

Relational Dialectics on Couples of Childbearing Age in Underprivileged Chinese Ethnicity Families in the Use of Contraception in Medan City

M. Akbar Hasyim Lbs¹ and Dewi Kurniawati²

¹National Population and Family Planning Agency, Indonesia, ²Department of Master of Communication Science, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: M. Akbar Hasyim Lbs (email: akhbarhasyim@gmail.com)

Abstract

Dialectics in the form of contradictions in relationships which can occur due to various things and problems in couple life, as well as in determining the decision to carry out a family planning (KB) program or in determining the use of contraception. This research aims to analyze how the condition of internal and external dialectics and the strategies for resolving internal and external dialectics on couples of childbearing ages in underprivileged families of Chinese ethnicity in Medan City. The research approach uses a combined approach with a mixed methods model embedded design in data collection techniques and data analysis techniques. Therefore, the data produced is quantitative data to answer the internal and external dialectical condition, and qualitative data to answer strategies for resolving internal and external dialectics. Researcher prioritize quantitative data obtained from 100 respondents, while qualitative data collected through focus group discussion with 6 resource persons as informants are meant to complement the data and elaborate the analysis results more fully. The results of the study based on quantitative data with descriptive statistical analysis showed the condition of internal dialectic variables obtained an average value of 4.10 and the external dialectic variables obtained an average value of 3.49 on a 5-point Likert Scale. Based on the assessment criteria using the grand mean analysis, both are in a relatively stable condition. However, this value means that the respondents in this study tend to be more able to cope with the internal dialectics which occur than the external dialectics of contraceptive use. Meanwhile, the dialectic resolution strategy used by respondents in resolving internal dialectics tends to use a balance strategy and in resolving external dialectics using an integration strategy.

Keywords: relational dialectics; couples of childbearing age; Chinese contraception

Introduction

In a husband-and-wife relationship, a disagreement is a common thing in determining the decision to be made. Szczesna & Basista (2019: 406) explains that conflict in marriage occurs naturally and is a feature of a close relationship between two people who have different views from

time to time and thus express differences of opinion or mutual expectations. Dialectics in the form of contradictions in relationships which can occur due to various things and problems in the life of a couple, as well as in determining the decision to run a family planning (*Keluarga Berencana*) program or in determining the use of contraceptives.

Lubis & Wijaya (2017: 54) reveals that the Government of Indonesia through the National Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN) initiated a family planning program to control the fertility or birth rate of Indonesian citizens. This program is realized by regulating births using contraceptives, such as pills, condoms, injections, contraceptive devices (IUDs), implants, women's medical operations (tubectomy), and men's medical operations (vasectomy).

Husband and wife who are referred to as couples of childbearing age are potential to face problems in arranging the birth of children if they cannot access the family planning program, especially for Chinese ethnic couples of childbearing age in the city of Medan. Lubis (2012: 16) reveals that Chinese people in the city of Medan are still exclusive, such as in choosing a place to live, shopping for daily needs, or choosing a school for their children. This does not rule out the problem of running a family planning program to regulate childbirth. According to Burhan & Sani (2014: 30), the people of the city of Medan in general have negative prejudice against ethnic Chinese because somehow they become threats for the natives, either in the values, culture, morality or threats in the economic, political, and welfare. So, it becomes natural if the natives treat the Chinese ethnic around them differently.

The Chinese culture, which embraces patrilinealism, greatly influences the perception of the Chinese community to have more children. According to Tan (in Aris, et.al., 2019: 30) people of Chinese ethnic descent do not have strong aspirations regarding the number of children. However, there is a strong aspiration to have at least one son due to the strong patrilineal line.

The researcher believes that the problem becomes more complex when the couple of childbearing age from the Chinese ethnic is included in the category of underprivileged families. There are five stages of family

welfare categories based on indicators created by BKKBN: underprivileged families, prosperous families I, prosperous families II, prosperous families III, and prosperous families III-plus (Ninditama, 2021 :38) According to Sunarti (Wardani, 2014), an underprivileged family is a family whose can only meet minimal basic needs, specifically food, clothing, shelter, health, and religious instruction but has not been able to fulfill one or more of the indicators of a prosperous family stage I. Meanwhile, stage I prosperous families are families whose have met minimum basic needs, but have not been able to fulfill their social and psychological needs, such as worship, eating animal protein, clothing, having space for family interaction, having an income, being able to read and write in Latin and having family planning. The following are the indicators for a prosperous family in stage I (Ninditama, 2021: 38).

- a. In general, family members eat two or more times a day
- b. Family members wear different clothes at home, work, school, or when traveling
- c. The house one lives in has good walls, roof and floor
- d. If their child is sick, they will bring them to the health facility, or a couple of childbearing age wants to have family planning
- e. Go to a contraceptive service facility if couples of childbearing ages want to use birth control
- f. All children attend school, especially children aged 7-15 years in the family

Apart from the exclusive culture and behavior of Chinese people, it is also difficult to access information on free family planning services, which resulted in the reluctance to participate in these activities. Based on the results of the 2021 family data collection conducted by BKKBN (2022), Medan City is one of the areas in the lowest category of family planning prevalence rates. This is interesting to study further considering

that ethnic Chinese are one of the majority ethnicities in Medan city.

