



## The Use of Structural Family Counseling in Improving Family Functioning

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### Abstract

This research is aimed to investigate the effectiveness of structural family counseling services in improving family functioning in the Pentil Community. Quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental method is used in this research. To be more precise, this research employed a non-equivalent pretest-posttest control group design. Sampling was carried out using a purposive sampling technique, with a total of 20 people. The samples were classified into 2 groups, namely the experimental group and the control group. Meanwhile, the effectiveness of the intervention was depicted through data analysis techniques which involved the stages of normality test, homogeneity test, n-gain test, and independent sample t-test. Empirically, the results of this study indicate that structural family counseling is effective in improving family functioning. Based on the calculation of the t-test for equality of means, it was revealed that the value of Sig. (2-tailed) was  $0.000 < 0.05$  which signals that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the family functioning in the experimental and the control groups. In addition, the effectiveness of structural family counseling was shown by the experimental group's family functioning score which increased from 58.5 in the pre-test to 78.5 in the post-test. After providing intervention through structural family counseling, it was designated that the family functioning of the experimental group was in the high category. This result indicated that the experimental group had sown such characteristics of family with pronounced aspect of religiosity, affection, responsibility, communicativeness, emotional control, problem solving, steadiness, valuational, and the absence of domestic violence.

Keywords: Family Counseling; Domestic Violence; Family Functioning.

## Introduction

Family is the center of interpersonal and social system in individual life. In the family, individuals can construct rules, roles, power structures, communication forms, and problem-solving strategies in order to carry out various family functions effectively. Furthermore, family is also recognized as the first social group of a person. Further, it is typically consisted of significant others who become the center of identification and determination in the formation of individual personality (Yusuf & Nurihsan, 2008b). A positive and well-adjusted individual personality is gained through interaction which is established in a harmonious, affectionate, caring, religious, and socio-culturally valuative family environment. Walker & Shepherd (2008), further clarify that a family can be considered as the center of individual well-being and functioning. Individual well-being and functioning are equally paramount to be established within a family where stimulus and care in the family environment allows individuals to learn and develop rapidly.

The critical element that needs to be gained by a family is family functioning. Family functioning tend to have a significant impact on the family member well-being either in psychological, social, or emotional state. Family functioning emphasizes the efforts of realizing family as a system that is contextual, unique, has a characteristics of its own and may also be influenced by the social demands (Dai & Wang, 2015). A well-functioning family is characterized by a relatively high tendency of integration and interaction among family members. Moreover, it also signified by the emotional support and autonomy within the family member (Keren et al., 2010). Family functioning will have a positive impact on each of the family member. Individuals who live in well-functioning families have the advantage of having positive role models for building relationships and conducive environment for developing self-esteem.

In the Islamic perspective, a family is formed through marriage which is aimed to build a sacred regeneration and to create a *sakinah*, *mawaddah* and *warahmah* forms of relationship. A *sakinah* family is a family condition that is based on faith and *akhlakul kharimah*. It is not merely referred to the relationships within the core family but it also includes relationship that is built with the extended families and the families in their surrounding neighborhood (Mawardi, 2017). The measure of stability in a *sakinah* family lies in the attitude performed by the individual in dealing with the family system

and all of its problems. According to Siregar (2015), the key to creating a *sakinah* family is adequate form of communication within family members and sufficient understanding of the family members in taking family functions and roles. A husband or a father typically be presented as a figure of the head of the family who is wise and protective. Meanwhile, a wife or a mother is reflected as a source of positive affection in the family.

Changes in community dynamics have an impact on reducing the intensity of interaction within the family, especially between parents and children. This tendency is typically caused the busy lives of the family members, therefore it also causes the decrease of quality time of the family. According to Kartono (Yusuf & Nurihsan, 2008a), the rapid change of globalization has affected family life to become more atomistic and partial. This condition is characterized by the form of communication between parents and children that is loose, formal, and not intimate. In the end, this tendency will cause individuals in the family to feel lonely and neglected. As stated by Willis (2008), family crisis is a condition that need to be avoided. Family crisis can lead to chaotic and disoriented family life. It was further explained that there are factors that can cause family crisis. These factors involve; the lack of communication within the family member, the egocentrism, the economic problems, the busyness of each family member, the educational problems, the infidelity, and the lack of religious values within the family. Family crises will lead to a disharmonious family, a broken home family, and even a divorce. These conditions can eventually cause distortions in the development of the child's personality and can create abnormalities in the child's adjustment process (Yusuf & Nurihsan, 2008a).

Another problem that often occurs in the family environment is domestic violence. Cases of domestic violence are like an iceberg phenomenon. Cases that appear or are revealed are typically only a small part of the hidden case in the family itself. This phenomenon happens since society considers it taboo for a family member to uncover the violence that they experienced, especially the perpetrated done by the ones closest to them. Domestic violence arises as a result of an unequal relationship between the perpetrator and the victim in a household. This unequal relationship will cause the stronger party to have a tendency to be the perpetrator and the weaker party to be the victim (Rofiah, 2017). Based on the results of a preliminary study conducted in 2021 on residents of Kedungdawa Villge precisely in the Pentil Community, it was found there is

a tendency for domestic violence to happen within families in this community. This tendency is triggered by the economic factors of the family. In this case, most of the residents of the Pentil Community work as mango pickers who rely their household income on the mango season. Therefore, their income is unstable and insufficient to cover their daily needs. This situation is exacerbated by the occurrence of COVID-19 pandemic in which the pandemic has reduced most of the family income of the Pentil Community. The impact can be seen in the increase of the stress levels and in the frequent fights among the family members due to the economic factors which lead to domestic violence.

National Commission for Women (2021b) reports that women are considered as the most vulnerable one in experiencing domestic violence. The domestic violence itself is dominated by the forms of psychological and economic violence. Households that have economic problems, especially the ones with income less than the minimum wage, tend to have potential for domestic violence. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic also has an impact on the economy with many male workers began to lose their jobs, resulting in a masculinity crisis which is manifested by committing domestic violence.

According to National Commission for Women (2021b) domestic violence falls into the category of personal violence. Based on the Annual Records (CATAHU) in 2020 there were 6,480 cases of domestic violence. The cases were dominated by the form of violence against wives. In this instance, the numbers of violence against wives reached up to 3,221 cases (Komnas Perempuan, 2021). The high rate of violence against wives tends to be consistent compared to other forms of domestic violence that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ideally, family environment should become a safe place for the growth and development of family members. A family environment is also supposedly be filled with a warm and loving attitude. Therefore, to reach it, it is important for the family member to be open to each other and be understanding regarding their roles and functions in the family. Referring to Government Regulation no. 21 in 1994 Article 5, it is stated that every family member is obliged to develop self-quality and family functions so that they can live independently. Furthermore, family members are also expected to develop a quality family. Family functioning can be facilitated through family coaching and education. In addition, as stated in Article 26, guidance and counseling services can take on a role by providing family counseling services.

Family counseling provides important opportunities in fulfilling family needs and in providing an understanding of the reciprocal relationships between family members (Weaver et al., 2013). Family counseling can be focused in helping counselees or family members to solve their problems. It is expected that the involvement of family members can significantly assist to solve the problems. As stated by Ulfiah (2021), family counseling is a critical step in dealing with complex family problems.

Basically, family is a system, whereas one part of the system is malfunction then it will likely affect the system as a whole. Likewise, the problems experienced by the counselee may also be influenced by the counselee's family system. Family involvement and support will have a huge psychological impact on the counselee, so that the counselee will have hope and have more strength in dealing with his problems. This is reinforced by Minuchin's view (Lindblad-Goldberg & Northey, 2013) which he indicates that a family has a hierarchical structure with reciprocal and complementary functions among its family members. One of the most popular family counseling approaches and has been used for over 40 years is structural family counseling (Reiter, 2016). The principles of structural family counseling highlight that behavioral and interaction problems within the family should be resolved systematically through the use of family system (Negash & Morgan, 2016).

In line with this, Weaver et al. (2013) revealed that structural family counseling was specifically designed by Minuchin for low-income families which have multiple problems (multi-problems). This view is used as the basis theory that places primary importance on building a healthy organizational hierarchy within the family system. Thus, structural family counseling is seen as an appropriate approach in improving family functioning in the mango picking community or commonly referred to as Pentil Community, which economically classified into the lower-middle class family with various accompanying family problems.

### *Methods*

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of structural family counseling in improving family functioning. The approach used in this study is a quantitative approach, with a quasi-experimental research method. Quasi-experiment is a research method that has a control group that does not fully function to control external

variables that may affect the experiment. In addition, a nonequivalent pretest-posttest control group design was used in this study. In the nonequivalent pretest-posttest control group design, the experimental group was given structural family counseling interventions, while the control group served as a comparison group. In other words, the control group was not given any intervention.

The population of this study were 40 residents of Pentil Community which is located in Kedungdawa Village, Kedawung Regency, in Cirebon Prefecture. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the samples of the research. This technique was reinforced by Cresswell & Cresswell (2018) who states that in the nonequivalent pretest-posttest control group design the experimental group and the control group were selected without a random placement procedure. The selection of the sample of the population was based on the two main criteria, namely 1) samples that are in the lowest category of family functioning are used as the experimental group; and 2) the sample that is in the highest category of family functioning is used as the control group. The selection of sample in this study will be presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Sample (Experimental Group and Control Group)

No	Sample of the Research	Total
1	Experimental Group	10
2	Control Group	10
<b>Total</b>		20

In revealing the family functioning, then family functioning instruments were developed based on the operational definitions of family functioning variables from the theory proposed by Dai & Wang (2015). To test the validity and reliability of the instrument, then the family functioning instrument was administered to 30 respondents. After calculating the correlation coefficient of each item using the Pearson Product Moment formula, it was found that there were 40 valid items out of a total of 60 items. The data is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. The Results of Validity Testing of Family Functioning Instruments

Criteria	Number of Item	Total
<b>Valid</b>	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 29, 31, 32, 34, 37, 38, 41, 43, 44, 45, 47, 48, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 57, 59, 60	40
<b>In-Valid</b>	4, 9, 16, 19, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30, 33, 35, 36, 39, 40, 42, 46, 49, 50, 56, 58	20

In addition, a validity test was also carried out to find out the level of reliability of the family functioning instrument. The reliability test uses the Cronbach's Alpha formula using the following reliability level criteria.

Table 3. Reliability Criteria of the Instrument

Kriteria	Kategori
0,91 - 1,00	Very high degree of reliability
0,71 - 0,90	High degree of reliability
0,41 - 0,70	Moderate degree of reliability
0,21 - 0,40	Below moderate degree of reliability
< 0,20	Very low degree of reliability

Based on the test results, the reliability value of the family functioning instrument is 0.881. In other words, the value lies in the high degree of reliability category. Therefore, the family functioning instrument can be used as a data collection tool to reveal the general profile of family functioning. In this case, the results of instrument reliability testing are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. The Reliability of the Family Functioning Instrument

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
<b>.881</b>	40

In addition, to test the effectiveness of structural family counseling in improving family conditions, then a parametric statistical test in a form of Independent Sample t-Test was used. Meanwhile, the stages of data analysis techniques carried out in this study include: 1) Normality Test; 2) Homogeneity Test; 3) N-Gain Score Test; and 4) Independent Sample t-Test. Some of these stages are intended for testing data from the experimental group and the control group, including both the pre-test and the post-test data.

## Discussion

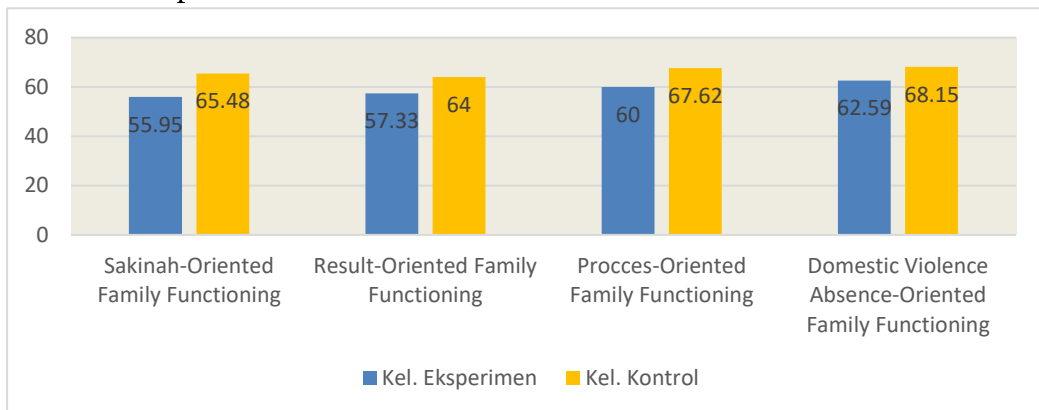
Based on the calculation results of the pre-test data, it was obtained that the level of family functioning of the experimental group was 58,5 (moderate category), meanwhile the control group was 66,08 (moderate category). In both groups, the level of family functioning is in the moderate category. The finding indicates that the functioning of the family in the experimental group and the control group is

satisfactory. The distribution of the family functioning of two groups is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. The Description of Family Functioning of Experimental Group and Control Group on Pre-Test

No.	Group	Frequency			The Degree of Family Functioning
		High	Moderate	Low	
1	Experimental	10	0	0	58,5
2	Control	10	0	0	66,08

Meanwhile, based on the aspects of family functioning, there were several differences found in both the experimental and the control group. In this case, the level of family functioning based on aspects in the experimental group and the control group is presented in the Graph 1.



Graph 1. The Level of Family Functioning in the Experimental and Control Group based on Aspect on the Pre-Test

In addition, the result of independent sample t-test on each aspect of the family functioning before the intervention (pre-test) was given suggests that there is no significant difference between the experimental and the control groups. The result of the comparison of pre-test scores that is based on the mean score is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Independent Sample t-Test on the Aspects of Family Functioning (Pre-Test)

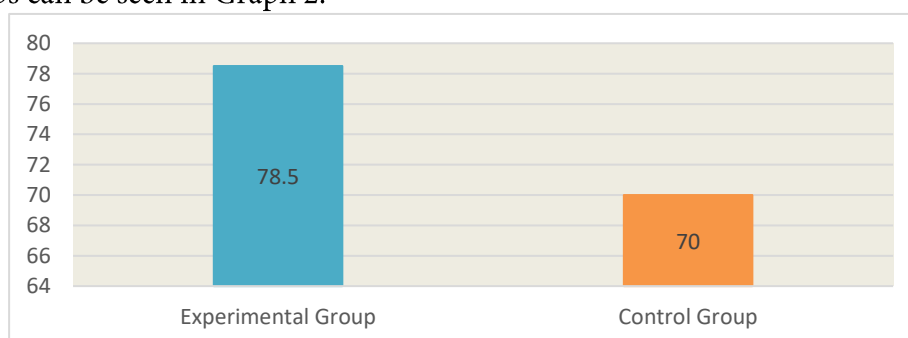
No.	Aspect	Asymp. Sig (2-tailed)	$\alpha$	Information
1	Sakinah-Oriented Family Functioning	0,081	0,05	Not Significant
2	Result-Oriented Family Functioning	0,930	0,05	Not Significant
3	Process-Oriented Family Functioning	0,082	0,05	Not Significant
4	Domestic Violence Absence-Oriented Family Functioning	0,234	0,05	Not Significant

**Keterangan: Nilai Sig (2-tailed) <  $\alpha$  (0,05) = significant**  
**Nilai Sig (2-tailed) >  $\alpha$  (0,05) = not significant**



Berdasarkan hasil *post-test* diperoleh peningkatan keberfungsian keluarga. Pencapaian tingkat keberfungsian keluarga pada kelompok eksperimen dan kelompok kontrol mengalami peningkatan dari kategori *sedang* (*pre-test*) menjadi kategori *tinggi* (*post-test*). Akan tetapi, peningkatan keberfungsian keluarga yang diperoleh oleh kelompok eksperimen lebih signifikan yakni sebesar 78,5 (kategori *tinggi*), sedangkan kelompok kontrol sebesar 70 (kategori *tinggi*). Adapun pencapaian tingkat keberfungsian keluarga pada kedua kelompok tersebut dapat dilihat pada Grafik 2 berikut.

The results of the post-test showed that there was an increase in family functioning. The level of family functioning in the experimental and control groups increased from the *moderate* category (*pre-test*) to the *high* category (*post-test*). However, the increase in family functioning obtained by the experimental group was more significant as the value was around 78,5 (high category) on the other hand, the value of control group was around 70 (high category). The level of family functioning of the two groups can be seen in Graph 2.



Graph 2. The Level of Family Functioning at Experimental Group and Control Group (Post-Test)

Based on Graph 2, it can be concluded that the achievement level of family functioning of the experimental group had increased significantly compared to the control group. In this case, the level of family functioning in the experimental group was 78,5 or in the *high* category. *High* category of family functioning is defined as a family that is God-oriented; that is concern on establishing a relationship based on affection and respect; that is clear in terms of the division of roles and responsibilities among each of the family members; that is capable of establishing of good and open communication within the family; that is emotionally close to each other; that is capable solving

problems; that is able to complete tasks in the family flexibly and regularly; that is valuatve and obedient; and that is lack of domestic violence.

After giving the structural family counseling intervention (post-test) to the experimental group, there was a significant difference compare to that of the control group. To find out the level of significance, an independent sample t-test was performed on the post-test scores of the experimental group and the control group. The results of the independent sample t-test is as follow.

Table 4. Independent Sample t-Test (Post-Test)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
<b>Family Functioning</b>	Equal Variances Assumed	,000	1,000	4,391	18	,000	10,2000	2,3228	5,3199	15,0801

Based on Table 4, it can be summed that the value of Sig. Levene Test for equality of variances is 1,000 > 0,05 which means that the variance of the data between the experimental group and the control group is homogeneous. In addition, based on the calculation of the t-test for equality of means, the value of Sig. (2-tailed) was 0,000 <0,05 which indicates that there is a significant difference between the average family functioning in the experimental group and the control group.

Independent sample t-test testing was also carried out on the scores of family functioning aspects in the experimental group and the control group. The test is aimed to view the significance of the difference in average scores of the group based on the aspects of family functioning. The results of the independent sample t-test on the score of each aspect of family functioning can be seen in Table 5 below.

Table 5. The Independent Sample t-Test on the Aspects of Family Functioning (Post-Test)

No.	Aspect	Asymp. Sig (2-tailed)	α	Keterangan
1	Sakinah-Oriented Family Functioning	0,000	0,05	Significant
2	Result-Oriented Family Functioning	0,002	0,05	Significant
3	Process-Oriented Family Functioning	0,000	0,05	Significant
4	Domestic Violence Absence-Oriented Family	0,010	0,05	Significant

Functioning

**Keterangan:**

**Nilai Sig (2-tailed) <  $\alpha$  (0,05) = significant**

**Nilai Sig (2-tailed) >  $\alpha$  (0,05) = not significant**

Table 5 depicts that the value of Sig. (2-tailed) on all four aspects were less than 0,05. The result signifies that there is such a difference of the mean scores in the four aspects of family functioning between the experimental and the control groups. This finding highlights that structural family counseling is effective in improving the four aspects of family functioning. The increase of family functioning was not only in the area of quantity, but also from the quality of the improvement. The quality of family functioning increased as shown by the results of the N-Gain score test in Table 6.

Table 6. Calculating Results of the N-Gain Score Test for Experimental and Control Group

No	Experimental Group	No	Control Group
	N-Gain Score (%)		N-Gain Score (%)
1	75,86	1	63,16
2	76,67	2	5,88
3	96,55	3	40,91
4	63,33	4	52,17
5	41,38	5	40,91
6	90,32	6	13,04
7	106,90	7	-33,33
8	75,86	8	17,39
9	86,67	9	9,52
10	90,62	10	5,26
<b>Mean</b>	80,42	<b>Mean</b>	21,49
<b>Min.</b>	41,38	<b>Min.</b>	-33,33
<b>Maks.</b>	106,90	<b>Maks.</b>	63,16

The result of the N-Gain score test shows that the mean of the N-Gain score of the experimental group was around 80,42% which means that it can be classified in the effective category. Meanwhile, the mean score of the N-Gain of the control group was 21,49%, which means that it was on the ineffective category.

To determine the significance of the effectiveness of structural family counseling in the experimental group and the control group based on the N-Gain score obtained, an independent sample t-test was performed for the N-Gain score. The basic assumption in using the independent sample t-test is that the data is normally

distributed and homogeneous. Based on the normality test on the N-Gain score data, the following results are obtained.

Table 7. The N-Gain Score Normality Test Results

	Group	Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.
NGain_Persen	Experimental	,944	10	,593
	Control	,945	10	,604

The use of Shapiro-Wilk in the normality test of this study was due to the fact that the number of samples (N) for both groups was less than 50. Thus, from the result it was revealed that the significance value (Sig.) for the N-Gain score in the experimental group was 0,593 and that for the control group was 0,604. Therefore, the value of Sig. both groups are greater than 0,05, so the data used in this study are normally distributed, so that the requirements for using the independent sample t-test for the N-Gain score are fulfilled. The next stage is to consider the results of Group Statistics to interpret the effectiveness of the N-Gain score.

Table 8. The Result of Group Statistics N-Gain Score

NGain_Persen	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
					Mean
	Experimental	10	80,4166	18,48192	5,84449
	Control	10	21,4921	28,23661	8,92920

In Table 8, it is revealed that the mean N-Gain score for the experimental group is 80,4166 or 80,42%. Based on the categorization of interpretations of the effectiveness of N-Gain (%) (Hake, 1999), it can be concluded that structural family counseling is effective in improving family functioning. Next, the significance of the effectiveness obtained by the experimental group and the control group based can be viewed based on the results of the independent sample t-test N-Gain score below.

Table 9. The Result of Independent Sample t-Test N-Gain Score

NGain_Persen	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means								
		F		Sig.		Mean Difference		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
			Sig.	t	df	(2-tailed)	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper	
	Equal Variances Assumed	1,885	,187	5,521	18	,000	58,9245	10,6719	36,5038	81,3453

Based on Table 9, it is uncover that the value of Sig. on Levene's Test for Equality of Variances is 0,187 with consideration of  $0,187 > 0,05$ , thus it can be concluded that the variance of the N-Gain data for the experimental group and the control group is homogeneous. Furthermore, in the independent sample t-test it is find out that the value of Sig. (2-tailed) is 0,000 or less than 0,05 ( $0,000 < 0,05$ ), thus it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in effectiveness between the experimental and the control groups.

Adequate family functioning is an important factor for the well-being of individuals, families, and communities (Walker et al., 2014). The results of this study indicate that the family functioning may have such contribution in leading the family to have divinely oriented characteristics in the form of a sakinah-oriented family, and the absence of domestic violence. In addition, in this study family functioning is characterized as a family that has intimacy, adaptability skills, effective communication, positive emotional responses, problem solving skills, responsibility for taking roles and tasks in the family, and has values and rules that are applied for each family member.

At this stage, the results of this study are in line with the research conducted by Herawati & Endah (2016) in which they found that the entire research sample was categorized into families with good functioning. Bilal et al. (2021) finding is also in accordance with this study in which they found that the entire sample had shown a good family functioning. The advantages of having establish family functioning are revealed by other previous studies. Greeff & de Bruyne (2000), for instance, found that well-functioning families have the ability to solve problems.

A particularly similar finding was also informed by Alderfer et al. (2008), in this case they showed that family functioning provides positive dynamics for family members including the act of caring, interaction, communicating, problem solving, decision making, and maintaining relationships within the family. Meanwhile, according to Du et al. (2022) family functioning helps children to have psychological well-being as indicated by aspects of hope, life satisfaction, and self-esteem.

Family activities are an important impetus in developing cohesive relationships and facilitating family functioning. To be more precise it can be achieved through strengthening identity and enhancing family bonding (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001).

Pedro et al. (2012) also found that responsive and sensitive interactions facilitate family functioning.

This is also in accordance with the research of Padilla-Walker et al. (2012) who found that in well-functioning families strong family relationships are formed between parents and children. Interaction within a well-functioning family is characterized by less rigidity and distraction, higher coordination between family members, more emotional support, and higher autonomy (Keren et al., 2010). A well-functioning family has the capacity to provide an environment that supports the fulfillment of religious needs as the basis for family development. In this case religious values play an important role in forming and maintaining a family to achieve *sakinah* state (Fauzan & Amroni, 2020).

Religious orientation in a *sakinah* family will lead to the internalization of religious values into the personality of the family members and play an important role in achieving family wholeness and functioning. This is in accordance with Kasdi (2019) in which she found that a *sakinah* family is a resemblance of family functioning in bringing family members to achieve their goals and objectives in building a family.

There are identified risk factors that can interfere family functioning, namely domestic violence. Serious disruption to the family is often found in the form of violence that occurs within the family. Domestic violence will lead to the conflict within the family, disruption of children's educational aim, disruption of social relationships, and social alienation (Walker & Shepherd, 2008). The important thing found in this study that there was an absence domestic violence in the entire sample. Therefore, they were able to achieve satisfactory family functioning. Families that function well and do not have domestic violence in them can create optimal child development, this is because children have positive role models and they also receive a structured parenting patterns from their parents.

The improvement of family functioning can be achieved by the use of counseling services. Family counseling has an important role in improving the quality and function of the family, including solving problems that occur in the family. The effectiveness of family counseling has been proven through several research results. Suteja & Muzaki (2019) found that family counseling can develop family potential and unity which also leads to the changes in the family construct. In addition, family counseling can also be

used as an effort to deal with domestic violence, or other problems that occur within the family (Suteja & Muzaki, 2020). Another effectiveness of family counseling is stated by Ulfiah (2021) in this case she proves that family counseling is very important in improving family welfare both materially, mentally-psychologically, communicatively, and spiritually.

Based on a meta-analysis that focus of exploring the use of systemic family therapy for various counselees such as that of von Sydow et al. (2010) found that systemic family therapy proved to be effective not only for the larger system, but also it can be effective to be administered individually. The application of systemic family therapy to individuals is aimed to restructure individual systems due to changes in perceptions or perspectives on problems (Shah & Satyanarayana, 2011). Improving family functioning cannot be separated from the implementation of structural family counseling interventions which have been proven effective. Several research results have found the effectiveness of structural family counseling in dealing with various individual problems as part of the family system. Structural family counseling can be used to deal with problems of drug addiction in adolescents (Sim, 2007), bullying problems (Butler VI & Lynn Platt, 2008), emotional disturbances in children (Radohl, 2011), and problems of parents' infidelity (Negash & Morgan, 2016).

The use of structural family counseling given to adult counselees individually or in groups has also proven to be effective. Fisher (2017), for instance, reveals that the structural family counseling approach was effective in improving the functioning of the counselee individually, without directly involving the entire family-related system. In this case, family counselors or therapists may focus on providing services to couples and families, and constantly reduce the scaffolding without giving too many directions to the counselees individually. As stated by Tramonti & Fanali (2015) that it is possible to combine structural family counseling for individual counselees, as well as the need to produce a systemic approach that can be applied in individual services.

Providing structural family counseling interventions in this study was conducted through group settings, with a focus on improving the functioning of the counselee individually. In the end, it is expected that it can influence family construction and achieve optimal family functioning. The basis for using group settings is based on the assumption that group service delivery: 1) is more effective and efficient; 2) is able to

facilitate group dynamics occur which can affect service outcomes; and 3) is an exchange of information and experiences that can affect changes in counselee behavior (Setiawan et al., 2019).

The implementation of structural family counseling used to improve family functioning consists of the following stages.

1. Stage 1: Joining

The first thing to do in the structural family counseling process is to join the counselor with the counselee system. The aim of this session is to build trust in the counseling process. In a service setting which is targeted at individuals in the experimental group, the counselor must accept the important role of family members who are the main focus of the counselee. This blending phase is used throughout the counseling process, therefore the counselor needs to constantly check and remind himself, to remain objective and maintain a strong therapeutic relationship.

2. Stage 2: Understand Presenting Problems

At this stage the counselor enters the counselee's reality. The counselor shall not challenge the counselee's point of view instead he needs to try to understand the counselee position. When the counselor shows an understanding attitude, the counselee's beliefs and point of view will not be threatened. In addition, the counselee should also try to validate and normalize the symptoms and attitudes displayed by the counselor.

3. Stage 3: Assessment

Assessment is an important initial stage. The patterns expressed by the counselee are restructured, and the counselor continually assesses the new functioning of the counselee. Assessment is also used as a technique to gain an understanding of the counselee's functioning and a history of the counselee's symptoms and behavior. In addition, it is important to learn about the counselee's external system, which influences the counselee's life and has the possibility of being a source of the counselee's dysfunction or problems. In collecting the data the counsellor may use genograms, family trees and other relevant approach.



#### 4. Stage 4: Goal Setting

This is the stage of creating treatment plans to produce both short-term and long-term goals. At this stage, the counselee's and counselor's goals should also be taken into consideration. The results obtained are aimed to improve the quality of the counselee's life, by achieving independence. Changes in functioning experienced by the counselee will have an impact on the family system which is also useful in improving family functioning. As in the concept of structural family counseling, individuals (family members) are part of the sub-systems of the family system, which are called the self-subsystems. Self-subsystems are affected by family, community and societal systems (Minuchin, 1974).

#### 5. Stage 5: Creating Change

The fifth stage is the work stage where action and change occur. The counselor acts as a leader to direct and guide the counselee in the process of restructuring unhealthy behavior patterns, boundaries, and hierarchies. Homeostatic crises often occur at the structural treatment stage. Homeostatic crisis in the family occurs when family members are unable to cope with the pressure (stressor) that disrupts the status quo system in the family, and previous patterns of behavior and coping techniques no longer function to maintain family balance. By maintaining family balance in homeostatic conditions in each system, subsystem and self-subsystem, the counselor shows confidence and belief in the counseling process. In addition, the most important thing is the belief in the counselee's ability to achieve permanent change. This homeostatic crisis condition usually lasts until the counselee feels confident and is no longer afraid of change.

#### 6. Stage 6: Termination

The last stage is termination or cessation. It is the stage where the goal of therapy is to reveal the counselee's latent abilities in order to develop a healthy systemic structure, and the counselee does not become dependent on the counselor. Even though the counselor repeats the session in the counselee's process, the responsibility to change lies within the counselee himself. The purpose of the counseling process for counselees from the experimental group is to be able to develop an understanding of systemic family dynamics, which contribute to the occurrence of disorders. In addition, to

restructure relationship patterns, clarify boundaries within the family, and have a healthy family hierarchy.

## Conclusion

Empirically this research proves that structural family counseling is effective in improving family functioning. This includes improving the sakinah family aspect, result-oriented family functioning, process-oriented family functioning, and can reduce domestic violence. The authors combine the four dimensions of family functioning into one concept of integrated family functioning, this is because each dimension has its own advantages. In addition it is believed that the use of a single theory may not enough to cover all aspects of family functioning, so the combination of the four dimensions from several different theories will be useful for the development of the concept of family functioning theory.

This research is limited to examining family functioning in the pentil community in Kedungdawa Village, Kec. Kedawung, Kab. Cirebon. Therefore, for the further research it is expected that the area of coverage in studying the family functioning can be further expanded and not limited to just one area. Given the importance of increasing family functioning in order to realize the quality of families that are prosperous and have family resilience in accordance with the mandate of the Indonesian government as stipulated in PP No. 21 of 1994 concerning the Implementation of Prosperous Family Development, then it is found that guidance and counseling can take a role in providing structural family counseling services to the community, so as to facilitate the community to be more independent and able to manage the family system more constructively.

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