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Reconstructing Family Resilience Amid Conflict: The Role of Christian Religious Education in Jayapura Regency

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Abstract
Family conflict is a complex social phenomenon influenced by legal, economic, interpersonal, behavioral, and spiritual factors. In Jayapura Regency, family disputes are often addressed through legal responses after conflicts escalate, while preventive approaches that integrate social, educational, and religious dimensions remain limited. This study aims to analyze the patterns, causes, consequences, and institutional responses to family conflicts and to reconstruct the role of Christian Religious Education (CRE) as a preventive and restorative framework for strengthening family resilience. The study employed a qualitative descriptive approach using police records and interviews with church leaders, CRE teachers, and families experiencing conflict. The findings reveal that recurring family conflicts involve physical violence, economic pressure, alcohol consumption, infidelity, unhealthy communication, unclear family responsibilities, and vulnerabilities arising from differences between religiously recognized and legally registered marriages. The study further identifies that family conflicts affect not only couples but also children through emotional insecurity, trauma, behavioral changes, and the potential transmission of violent conflict patterns. CRE is proposed as a lifelong family education process that extends beyond doctrinal instruction toward premarital guidance, parenting education, communication development, moral formation, conflict resolution, child protection, and relational restoration. This study contributes a contextual framework by integrating legal institutions, religious communities, educational actors, and families as interconnected components in preventing and addressing family conflict in Jayapura Regency.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Family conflict represents a complex social phenomenon that extends beyond interpersonal disagreements between spouses and involves broader interactions among legal systems, economic conditions, cultural expectations, religious values, and community structures. Within the family context, conflicts may emerge through multiple pathways, including domestic violence, prolonged disputes, communication breakdowns, economic pressure, alcohol consumption, infidelity, and unclear responsibilities among family members. These conflicts not only threaten marital stability but also influence children's psychological security, moral development, educational experiences, and future patterns of social relationships. Therefore, understanding family conflict requires an integrated perspective that considers both individual behavior and the social environments shaping family relationships. In Jayapura Regency, family conflicts must be examined within the

intersection between household realities, religious traditions, community structures, and formal legal recognition.

One important dimension of family conflict in Jayapura Regency concerns the relationship between socially or religiously recognized marriages and legally registered marriages. Some couples may have lived together, raised children, and received religious recognition through church marriage blessings, while their marriages remain unregistered through state administrative procedures. This situation creates structural vulnerabilities because couples, particularly women and children, may encounter difficulties in accessing legal protection, inheritance rights, maintenance claims, and public services. Consequently, family conflict cannot be understood solely as a private household matter, because legal status, institutional recognition, and social protection mechanisms influence how conflicts are categorized and resolved. The presence of formal mechanisms (e.g., family dispute resolution, mediation, civil protection orders) shapes how conflicts are processed and resolved. Institutional frameworks can either facilitate or hinder access to justice, depending on their inclusivity and adaptability to diverse needs (Aftab, 2024; Avdonina, 2024; Crowe et al., 2018; Easteal et al., 2022; Malatuny, 2020; McDonnell & Wright, 2026). The interaction between religious legitimacy and state law creates a unique context in which family conflicts may develop different consequences depending on the recognition systems surrounding the family.

The central research problem addressed in this study is that family conflicts in Jayapura Regency are frequently approached as isolated incidents involving individual misconduct, while their underlying causes are multidimensional and interconnected. Police records indicate recurring patterns involving physical violence, prolonged disputes, economic stress, unhealthy communication, alcohol-related behavior, infidelity, and neglect of family responsibilities. olice records and research define domestic violence as involving physical, psychological, and sometimes sexual abuse, with a focus on patterns of control and domination (American College of Legal Medicine & American Board of Legal Medicine, 2025; Gibbs, 2014; Hepp & Borst, 2015; Misso et al., 2019). Economic abuse and stress are recognized as both forms of abuse and contributing factors to ongoing disputes (American College of Legal Medicine & American Board of Legal Medicine, 2025; Hepp & Borst, 2015). Such patterns suggest that legal intervention alone may not sufficiently address the root causes of family conflict. Although police institutions play an essential role in responding to violence and maintaining social order, sustainable conflict prevention requires broader approaches that strengthen family resilience, improve communication capacity, promote responsible relationships, and protect vulnerable family members, especially women and children.

A potential solution requires the development of an integrated family conflict prevention framework that combines legal protection, social support, educational intervention, and religious guidance. Christian Religious Education (CRE) provides a potential framework because its function extends beyond doctrinal teaching toward the formation of values, character development, relational responsibility, and ethical decision-making within family life. CRE is designed to instill core values such as love, forgiveness, honesty, empathy, and respect, aiming to form morally good individuals who embody Christian virtues in daily life. These values are foundational for healthy family relationships and social interactions (Bobbert, 2017; Pop & Pop, 2017; Potočárová, 2024).

CRE supports the holistic development of the individual, emphasizing the nurturing of character traits like resilience, hard work, and respect. Family upbringing, in conjunction with religious education, is highlighted as a key influence on character formation (Adenekan-Koevoets, 2026; Park et al., 2025; Pike, 2010; Pop & Pop, 2017). However, CRE must be reconstructed as an active and preventive educational process rather than

being limited to classroom instruction, Sunday school activities, or religious ceremonies. A comprehensive CRE approach should support premarital preparation, marital education, parenting capacity, communication skills, conflict resolution, and recovery processes following family crises. Such an approach requires collaboration between families, churches, schools, police institutions, and community networks.

Previous scientific literature demonstrates that family conflicts are influenced by multiple structural and psychological factors. Economic pressure has been identified as an important contributor to family tension because financial difficulties increase psychological distress, reduce relationship satisfaction, and intensify disagreements between partners. Economic pressure leads to higher levels of emotional distress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms among parents and couples. This distress can spill over into family interactions, intensifying overall family tension (Kavanaugh et al., 2018; Kwon et al., 2003; Lee et al., 2023; O'Neal et al., 2015). Research based on the Family Stress Model shows that economic strain can negatively affect family relationships through increased stress and reduced emotional regulation. Economic hardship and strain act as primary stressors, increasing overall family stress and emotional distress among family members (Falconier & Jackson, 2020; Jackson et al., 2023; Kanter et al., 2025; Laxman et al., 2019). Similarly, studies on domestic violence indicate that alcohol consumption may function as both a direct trigger and an intensifier of existing conflicts by reducing self-control and increasing aggressive responses. Communication patterns are also critical because destructive communication characterized by criticism, threats, avoidance, and verbal aggression is associated with lower relationship satisfaction and greater marital instability.

Beyond economic and behavioral factors, religious and educational perspectives provide additional insights into family conflict prevention. Religious systems shape family members' values and goals, influencing what is considered important and the means to achieve harmony. When family members share religious beliefs, these can inhibit conflict by fostering common ground and shared expectations. However, differences in religious beliefs can also amplify conflict if not managed constructively (Mahoney, 2005; Pirutinsky et al., 2014). Previous studies emphasize that religious communities can contribute to reconciliation and social support when spiritual guidance is connected with practical family challenges. Faith-based interventions may strengthen forgiveness, responsibility, empathy, and relational restoration; however, they must be implemented carefully to avoid encouraging victims to remain in unsafe relationships or replacing legal accountability with religious reconciliation. Existing research also highlights the importance of child protection mechanisms because children exposed to family conflict may experience emotional insecurity, trauma, behavioral changes, and the normalization of violence as a conflict-resolution strategy. These findings demonstrate that effective family interventions must integrate psychological, social, legal, and educational dimensions.

Despite extensive research on domestic violence, family stress, religious counseling, and conflict resolution, several research gaps remain. Many previous studies examine family conflict primarily from psychological, legal, or sociological perspectives separately, while limited attention has been given to how different normative systems—state law, church authority, and community mechanisms—interact in shaping family conflict resolution. In addition, the preventive role of Christian Religious Education has often been discussed conceptually rather than examined as an integrated framework connected with police institutions, family experiences, and community realities. Particularly in the context of Jayapura Regency, limited empirical understanding exists regarding how marital recognition, economic conditions, communication patterns, institutional responses, and religious education collectively influence family conflict dynamics.

This study aims to analyze the complexity, recurring patterns, causes, consequences, and institutional handling of family conflicts in Jayapura Regency through police records and qualitative interviews with church leaders, Christian Religious Education teachers, and families experiencing conflict. The study proposes that family conflict should be understood as a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by legal, economic, interpersonal, behavioral, and spiritual factors. The novelty of this research lies in reconstructing Christian Religious Education as a preventive and restorative family education framework that connects moral formation with communication improvement, conflict resolution, child protection, and relational recovery. The scope of this study is limited to Jayapura Regency and focuses on physical violence, prolonged disputes, economic pressure, alcohol consumption, infidelity, unhealthy communication, unclear family roles, marital-registration issues, police mediation processes, and the potential contribution of CRE in strengthening family harmony. Through this approach, the study contributes to a broader understanding of family conflict prevention by positioning education, religious institutions, and legal systems as interconnected components of sustainable family resilience.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The research analysis was conducted using a qualitative descriptive approach to understand the complexity of family conflicts and the reconstruction of the role of CRE in Jayapura Regency. The study analyzed family conflict as a multidimensional social phenomenon involving legal, economic, interpersonal, and spiritual factors. Data were obtained from police records, interviews with church leaders, CRE teachers, and families experiencing conflict. This approach enabled the identification of recurring conflict patterns, including physical violence, prolonged disputes, communication breakdowns, economic pressure, alcohol consumption, infidelity, and unclear family responsibilities. The analysis did not view family conflict solely as an individual behavioral issue but as a phenomenon shaped by interactions between social structures, legal recognition, religious norms, and community environments.

The analytical process focused on identifying relationships among the major themes emerging from the collected data. The study examined how differences between socially or religiously recognized marriages and legally registered marriages influenced victims' access to legal protection and affected the classification of reported cases. In addition, economic difficulties were analyzed as sources of psychological stress and relational tension, while unhealthy communication patterns were identified as mechanisms that intensified conflicts within households. The impact of family conflict on children was also examined, particularly regarding emotional insecurity, trauma, behavioral changes, and the possibility of intergenerational transmission of violent conflict patterns. These findings were interpreted through thematic analysis by grouping similar experiences and identifying connections among causes, consequences, and possible intervention strategies.

The final stage of analysis focused on reconstructing the preventive and restorative role of CRE in addressing family conflicts. The study interpreted religious education not merely as doctrinal instruction but as a continuous educational process that supports family formation, communication improvement, moral development, conflict resolution, and relational restoration. The analysis highlighted the importance of collaboration between families, churches, schools, police institutions, and community networks to create comprehensive prevention mechanisms. Through this framework, CRE was positioned as a supportive system that promotes responsible family relationships, child protection, and reconciliation while maintaining awareness of legal protection and the safety of conflict victims. .

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Family Conflicts Based on Jayapura District Police Data

Family conflicts most frequently reported to the police involve physical assault, prolonged disputes, and violence within intimate partner relationships. An interesting finding is the discrepancy between socially and religiously recognized marital status and marital status legally recognized by the state. Some couples have lived together, have children, and have even undergone church marriage blessings; however, their marriages have not yet been officially registered through civil administration procedures. Unregistered marriages are often considered valid under religious law but lack legal recognition by the state. This leads to issues such as lack of inheritance rights, maintenance disputes, and difficulties in accessing public services like education and healthcare for children (Nofialdi et al., 2023; Sunmirat et al., 2024).

Under such circumstances, acts of violence against a partner are not always processed as domestic violence but may instead be classified as ordinary assault. This finding indicates that family conflicts in Jayapura Regency are not solely related to individual behavior, but also involve a lack of alignment between family realities, ecclesiastical legitimacy, and state legal recognition. Religious authorities historically play a role in legitimizing family structures, but their influence can clash with secular legal frameworks, especially in contexts where religious and state laws overlap (Méndez Reátegui & Sánchez Peinado, 2021; Rubin, 2025).

The difference in legal status has significant consequences for victims' access to legal protection. Police informants distinguish between the criminal threat of ordinary assault, which they estimated at around two years and five months, and domestic violence, which can reach approximately five years, based on the informants' understanding when handling cases. Although this account should be viewed as the informants' practical perspective rather than a definitive legal interpretation, the finding indicates that marriage registration can determine the course of case handling. Women who have lived with their partners and have children, but whose marriages are not officially registered, are in a more vulnerable position.

Women in cohabiting relationships without legal marriage may face economic disadvantages, particularly in property and financial matters. Highlights concerns about the lack of legal protection for economically vulnerable cohabiting women, especially regarding property rights, which can leave them in precarious positions if the relationship ends (Bottomley, 2006). Unmarried mothers, especially those with illegitimate children, face unfavorable societal attitudes, which can exacerbate their vulnerability (Raboteg-Šarić & Pećnik, 2010). The key novelty of this study lies in identifying marital status as a structural variable that influences case categorization, the victim's position, and the likelihood of accessing legal protection.

Family conflict is also depicted as a recurring phenomenon, driven by the ongoing economic pressures that persist in household life. Economic pressure is directly linked to increased family conflict, often mediated by parental psychological distress and marital discord (Layte & McCrory, 2018; Robila & Krishnakumar, 2005; Roper et al., 2016). Rising needs and prices of goods, insufficient income, and situations in which only one family member is employed create tensions that can easily escalate into quarrels. Economic pressure does not automatically lead to violence, but it can reduce a couple's ability to control emotions, communicate rationally, and share household responsibilities. When basic needs are unmet, each party may blame the other, feel unappreciated, or perceive their partner as failing in their role. Police data position economic factors not merely as a backdrop to conflict, but as a daily pressure that increases the likelihood of violence.

In addition to economic pressures, unhealthy communication is a key factor in family conflicts. Informants emphasised that partners who are emotionally mature should be able to encourage their partners to discuss issues calmly and constructively. Constructive communication patterns, such as positive problem-solving, are strongly associated with higher marital satisfaction and reduced stress levels. Conversely, negative communication styles, such as demand-focused or avoidant patterns, are linked to lower well-being and increased conflict (Ghumman et al., 2025; Girma Shifaw, 2024). This statement implies that conflicts often escalate not only because of the gravity of the issues, but also due to the lack of a safe and equal space for dialogue. Past issues, suspicions, infidelity, or unresolved experiences can continue to be dredged up and turn into resentment. Communication then becomes dominated by insults, accusations, threats and physical violence. These findings demonstrate that family communication skills are a fundamental need that has not been sufficiently developed through family education, the church or social institutions.

The impact of family conflict on children was one of the most significant findings. Children who witness arguments and abuse first-hand are at risk of suffering lasting trauma, losing their sense of security, and developing a distorted understanding of marital relationships. Informants also noted the possibility of children leaving home, following their partner at a very young age, becoming defiant, or exhibiting problematic behaviour. Family conflict is strongly associated with increased emotional and behavioral problems in children, including anxiety, depression, conduct issues, and hyperactivity (Cummings et al., 2015; Streit et al., 2021; Trejos-Castillo et al., 2025). Such reactions can be understood as a way for children to escape from an unsafe home environment. Family conflict is not merely a matter between two adults, but a social phenomenon that affects children's psychological, moral and educational development, as well as their social relationships. The impact has the potential to be passed down across generations if violence is regarded as a normal way of resolving problems. These various findings are summarised in this table.

Table 1. Economics and Communication within the Family

Factors Leading to Conflict	Description of Economic Problems	Communication Patterns	Psychological Effects	Social and Behavioural Effects on Children	Solutions
Economic Pressure	Rising prices, insufficient income, and only one working member of the family.	Blame-shifting, a reduced ability to control one's emotions, and difficulty communicating rationally.	Lasting trauma, a loss of a sense of security, and the development of misconceptions about the relationship between husband and wife.	A child leaves home, marries at a young age, becomes headstrong, or displays problematic behaviour.	Better family financial planning and a transparent division of financial responsibilities between partners.
Unhealthy Communication	Not discussing the family's financial	A culture dominated by abuse, accusations, threats,	The potential for trauma and negative effects on children's	Problem behaviour and viewing violence as	Developing communication skills through family education,

	needs together	physical violence and the dredging up of past issues, with no safe space for dialogue	moral and psychological development.	a normal way of resolving problems in the future.	religious organisations or conflict resolution training.

The police's process for handling family conflicts involves filing an official report, summoning the parties involved, conducting interviews, mediation, and determining whether the case can be resolved through reconciliation or must proceed to criminal proceedings. The victim and the accused are interviewed separately so that their respective statements do not influence one another. In cases of physical violence, victims may be provided with a referral letter to undergo a medical examination or forensic assessment. This practice demonstrates that the police seek to balance their law enforcement role with their role in social reconciliation. Mediation is considered effective when the issue can still be discussed and both parties demonstrate a willingness to resolve the matter. However, the use of mediation must still take into account the level of violence, the victim's safety, power imbalances, and the risk of repeated violence. Mediation is most effective when disputing parties demonstrate a willingness to collaborate and resolve their differences constructively (Arif, 2016; McKenzie, 2015).

Findings on mediation show that open communication, empathy and the search for joint solutions are seen as capable of preserving family relationships without neglecting problem-solving. Nevertheless, reconciliation must not be interpreted merely as an apology or the victim's return to a harmful relationship. The effectiveness of mediation must be assessed in terms of behavioural change, the cessation of violence, the fulfilment of responsibilities, and the provision of protection for victims and children. This highlights the need for a support mechanism following mediation. Without ongoing monitoring and guidance, a peace agreement risks merely bringing the case to an administrative close, without resolving the root causes of the conflict. This finding is significant as it broadens the understanding that family cases must be addressed beyond the resolution of the case within the investigative process.

The main innovation of this section is the identification of a family conflict ecosystem involving three normative systems simultaneously, namely state law, church teachings, and customary or community mechanisms (Winsherly Tan et al., 2025). The police do not operate in isolation, as conflict resolution sometimes involves the church, indigenous groups, or associations based on ethnic background. However, the church's involvement is considered to be inconsistent and often only becomes apparent once a problem has escalated. This study shows that family conflicts in Jayapura Regency need to be understood through the interplay between the legality of marriage, economic pressures, communication, child protection, and the capacity of social institutions. Therefore, the most relevant approach is not a purely legal one, but rather an integrated prevention model that links the police, the church, families, schools and indigenous communities.

Factors Triggering Family Conflict in Jayapura Regency

Research data identifies several key factors that recur in family conflicts, namely alcohol consumption, financial pressure, infidelity, neglect of responsibilities, unclear division of roles, and communication characterised by verbal abuse. These factors do not operate in isolation. In many cases, economic pressure can trigger arguments, alcohol consumption reduces self-control, whilst suspicion of infidelity intensifies anger.

Economic pressure is strongly associated with emotional distress, marital conflict, and reduced marital satisfaction. Studies using the Family Stress Model show that economic strain negatively affects family relationships by increasing psychological stress and conflict between partners (Kavanaugh et al., 2018; Kwon et al., 2003; Robila & Krishnakumar, 2005, 2006).

Excessive drinking is associated with domestic violence financial difficulties, and family instability. Alcohol abuse imposes significant emotional and physical burdens on family members, often leading to heightened interpersonal conflict and violence (Bácskai & Gerevich, 2006; Nelson, 2015; Reinaldo & Pillon, 2008). Suspicion of infidelity intensifies psychological distress, depression, and physical health symptoms, often leading to marital conflict and aggression. This is particularly pronounced when infidelity is suspected or confirmed, as it undermines trust and emotional security (Weigel et al., 2024; Weigel & Shrout, 2021). Violence then emerges as the culmination of a build-up of unresolved issues. This finding is interesting because it challenges the notion of a single explanation for family conflict. Incidents of violence are better understood as the result of the interplay between structural pressures, personal habits, relationship patterns, and weak conflict-resolution mechanisms within the family.

Alcohol consumption plays a significant role as it can act as both a direct trigger and an intensifier of pre-existing conflicts. Informants described situations where a person, facing problems at home, would consume alcohol and subsequently assault their partner. In such scenarios, alcohol is not always the primary cause of the problem, but acts as a catalyst that accelerates the escalation of a verbal argument into physical violence. Alcohol consumption can also impair a person's ability to assess the situation, control their anger, and consider the consequences for their partner and children. Alcohol misuse is linked to difficulties in emotional regulation, including impulsivity and reduced ability to manage distress. These emotional challenges can exacerbate interpersonal conflicts, including anger and frustration, which may negatively affect relationships with partners and children (Castro-Ochoa & Moreta-Herrera, 2023; Dvorak et al., 2015; Iacopetti et al., 2021; Puigcerver Pérez et al., 2026). These findings are important for prevention programmes, as interventions addressing family conflict must not merely focus on harmony, but must also address alcohol consumption patterns, social peer pressure and access to rehabilitation or counselling services.

Economic factors manifest themselves through rising prices, an imbalance between income and needs, and a family's dependence on a single breadwinner. Inflation erodes purchasing power, creating relational tensions within families. This can lead to delayed marriages, reduced childbearing, and increased divorce rates across diverse cultural and economic contexts (Degner, 2019). This situation creates a psychological burden for both the working partner and family members who are financially dependent. Conflicts may arise when household needs are not met, expenditure is not discussed transparently, or one party is perceived as not contributing. Economic pressure can also exacerbate power imbalances, as the partner who controls the income feels entitled to dictate family decisions. A key finding is that economic problems are not only related to a lack of money, but also concern the division of roles, recognition of domestic work, financial transparency, and the family's ability to set shared priorities. Various research findings on the factors triggering family conflict in Jayapura Regency are presented in this figure:

Figure 1. Factors Triggering Family Conflict in Jayapura Regency



Unhealthy communication is characterised by the use of harsh language, mutual insults, belittling, threats, and not giving one's partner the chance to explain the situation . One partner makes excessive demands while the other withdraws, leading to frustration and emotional distance (Sarah Angulo, Matthew L. Brooks, 2011; Schrodt et al., 2014; Shrout et al., 2023). Frequent expressions of negative emotions, such as criticism, verbal disinhibition, and conflict substitution, are linked to lower relationship satisfaction and increased marital instability (Adamo et al., 2021; Markman et al., 2010; Sarah Angulo, Matthew L. Brooks, 2011). Informants distinguished between physical and psychological violence, suggesting that family conflicts do not always leave visible scars. Verbal abuse can undermine a victim's self-esteem, instil fear, and pave the way for physical violence. When such patterns recur, family members begin to regard insults as a normal part of domestic communication. This finding is significant as it broadens the focus of intervention from physical injuries to psychological harm. Family education should teach ways of expressing disagreement without undermining the dignity of others.

Infidelity and the involvement of a third party are factors that lead to jealousy, suspicion, a loss of trust and violence. Real or suspected infidelity, coupled with romantic jealousy, consistently correlates with IPV across diverse cultural contexts. Mechanisms include patriarchal norms, threatened masculinities, and poor emotional regulation (Cynkier, 2018; Pichon et al., 2020). However, the research identified legal complexities when couples are not legally married under state law. Women who have children from such a relationship may face multiple disadvantages when their partner enters into a relationship with someone else, yet lack a sufficiently strong legal basis to receive the same protection as couples in a registered marriage. Informants also distinguished between suspected casual intimacy and infidelity involving sexual relations. These findings demonstrate that the ambiguity of a relationship's status can increase women's vulnerability, particularly in terms of legal protection, the recognition of responsibility, and certainty regarding their children's future.

A lack of moral and spiritual understanding is also perceived as a factor linked to conflict. Divorce as a spiritual crisis and a failure to uphold the covenant established by God, based on an ethical reflection on Matthew 19:1–12. Factors such as infidelity, domestic violence, economic pressure and a lack of faith formation erode the values of love and fidelity; the church is called to fulfil its pastoral responsibility through guidance, counselling and restoration (Debi Silvia Dinata et al., 2025). Informants linked this to families' infrequent participation in religious worship and a lack of religious guidance. However, this finding should not be interpreted simplistically to mean that people who rarely worship will inevitably commit acts of violence, or that religious practice automatically guarantees harmony. The deeper implication is that families are losing spaces for reflection, guidance, the reinforcement of values, and a community capable of addressing destructive behaviour. A new moral understanding has a preventive effect only if it is manifested in self-control, respect for one's partner, fidelity, financial responsibility, and a rejection of violence. Spirituality must be measured through the practice of daily life, not merely through participation in rituals. Spirituality is increasingly recognized as a multidimensional construct that extends beyond religious rituals to include personal practices, existential well-being, and life attitudes. Instruments like the SpREUK-RP questionnaire measure not only ritualistic practices but also prosocial, existential, and humanistic dimensions of spirituality, emphasizing its broader scope (Büssing et al., 2017; Koenig, 2008).

The police investigation procedure provides further insights into the nature of the conflict. The parties need to be summoned and interviewed one by one, as the presence of other parties may intimidate the victim, influence their testimony, or provoke anger.

Informants have encountered angry parties who obstructed the questioning, necessitating their removal from the interview room. This situation demonstrates that the conflict does not cease when the family enters the police station; dynamics of domination, emotion and threats can still carry over into the legal process. Consequently, the ability of officers to create a safe interview environment is a vital part of victim protection. The legal process also requires sensitivity to trauma, power imbalances and the possibility that victims may retract their statements due to family pressure.

Understanding family conflict as a cumulative and ecological process. Violence does not stem from a single cause, but rather from a combination of economic pressures, alcohol, infidelity, aggressive communication, uncertainty regarding marital status, neglect of responsibilities, and a lack of moral and spiritual support. Legal and sociological research has identified the causal factors of domestic violence from social, economic, cultural and psychological perspectives. The findings highlight economic factors (financial instability) as the primary trigger, whilst cultural values that support male dominance increase the risk; prevention requires a multi-faceted approach (Surya & Rasji, 2024). Each factor can exacerbate the others to the point where families lose the ability to resolve issues peacefully. This analytical model suggests that prevention programmes must be designed to address multiple dimensions: strengthening family finances, marriage education, alcohol control, communication counselling, the protection of women and children, and spiritual guidance. A one-dimensional approach will not be sufficient to tackle conflicts whose causes are interlinked.

The Role of CRE in Fostering Family Harmony

The police view CRE as playing a strategic role in building harmonious families. However, it is felt that this role has not yet been fulfilled to its full potential and tends to be limited to routine church activities. Church visits are more often directed towards those suffering from physical illness, whilst family members experiencing mental distress, emotional trauma, marital crises or spiritual dryness do not always receive the attention they need. Churches often prioritize physical health concerns, with clergy and laity providing home visits and support to individuals with serious physical illnesses, such as cancer or heart disease. These visits help maintain emotional and spiritual well-being for those unable to attend services due to illness (Hays et al., 2011). Mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, PTSD, and marital crises, are prevalent among congregants but often overlooked by church communities. Families affected by mental illness report significant distress and unmet needs for support from their congregations (Kim, 2025; Rogers et al., 2012).

This finding is interesting as it broadens our understanding of service needs. Families in conflict can be understood as families experiencing ‘relational distress’ and in need of support, even though the problem is not physically visible. CREshould therefore serve as a means of restoring relationships, rather than merely teaching doctrine. Religious and spiritual guidance is seen as a means of reducing conflict when delivered through programmes that address the real-life issues faced by families. Home visits, pastoral counselling, couples’ counselling and support for families in difficulty can create opportunities to identify conflicts before they escalate into criminal offences. Religion and spirituality can be safely integrated into conflict resolution processes, provided practitioners are trained in these areas and maintain ethical self-awareness. Faith-based approaches can foster reconciliation and self-determination among parties in conflict (Goldberg & Blancke, 2011; Lichtenstein, 2005). The informant stated that criminal cases can arise on a daily basis, so preventative measures need to be taken before families reach the police station. A key finding is the shift in focus from reactive to preventative support.

It is not enough for the church to simply wait for families to come forward seeking help, as victims may feel ashamed, afraid, economically dependent, or unaware of where to seek assistance. Support services need to actively reach out to families whilst safeguarding their privacy and safety.

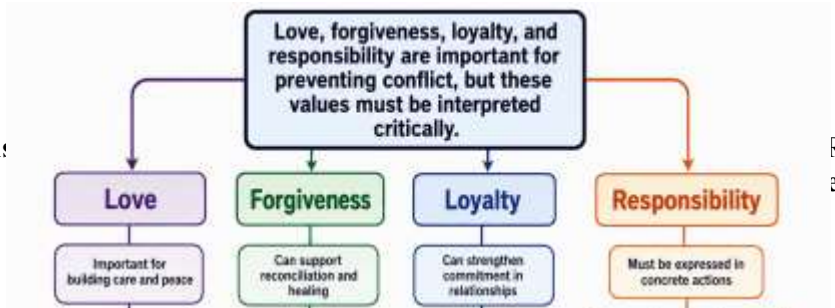
Parents are identified as the key players in shaping family values. Although the church and teachers may make home visits or provide guidance, the success of such efforts depends heavily on parents' willingness to accept support. Some parents are open to the church's involvement, whilst others reject it, believing that family matters are a private affair. These findings indicate a boundary between family authority and the intervention of religious institutions. Therefore, the CREapproach must avoid giving the impression of being judgemental or of taking over the family's role. The church must build trust, listen to the experiences of all parties, and offer assistance that respects the dignity of the family. Parental acceptance is a crucial gateway to behavioural change and child protection.

Parental acceptance is a critical factor in child protection and behavioral change. Studies show that parental acceptance is positively correlated with better child functioning and inversely related to behavioral problems (Aydın & Yamaç, 2014; Nabors et al., 2016; Ronald P. Rohner, Abdul Khaleque, 2005). The roles of the church, CREteachers and Sunday school teachers need to be viewed as a complementary educational network. Character development cannot be left solely to formal schooling. Children who rarely attend church services or do not attend Sunday school need to be given attention, visited and asked about the reasons for their absence. A child's absence may not simply be a matter of discipline, but could be a sign of conflict, neglect, abuse or instability within the family. This finding is significant as it positions religious education teachers and children's workers as potential agents of early detection. However, they need to be equipped with knowledge regarding the limits of their authority, reporting procedures, child protection and how to respond safely to disclosures of abuse.

The values of love, forgiveness, loyalty and responsibility are regarded as important in preventing conflict, but these values need to be interpreted critically. Love must not be interpreted as an obligation on the part of the victim to continue to accept violence. Forgiveness must not be used to absolve the perpetrator of responsibility. Loyalty is not a reason to maintain a relationship that threatens one's safety, whilst responsibility must include meeting economic needs, child-rearing, emotional control, and respect for one's partner. These findings open up space for theological reconstruction so that Christian values are not used unilaterally to burden victims. CRE needs to emphasise that love and justice go hand in hand, whilst recovery requires an end to violence and a change in behaviour.

Religious values have also been informally applied by the police in the resolution of cases. Informants advised a married son to continue to respect and visit his mother. In another case, a pastor who had been violent towards his wife was reprimanded by reference to the teachings he had long been imparting to his congregation. These practices demonstrate that conflict resolution in Jayapura Regency takes place within a religious social context. The language of faith can serve as a means of moral reflection because it is closely linked to the parties' identities. However, it must be used with care so as not to supplant legal processes, pressure victims into reconciliation, or reduce issues of violence to a mere lack of faith.

Figure 2. Concept Role of CRE in Fostering Family Harmony



A case of violence committed by a pastor is a critical finding because it demonstrates that a religious position does not automatically lead to harmonious family behaviour. A person may be well-versed in doctrine, preach, and hold spiritual authority, yet still commit violence against their partner. This finding distinguishes religious knowledge from character transformation. CRE that merely emphasises the ability to explain doctrine does not necessarily change patterns of relationships, the exercise of power, or emotional control. Therefore, church leaders also require accountability mechanisms, marriage counselling, pastoral supervision, and procedures for dealing with cases where church ministers become perpetrators. Accountability in churches is often conceptualized as reciprocal relationships between individuals, emphasizing moral authority and proactive cultivation of ethical practices (Hayes-Mota, 2023; Letswalo & Naidoo, 2024). Effective accountability requires clear boundaries and mechanisms, such as segregation of duties, monitoring financial systems, and separating spiritual beliefs from practical accountability measures (Riaz et al., 2026; Tetteh et al., 2021).

What is novel about these findings is the positioning of CRE as lifelong family education. Its role extends from pre-marital counselling, early marriage support, parenting education, character-building for children, conflict resolution, to family recovery following violence. This model differs from approaches that confine CRE to the classroom, Sunday school, or Sunday sermons. Education must engage with the concrete experiences of family life and link its teachings to communication, household finances, equality, child protection, the legality of marriage, and alcohol management. CRE is reimagined as a process of building relationships that are safe, fair, responsible, and oriented towards restoration.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that family conflict in Jayapura Regency is a multidimensional social phenomenon shaped by the interaction of legal, economic, interpersonal, behavioral, and spiritual factors. The findings indicate that family conflicts cannot be adequately understood as isolated cases of individual misconduct because they emerge from interconnected conditions, including physical violence, economic pressure, alcohol consumption, infidelity, unhealthy communication, unclear family responsibilities, and differences between religiously recognized and legally registered marriages. The study highlights that legal responses through police institutions remain important for protection and conflict management, but they require complementary preventive mechanisms that address the underlying causes of conflict and strengthen family resilience.

The reconstruction of CRE proposed in this study positions religious education as a lifelong family development process rather than merely doctrinal instruction. CRE has the potential to contribute to conflict prevention through premarital education, parenting support, communication development, moral formation, child protection, and relational restoration, while maintaining respect for legal accountability and victim safety. The novelty of this study lies in integrating the perspectives of police institutions, families, churches, and educational actors into an interconnected framework for addressing family conflict in Jayapura Regency. This approach suggests that sustainable family harmony requires collaboration among legal, educational, religious, and community systems to create relationships characterized by responsibility, justice, safety, and mutual respect.

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