Apart from private dialectics in husband-and-wife relations, there is also a public dialectic which refers to the tension between private relations and public life. This means that dialectics does not only occur internally in husband-and-wife relations, but can also be found outside these private relationships, or it is also called external dialectics. Rawlins (in West & Turner, 2018: 195) calls these contextual dialectics, which means that they derive from the place of the relationship in the culture. The public and private dialectic refers to the tension between the two domains, a private relationship, and public life.

Communication is central to organizing and negotiating contradictions in relationships. With the perspective of relational dialectics theory, contradictions are created on the basis of communicative actions of a person, and through that communication we can manage existing relationships. Dialectical tensions which lead to a conflict in a relationship are certain to occur. Not only in the life between two individuals but also in the broader context of life. Basically, every human being is different and on the basis of these differences, one must understand and accept the differences existing. By understanding these differences, conflicts in life, such as contradictions or differences in desires, misunderstandings, likes, and dislikes can be resolved properly and can even bring existing relationships closer.

To be able to parse more clearly about dialectics in a relationship, Baxter & Montgomery came up with the theory of relational dialectics. According to Baxter (in Griffin, 2012: 154-160), every personal relationship will face the same tensions. From a relational dialectical perspective, relationships bond in a system of interdependence with others and mutual independence from others. So, dialectical tension is a natural product or inevitable outcome of our conversations resulting from a motive force which guides

what we say in them. Despite the fact that we tend to think of conflict as destructive to our relationships. Baxter and Montgomery believe that these contradictions can be constructive. There are 3 major contradictions that arise in this theory.

1. Integration - Separation: The contradiction between connection and autonomy is a major tension in all relationships. If one party is too strong in the tug-of-war between "me" and "us", then the relationship is lost. No relationship works unless the parties sacrifice some individual autonomy.
2. Stability - Change: In a relationship we have a desire for a stable relationship, creating a sense of security, but also have a desire to try or get new things that show intimacy in the relationship. Like a touch of spontaneity, the occasional surprise is needed for fun. Without the spice of variety in the relationship, the relationship becomes boring and will die emotionally.
3. Expression - Nonexpression: As the conclusion of social penetration theory explains, disclosure and privacy occur in cycles, or wave-like, over time. In this theory, Baxter and Montgomery agree that relationships are not on a straight path to intimacy. There are pressures for openness and closedness or increase and decrease.

Baxter in his research entitled *Dialectical Contradictions in Relationship Development* which examined 106 lovers found that relationship satisfaction was not significantly correlated with the existence of contradictions but correlated with how or how these contradictions were managed. Therefore, Baxter & Montgomery (in Cools, 2011: 53-55) identify eight strategies in responding to dialectics, to be specific by disorientation, cyclic alternation, segmentation, compromise (balance), integration, reframing, reaffirmation, and denial.

Research related to relational dialectics in the past is dominated by qualitative interpretive studies which focus their studies on dialectics textually. Baxter & Scharp (2015: 4) acknowledges that so far, this research tradition has been dominated by the use of interviews and narratives. They further recommend that researcher from an interpretive qualitative perspective need to adopt a wider range of data collection and analysis methods in the hope of benefiting from a more concerted effort to develop more dialectic theories.

Based on the background of these problems, the researcher is interested in seeing and studying further how internal and external dialectics are and how to resolve the dialectical tension which occurs in couples of childbearing underprivileged Chinese ethnic families in Medan City in the use of contraceptives using a quantitative approach in order to obtain a comprehensive picture and extensive knowledge of the current situation.

Methods

This research uses a combined approach. Research with a combined approach which is also referred to as multimethodology is a research approach which combines methodology and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. This approach tends to rely on a pragmatic paradigm (Muslim, 2018: 81). Therefore, the research method used in this study is a mixed method. The term mixed methods in research basically does not mix methods but uses various methods from the two approaches to answer each question which arises from the same phenomenon. One particular question requires a particular method to answer it, while the final results will be integrated to complement each other in a research report (Senjaya, 2018: 115).

In this study, the mixed methods model used is the embedded design model, which combines data collection techniques and

data analysis techniques. Therefore, the data to be generated are in the form of quantitative data and qualitative data. Researcher prioritized the quantitative data collected from questionnaires by respondents, while qualitative data was collected through focus group discussion (FGD) with several informants who were also part of the research respondents. The qualitative data is used to ensure validity and complement the quantitative data, as well as to elaborate on the results of the analysis more fully.

Quantitative data collection was carried out by distributing questionnaires to 100 respondents, including the predetermined criteria. In this study, because the population size is not known with certainty, the sample size was calculated using the Cochran formula (Sugiyono, 2019: 136) as follows.

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq}{e^2} \quad (1)$$

Additional information:

n : Number of samples required

Z : The level of confidence required in the sample

p : True Chance 50%

q : Wrong Chance 50 %

e : Margin of Error

The confidence level used is 95% of the Z value with a value of 1.96 and a margin of error level of 10% = 0.1. So, the total sample size in this study is as follows.

$$n = \frac{(1,96)^2 (0,5)(0,5)}{(0,1)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{(3,8416) (0,25)}{(0,01)}$$

$$n = \frac{(0,9604)}{(0,01)}$$

$$n = 96,04 \text{ (Fulfilled = 97 person)}$$

Based on these calculations, the minimum sample size which can be used is 97 respondents or in this study rounded up to 100 respondents. Meanwhile, qualitative

data collection was carried out using focus group discussions (FGD) with 6 participants consisting of 3 men and 3 women who were considered able to provide information addition. Referring to the embedded design model in this study, the research flow uses the convergent design proposed by Creswell (2020: 7). