

EXPLORATION OF INTERGENERATIONAL INTERACTION IN THE CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY FAMILIES: A REVIEW FROM A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This study explores intergenerational interaction in the context of contemporary families from a sociological perspective. The main focus of this research is how value shifts and social changes influence relationships between older and younger generations within families. The findings reveal tension between older generations, who preserve traditional values, and younger generations, who are more open to change. However, there are also opportunities for mutual learning, both in terms of technology and cultural values. Changes in family structure, particularly the shift toward nuclear families, and the adoption of technology, play a significant role in shaping communication between generations. The study concludes that, despite challenges in intergenerational interactions, open dialogue and mutual learning can strengthen relationships within contemporary families.

Keywords: *Intergenerational interaction, Contemporary Family, Value Shifts, Technology, Sociology.*

INTRODUCTION

Changes in family structure and modern lifestyles have altered the patterns of interaction between different generations. Various factors, such as busy schedules, lack of public facilities for social interaction, and the increasing use of digital technology, can impact the loss of space for face-to-face interaction between generations (Mulyadi & Liauw, 2020). This phenomenon does not only occur in public spaces but also within the family environment itself.

For example, in a study on the practice of "sharenting" on social media, it was found that parents increasingly upload photos and personal information about their children without considering privacy and long-term consequences (Dwiarsianti, 2022). This can hinder the child's learning process in building direct social interactions, as they become accustomed to interactions through digital media (Sinaga & Lumban Gaol, 2020a). On the other hand, the use of gadget technology in preschool children can also have both positive and negative impacts on their social interactions in the school environment (Viandari & Susilawati, 2019).

With the rapid social changes, the dynamics of modern families are undergoing significant transformations. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (Statistik, 2022) around 29% of households in Indonesia consist of different generations under one roof, highlighting the importance of understanding these interactions. Families no longer consist solely of parents and

children, but often involve grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins, creating complexity in intergenerational relationships.

In this context, intergenerational interactions can be viewed from various dimensions, such as values, traditions, and communication styles. Research conducted by (S. (2020). Putri, 2020) revealed that the differences in values between older and younger generations often create tension, but also provide opportunities for mutual learning. For example, the younger generation, which is more familiar with technology, can help the older generation in using digital devices, while the older generation can transfer cultural values that are beginning to be forgotten.

The importance of understanding intergenerational interactions is not limited to family aspects but also encompasses broader social impacts. According to research by (Soekanto, 2019) positive intergenerational relationships can enhance social cohesion and support community development. Conversely, intergenerational tensions can lead to divisions and detrimental conflicts. Therefore, this study aims to explore the dynamics of intergenerational interactions in the context of contemporary families, as well as their implications for society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theory of Intergenerational Interaction

The theory of intergenerational interaction provides a framework for understanding how relationships between different generations are formed and developed. One of the theories that is often used is the Social Exchange Theory, which states that social interactions are influenced by the exchange of benefits between individuals (Homans, 1958). In the context of family, this means that every family member, both old and young, strives to gain benefits from the relationship, whether emotional, financial, or social.

The family is an important part of society that plays a role in shaping a healthy culture and behavior. In Islam, the family is the smallest unit of society consisting of a husband, wife, and children, whether obtained by descent or adoption. (Mahfuzhah et al., 2022) Families aim to achieve a happy life through efforts made from the formation of the family to the establishment of a prosperous family (Mahfuzhah et al., 2022)

Children are the greatest blessing for parents (Marwan & Pasrizal, 2020) Parents have the obligation to fulfill all the needs and desires of their children, whether they are physical, emotional, or spiritual needs. In this regard, Islamic religious education plays an important role in shaping the character and morals of children. Children not only need the fulfillment of material needs but also spiritual guidance from their parents to grow into faithful and pious individuals. To create

a harmonious family, efforts are needed from every family member, whether husband, wife, or child. Each family member has complementary roles and responsibilities.

Research by (Lestari et al., 2022) shows that in families with healthy relationships, family members provide each other with emotional and practical support. For example, children who live with their parents and grandparents often receive support in education and upbringing. Conversely, grandparents also benefit from interactions with their grandchildren, such as increased happiness and a stronger sense of belonging. This phenomenon highlights the importance of mutual understanding and cooperation between generations.

However, this theory also acknowledges that not all intergenerational interactions are positive. Tensions and conflicts can arise due to differences in values and worldviews. According to research by (Junaidi, 2022), younger generations, who are more individualistic, often have difficulty understanding the perspectives of older generations, who are more collectivist.

Factors Influencing Intergenerational Interaction

There are several factors that influence intergenerational interactions in contemporary families. One of them is the difference in values and norms that develop over time. Parents tend to be apathetic towards their children's development due to the busyness of earning a living, with the assumption that meeting physical needs is sufficient (W. Putri, 2021). In fact, the role of parents, both in providing affection and being role models, is very important in the formation of a child's character and personality (Kogoya, 2022). Lack of interaction between parents and children, as well as the application of parenting styles that tend to use violence and coercion, often results in children becoming angry and difficult to control. On the other hand, parents sometimes still use normal life standards in educating their children, forcing them to achieve and pursue grades without paying attention to the proper process.

In the Christian context, the role of parents in educating their children from an early age is very important. Not only the fulfillment of physical needs but also the formation of moral and spiritual values. Parents need to realize that their responsibility in educating their children is very meaningful and not trivial. Another factor that influences is technological development. According to a survey conducted by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) in 2021, around 73% of internet users in Indonesia are young people. This shows that the younger generation is more familiar with digital technology compared to the older generation. The older generation's lack of understanding of technology can create gaps in communication and interaction, which in turn affects intergenerational relationships.

In addition, economic factors also play an important role in intergenerational interactions. According to (Statistik, 2022), around 15% of households in Indonesia consist of three generations. In this context, intergenerational interactions become more complex, as each family member has different roles and responsibilities.

Social Implications of Intergenerational Interaction

Intergenerational interactions in contemporary families have various significant social implications. One of them is the increase in social solidarity. According to research by (Rizal, 2021), families with good intergenerational relationships tend to be more capable of facing social and economic challenges. For example, in a crisis situation, family members can help and support each other, which ultimately strengthens social bonds within the community. However, on the other hand, intergenerational tensions can have negative impacts on society.

Research by (Lestari et al., 2022) shows that conflicts occurring within the family can affect individuals' behavior outside the home. For example, children who grow up in a family environment full of conflict tend to have problems interacting with peers and the wider community. This shows that family dynamics have a much greater impact than just the relationships between family members. In addition, intergenerational interactions also contribute to the preservation of culture and traditions. According to research by (Wulandari, 2020) families with good intergenerational relationships tend to be more capable of transferring cultural values to the next generation

METHOD

The research method with a literature review is an approach used to collect, analyze, and summarize previous research relevant to the topic or problem being studied. The purpose of a literature review is to gain a deeper understanding of the topic being researched, identify gaps in previous research, and provide a theoretical foundation for further research.

DISCUSSION RESULT

Shifts in Values and Traditions

There is a shift in values between the older and younger generations, where the younger generation is more open to modern values oriented towards individualism and freedom, while the older generation tends to uphold collectivism and respect for tradition. This happens due to the differences in life experiences between the two generations, where the younger generation grows up amidst the currents of globalization and technological advancements that bring significant changes in lifestyle and worldview. It cannot be denied that

technological advancements have both positive and negative impacts on the millennial generation (Srinanda, 2019).

Technological advancements have provided millennials with extensive access to information and knowledge (Anwar et al., 2020), but on the other hand, they have also led to a tendency among millennials to become overly dependent on gadgets and technology in their daily lives (Steven Putra Ongkowijoyo, 2021). Therefore, efforts are needed to introduce and instill positive traditional values to the millennial generation, such as the values of Pancasila, in order to create a balance between modernity and local wisdom.

The Role of Technology in Communication

The younger generation, more connected with technology, often uses social media, digital devices, and applications to communicate, while the older generation may rely more on face-to-face communication or more traditional methods of communication. This imbalance sometimes leads to difficulties in building effective communication between family members across generations.

Children today grow up in the digital era, where the use of digital media has become an integral part of cultural practices within families (Dwiarsianti, 2022). Almost every child today is already using social media. However, uncontrolled use of social media can have negative impacts, such as reduced communication with parents, decreased psychomotor skills, difficulty adapting to lesson materials, and difficulty in socializing (Sinaga & Lumban Gaol, 2020b). The process of adolescent development is not free from the influence of technological advancements in the current era, one of which is social media, which can lead to problems such as cyberbullying (Triyono & Rimadani, 2019).

Intergenerational Learning

Although there is tension, there are also opportunities for intergenerational learning. The younger generation can transfer technological skills to the older generation, while the older generation can teach important cultural values, ethics, and life experiences. One of the main challenges in human resource management is managing the leadership of the millennial generation. The millennial generation has extraordinary potential, but there are differences in characteristics compared to previous generations. Companies must be able to optimize millennial leadership in enhancing employee productivity by continuously providing the latest technological developments. Technology is capable of optimizing the potential of millennial leaders.

The millennial generation was raised amidst the rapid advancement of science and technology, which will undoubtedly influence their attitudes and behaviors in various aspects of life. This advancement not only has positive influences and contributions but also negative ones. Therefore, the role of

character education that aligns with the values of Pancasila is very important in shaping and building a millennial generation that possesses good attitudes, behavior, and speech, is religious, honest, tolerant, disciplined, creative, independent, and democratic.

Discussion

Based on the results of the exploration, intergenerational interactions in contemporary families reflect significant changes influenced by social, cultural, and technological factors.

Along with the social changes that are occurring, the values held firmly by the older generation are often considered outdated by the younger generation. Values that are more open to personal freedom, individual rights, and diversity have become more dominant among the younger generation, while the older generation prioritizes family values, hard work, and respect for social hierarchy. However, in many cases, these differences can be bridged through open dialogue, allowing both parties to understand each other's perspectives.

One of the factors exacerbating this tension is the imbalance in technology adoption between the older and younger generations. The younger generation, more accustomed to technology, tends to view it as an essential part of daily life. On the other hand, the older generation, who may not be so familiar with technology, can feel marginalized or struggle to adapt to new ways of communication. This often leads to communication gaps within families. However, in some cases, technology also serves as a bridge that enables communication between family members who are far apart, especially through digital platforms.

Although there are significant differences, there are also great opportunities for both generations to learn from each other. The younger generation often has higher digital skills, which allows them to teach technology to the older generation. On the other hand, the older generation can provide valuable insights into traditional values, family history, and life experiences that shape the family's identity. This mutual teaching process can enrich intergenerational relationships and create stronger bonds within the family.

Changes in family structure, which are more oriented towards nuclear families, can reduce the intensity of intergenerational interactions. Children who live far from their parents or grandparents often miss the opportunity for direct interaction, which previously served as a place for them to learn family values and traditions. Nevertheless, the nuclear family also provides space for each family member to develop individually, with more opportunities for the younger generation to cultivate their personal potential without being overly dependent on the larger family structure.

Intergenerational interactions in contemporary families show a complex dynamic, influenced by social, cultural, and technological changes. Although

there are differences in values and tensions between the older and younger generations, there are also great opportunities for mutual learning and developing a deeper understanding of each other's roles within the family. Intergenerational learning, especially in terms of technology and traditional values, can strengthen family relationships and help both generations adapt to changes in a more harmonious manner.

CONCLUSION

Intergenerational interactions in contemporary families reflect the complexity of social dynamics influenced by changes in values, technology, and family structure. Although there is tension between the older generation, who uphold traditional values, and the younger generation, who are more open to change, there are also opportunities for mutual learning and enriching intergenerational relationships. The younger generation, who are more accustomed to technology, can teach digital skills to the older generation, while the older generation can transfer important cultural values and life experiences. Changes in family structure, which tend to lead to nuclear families, as well as technological advancements, affect the way communication and interaction occur between generations. Imbalance in technology adoption can create gaps in communication, but technology also offers new ways to strengthen relationships between family members who are geographically separated. Overall, although there are challenges in maintaining harmony between generations, there are many opportunities to strengthen family bonds through understanding and teaching complementary values and skills.

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