Families in Sukowilangun Village	(Anggraini, 2024)	Descriptive quantitative with qualitative support using SEM	Family resilience is built through openness in financial management and harmony	Family resilience is determined by legality, integrity, and socio-cultural resilience	Women's migration creates challenges to maintain family integrity	The foundation of legality and family integrity is the dominant factor in family resilience	Strengthening of social support systems for migrant worker families
16	Association between social integration and loneliness among the female migrant older adults with children	(Xu et al., 2024)	Quantitative with structural equation modeling	Older generation of migrants faces the challenge of social integration that affects loneliness	Social support mediates the relationship between social integration and loneliness	Migrant elderly women with children face special adaptation challenges	Social integration is negatively associated with loneliness rates in elderly migrants	The importance of increasing social support for the integration of female elderly migrants
17	The persistence of precarity: youth livelihood struggles	(Griffin et al., 2024)	Qualitative with field research	The younger generation faces precariousness in the	Agrarian changes affect the aspirations and experiences	Mobility creates a new form of precarity based on	Young people maintain intergenerational livelihoods	Policies are needed to support economic transition and reduce

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	and aspirations in the context of truncated agrarian change			transition from traditional livelihoods	of the younger generation	gender and class	while looking for modern work	the precariousness of the younger generation
18	Too precarious to walk: an integrated "three delays" framework for modeling barriers to maternal health care	(Cheong & Baltazar, 2021)	Qualitative with a three-delay framework	Health system exclusion creates an intergenerational cycle of legal exclusion	Stateless families face barriers to accessing maternal health services	Irregular migrants and stateless people face systemic barriers	Exclusion from one system increases the risk of exclusion from another	Policy reform is needed to reduce barriers to access to basic services
19	Family migration and well-being of Chinese migrant workers' children	(Tang et al., 2024)	Quantitative with structural equation modeling	Family migration affects a child's cognitive-social well-being through caregiver relationships	Family relationship characteristics are interrelated with cognitive-social well-being indicators	Family migration has a significant impact on the welfare of migrant workers' children	Caregiver-child communication and trust positively affect the child's well-being	Special attention needs to be paid to family relationships in the context of migration
20	Sociocultural adaptation and job satisfaction as mediators between cultural competence and intention to stay	(Tsang & Nguyen, 2023)	Quantitative with a moderated mediation model	Cultural competence affects the sociocultural adaptation of the younger generation of migrant workers	Job satisfaction and cultural adaptation affect intention to stay	Vietnamese migrant workers in Taiwan face cultural adaptation challenges	Local language proficiency strengthens the relationship between cultural competence and sociocultural adaptation	Effective management policies are needed for low-skilled foreign workers
21	Cross Cultural Workers for women and families from migrant and	(Rogers et al., 2021)	Mixed-methods with surveys and interviews	Cultural differences between generations in accessing perinatal	Migrant and refugee families need special support in perinatal care	Cross-cultural care models support migrant access to	Cross Cultural Workers act as a bridge to access culturally responsive	It is necessary to strengthen the capacity and clarify the role of Cross

	refugee background s			health services		health services	health services	Cultural Workers
2 2	Conflict and coexistence among minorities within minority religions	(Okai & Takahashi, 2023)	Qualitative with participant observation and interviews	Tensions between first- and second-generation core members in religious organizations	The power relationship between subgroups in minority groups is fluid	The arrival of Muslim migrant workers affected the development of the Islamic movement in Japan	There are several subgroups in minority groups with complex power dynamics	Need to understand intersectionality in majority-minority relations
2 3	Waiting or dating? Migrant bachelors in the European borderscapes	(Henriksson et al., 2023)	Qualitative with interviews	Differences in the views of the young generation of migrants on the value of the single between the culture of origin and the host	Bangladeshi migrants describe bachelor's as a waiting period, Syrian migrants as a lifestyle	Class and racial differences affect attitudes toward singlehood in Europe	Differences between groups are related to how racial boundaries shape their positions	Need for an intersectional understanding of the migrant experience by class and race
2 4	The formation and evolution of vulnerability risk of rural poor groups under the perspective of social support	(Li et al., 2024)	Quantitative and qualitative with surveys and semi-structured interviews	Rural poor face risk of vulnerability with fragmented social support	Livelihood dependency and capital accumulation deficiency create high sensitivity	Not directly related to Indonesian labor migration	Vulnerability and resilience interact in responding to risk shocks	Need for system engineering to reduce sensitivity and increase resilience
2 5	A study of the mechanism for intergenerational transmission of gender roles in single-parent families	(Chen & Chen, 2023)	Qualitative with grounded theory	The gender stereotype of single parents is diluted but still affects parenting	The transmission of gender roles occurs through parent-child interaction in daily life	Not directly related to labor migration	Single parents have a more open attitude towards the equality of their children's gender roles	A comprehensive understanding of the transmission mechanism of gender roles in the family

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26	The impact of urban integration on the intention of settlement and residence among migrants	(Hu et al., 2024)	Quantitative with China Migrants Dynamic Survey data	Psychological integration affects the intention to settle and live in the city	Economic, health, social, and psychological integration are interrelated in urbanization	Agricultural household labor experienced a decrease in the intention to settle but an increase in the intention to stay	Good urban integration contributes to the intention of migrants to settle and stay	There is a need to reform the household registration system and reduce the difficulty of urban integration
27	Can home labor education boost teenagers' academic performance? A Comparative analysis	(Zhang & Ye, 2024)	Quantitative with China Education Panel Survey using OLS, PSM, and quantile regression	Adolescents' participation in homework affects academic achievement with generational differences	Homework education plays a role in the holistic development of adolescents	Not directly related to labor migration	Homework is effective in improving the academic achievement of adolescents, especially those with middle-low achievement	Need to promote adolescent participation in household chores for cognitive development
28	Development through vocational education. The lived experiences of young people at a vocational education	(Miller, 2020)	Qualitative with rights-based participatory research	The younger generation faces competitive demands between traditional cultural values and the experience of equality	Vocational education provides an aptitude approach to human development	Poor young people migrate from rural communities to find work and get out of poverty	Students face competitive demands between traditional gender cultural values and the experience of equality	Vocational education with an ability approach can overcome educational gaps

Discussion

Triggering Factors and Structural Determinants

The transformation of family structure in Indonesian migrant worker households fundamentally challenges the equilibrium of family systems theory, which posits that families maintain homeostasis through predictable role distributions and communication patterns (Minuchin, 1974). The physical absence of a parent creates what Boss (2006) conceptualizes as "boundary ambiguity"—a state where family members are psychologically present but physically absent, or vice versa. Fidyawati & Ardi (2024) identified structural inequality stemming from this absence, yet their findings reveal a critical paradox: while migration aims to improve family economic conditions, it simultaneously destabilizes the very social architecture it seeks to strengthen. This paradox is particularly acute in Indonesian contexts where extended family structures traditionally serve as safety nets, yet migration transforms these networks into primary caregiving units rather than supplementary support systems. The redistribution of authority to grandparents or unprepared children represents more than functional role replacement—it constitutes a fundamental reconfiguration of generational hierarchies that contravenes traditional Indonesian values of filial piety and parental authority. Oktarima & Almaghfiro (2025) documented how intergenerational parenting becomes a contested space for value formation, where elderly caregivers transmit values potentially divergent from migrant parents' aspirations. This finding critically intersects with Nurbuana et al. (2024)'s observation that madrasah education integrates religious and modern values, suggesting that Indonesian migrant families navigate multiple, sometimes contradictory, socialization agents. However, contrary to assumptions of unilateral value imposition, the evidence suggests bidirectional influence where children's exposure to globalized values through technology (Ibnu, 2024) creates reciprocal pressure on traditional caregivers to adapt, producing what can be termed "reverse intergenerational socialization."

Communication pattern disruptions emerge as particularly critical determinants, yet existing analyses underestimate their theoretical complexity. Rosida (2022) revealed how geographic distance impedes communication, but through the lens of boundary management theory (Petronio, 2002), these disruptions represent failures in coordinating information boundaries across generations. The Indonesian cultural preference for indirect communication and conflict avoidance (commonly termed "halus" communication style) exacerbates this issue—family members may suppress grievances to maintain surface harmony, allowing latent conflicts to accumulate. This cultural pattern directly contradicts the open communication strategies that Western family therapy models prescribe, raising questions about the cross-cultural applicability of conflict resolution frameworks. Economic factors function as both structural determinants and symbolic battlegrounds for intergenerational power negotiations. Sriyana (2024) and Ng & Manu (2025) highlighted remittance management and investment literacy gaps, but these economic tensions mask deeper struggles over modernity, risk orientation, and temporal horizons. Older generations, shaped by scarcity mindsets and agricultural economies, may prioritize immediate consumption or ceremonial expenditures that maintain social prestige (Damanhuri & Rahayuni, 2023), while younger generations influenced by global financial narratives advocate for formal investments. This generational divergence reflects what Mannheim (1952) termed "generational units"—distinct historical experiences producing irreconcilable worldviews. Notably, the finding that migration serves to preserve family dignity (Damanhuri & Rahayuni, 2023) contradicts simplified economic determinism, revealing how Indonesian families embed financial decisions within complex matrices of social honor and community standing.

Forms and Typologies of Intergenerational Conflict

The manifest-latent conflict continuum in Indonesian migrant families demonstrates greater complexity than binary categorizations suggest. Amalia & Mas'udah (2023) identified explicit and implicit negotiation processes in blended families, but their significance extends beyond immediate family composition to reflect broader societal transitions in Indonesian family formation patterns. The increasing prevalence of blended families challenges the traditional Indonesian ideal of intact nuclear families embedded within extended kinship networks, forcing families to develop novel conflict negotiation repertoires absent from traditional cultural scripts. Manifest conflicts over financial priorities, educational choices, and investment decisions (Ng & Manu, 2025) function as proxy battles for deeper existential questions about family identity, social mobility trajectories, and the meaning of success. When elderly grandparents advocate for religious education while absent parents prefer secular schooling, they are not merely disagreeing about pedagogy—they are contesting the ontological foundations of what constitutes a "good life" and a successful family. This interpretive lens, drawing from symbolic interactionism, reveals how seemingly mundane conflicts carry profound implications for family meaning-making systems.

Latent conflicts present particularly insidious challenges because they operate beneath conscious awareness yet systematically erode family cohesion. Fidyawati & Ardi (2024) documented how ineffective

communication and role limitations create disharmony, but boundary ambiguity theory provides deeper explanatory power: family members cannot successfully reorganize roles when they remain uncertain about who is "in" or "out" of the family system psychologically. This ambiguity generates chronic stress because it prevents the family from achieving the clarity necessary for adaptive reorganization. The Indonesian cultural emphasis on maintaining "harmoni" (harmony) paradoxically intensifies latent conflicts by delegitimizing their open expression, forcing them into passive-aggressive manifestations such as silent treatment, indirect criticism through third parties, or somatic complaints. The temporal evolution of conflicts reveals dynamic patterns responsive to life course transitions and external shocks. Tang et al. (2024) demonstrated how caregiver-child relationships, communication frequency, and trust interrelate with children's socio-cognitive well-being, yet this finding contradicts simplistic assumptions that more communication necessarily improves outcomes. Quality may trump quantity, and certain types of communication—particularly those laden with guilt, obligation, or implicit reproach—may actually exacerbate conflicts. Miller (2020)'s finding that vocational education students face competing demands between traditional gender values and egalitarian experiences illuminates a critical contradiction: education simultaneously empowers and creates dissonance, particularly for young women navigating conservative family expectations while exposed to progressive institutional environments.

Multifaceted Impact of Intergenerational Conflict

The multidimensional impacts of intergenerational conflicts challenge linear cause-effect models, instead revealing recursive feedback loops where conflicts simultaneously cause and result from family dysfunction. Anggraini (2024) identified four resilience dimensions—legal-integrity foundation, physical resilience, socio-psychological resilience, and socio-cultural resilience—but intergenerational conflicts systematically undermine each domain through distinct mechanisms. Legal and integrity dimensions suffer when family members dispute remittance distribution or question the legitimacy of authority structures. Physical resilience deteriorates as chronic stress manifests in psychosomatic symptoms, corroborating Xu et al. (2024)'s finding that social integration deficits correlate with loneliness and presumably health consequences among elderly female migrants. Socio-psychological impacts demonstrate particular severity because they operate through subtle, accumulative processes. Xu et al. (2024) revealed that social support mediates relationships between integration and loneliness, but in intergenerational conflict contexts, family relationships—normally primary support sources—become conflict sites, leaving individuals socially isolated despite physical proximity to family members. This creates what could be termed "intimate isolation," where individuals feel profoundly alone despite being embedded in family networks. The finding that conflict and trust inversely correlate with well-being (Tang et al., 2024) appears self-evident, yet its implications are profound: children in high-conflict migrant families may internalize dysfunctional relationship models, perpetuating intergenerational cycles of conflict.

Cultural value transmission emerges as perhaps the most theoretically complex impact domain. Rahimah (2025) documented how first-generation diaspora maintain traditional values while second generations integrate with host environments, creating predictable intergenerational tensions around marriage, career, language, and dress. However, this finding, while consistent with classical assimilation theories, oversimplifies the actual process in several ways. First, it assumes unidirectional change (tradition to modernity) rather than syncretism where youth create hybrid identities. Second, it treats "traditional" and "modern" as monolithic categories when both are internally diverse and contested. Third, it neglects how transnational communication technologies enable youth to maintain homeland connections while physically distant, complicating simple integration narratives. Griffin et al. (2024) provided crucial insight into how youth navigate precarity by simultaneously maintaining intergenerational livelihoods while pursuing modern wage employment. This finding contradicts either/or assumptions about tradition versus modernity, revealing instead both/and strategies where youth attempt to preserve family agricultural legacies while securing stable employment. The gender and class dimensions Griffin et al. highlight are particularly salient for Indonesian contexts where migration opportunities differ dramatically by gender (with different destinations, occupations, and social implications for male versus female migrants) and class (with middle-class professionals experiencing different trajectories than working-class laborers).

Identity formation among youth in migrant families occurs at the intersection of multiple, often contradictory, identity claims. They are simultaneously: children of migrants (with attendant stigma or pride depending on context); members of specific ethnic communities (Javanese, Sundanese, Madurese, etc. with distinct cultural expectations); Indonesian nationals navigating global labor markets; and youth cohorts shaped by global digital cultures (Bambang Mudjiyanto et al., 2025). Chen & Chen (2023) demonstrated how single-parent families transmit diluted but persistent gender stereotypes, and by extension, migrant families likely transmit complex, sometimes contradictory, messages about gender, work, mobility, and success. The resulting identity work requires youth to develop sophisticated code-

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switching abilities, performing different identities in different contexts—a skill valuable for navigating globalization but potentially psychologically taxing when identities fundamentally contradict.

Adaptation Strategies and Coping Mechanisms

Indonesian migrant families deploy culturally-specific adaptation strategies reflecting indigenous conflict resolution approaches and collectivist values. Rosida (2022) identified accommodation strategies where female migrant workers prioritize concession over confrontation to preserve harmony, exemplifying what Ting-Toomey (1988) terms "avoidance" and "obliging" conflict styles common in collectivist cultures. However, while these strategies effectively prevent immediate escalation, they risk accumulating resentment and may perpetuate power imbalances, particularly when accommodation consistently flows from subordinate to dominant family members. The gendered nature of this accommodation—with female migrants bearing disproportionate responsibility for family harmony—deserves critical attention as it potentially reproduces patriarchal structures even as migration ostensibly empowers women economically. Spirituality-based coping emerges as dominant in Indonesian contexts, with Nurbuana et al. (2024) highlighting how madrasah education integrates Islamic values with modern competencies. This finding aligns with broader patterns in Indonesian Islam emphasizing compatibility between religious devotion and worldly success. However, spirituality's role in conflict mediation operates through multiple mechanisms: providing shared moral frameworks for negotiation; offering transcendent meaning that contextualizes suffering; supplying ritual practices (prayer, Quran recitation) that regulate emotions; and creating community support through religious networks. Yet reliance on religious coping may also discourage seeking formal psychological or social services due to stigma or beliefs that faith alone suffices. Economic strategies, particularly investment diversification (Ng & Manu, 2025), represent attempts to address root causes rather than merely managing symptoms. However, the finding that migrants possess investment interest but suboptimal execution suggests structural barriers—limited financial literacy, restricted access to formal financial institutions, vulnerability to fraud—that individual agency cannot overcome. Damanhuri & Rahayuni (2023) revealed how migration serves dignity preservation functions, indicating economic strategies embed within broader status management systems where certain expenditures (ceremonial, residential, educational) carry symbolic weight exceeding financial logic.

The Role of Social Institutions in Conflict Mediation

Formal and informal institutions provide crucial scaffolding for conflict mediation, yet their effectiveness depends on cultural consonance and resource availability. Rogers et al. (2021) demonstrated how Cross Cultural Workers bridge service access gaps for migrant and refugee women, a model potentially applicable to Indonesian contexts where cultural and linguistic diversity complicates service delivery. However, Indonesia's institutional landscape differs significantly from developed nations, with fewer formal support services, greater reliance on informal networks, and state capacity limitations particularly in rural migrant-sending regions. Informal institutions—extended family networks, neighborhood associations (RT/RW), religious communities—traditionally mediated conflicts in Indonesian society, but migration strains these mechanisms by physically dispersing members and creating novel problems (transnational communication, remittance management, legal complexities) beyond traditional competencies. Tsang & Nguyen (2023) found that sociocultural adaptation and job satisfaction mediate relationships between cultural competence and retention intentions among Vietnamese migrants in Taiwan, with language proficiency substantially strengthening these relationships. Applied to Indonesian contexts, this suggests that supporting host-country language acquisition and cultural orientation may reduce conflicts stemming from adaptation difficulties.

The most effective institutional responses integrate formal and informal dimensions, with formal structures providing resources, legitimacy, and professional expertise, while informal networks supply cultural knowledge, social capital, and sustained engagement. Cheong & Baltazar (2021)'s "three delays" framework modeling barriers to maternal healthcare and birth registration illustrates how exclusion from one system compounds exclusion from others, creating cascading disadvantage. This framework applies directly to migrant families where legal precarity, poverty, social isolation, and discrimination intersect, producing multiple, reinforcing vulnerabilities that require coordinated, multi-sectoral interventions rather than isolated programmatic responses. Ultimately, addressing intergenerational conflicts in Indonesian migrant families requires moving beyond individualistic interventions to structural reforms addressing migration governance, labor protections, financial system access, and social services provision. However, such reforms must remain culturally grounded, recognizing Indonesian families' distinctive characteristics—extended structures, collectivist values, religious orientation, and ongoing negotiation between tradition and modernity—rather than imposing Western family models inappropriate for local contexts.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This systematic review of 28 studies reveals that intergenerational social conflict in Indonesian migrant worker families emerges from boundary ambiguity caused by parental absence, communication disruptions exacerbated by "halus" communication styles, and economic tensions reflecting divergent generational worldviews. Conflicts manifest explicitly through financial disputes and latently through role ambiguities suppressed by "harmoni" cultural emphasis, systematically undermining family resilience across legal-integrity, physical, socio-psychological, and socio-cultural dimensions. Youth navigate contradictory identity claims while families deploy culturally-specific adaptation strategies including accommodation, spirituality-based coping, and economic diversification, though structural barriers limit effectiveness. These findings challenge linear family systems models by demonstrating recursive feedback loops where structural absence intensifies communication failures and destabilizes role distributions. The culturally-specific conflict suppression paradoxically intensifies latent tensions, suggesting Western frameworks require substantial adaptation for Indonesian contexts. The identification of "intimate isolation" extends social support theory by revealing how conflict transforms family relationships into stress generators rather than support sources. Practically, economic benefits cannot compensate for socio-psychological costs, demanding holistic approaches addressing family system integrity. Gender-differentiated impacts and class-based precarity variations necessitate intersectional policy approaches recognizing how multiple identity dimensions shape distinct conflict trajectories. Two critical interventions are needed. First, develop holistic and culturally sensitive migrant worker protection policies mandating pre-departure family preparation programs, accessible remittance protection frameworks, bilateral agreements ensuring digital connectivity, and gender-specific provisions. Second, strengthen family counseling services in origin communities by training counselors in culturally appropriate conflict mediation, developing community-based support groups through existing religious and neighborhood institutions, creating intergenerational financial literacy programs, and establishing accessible legal aid services addressing migration-related disputes.

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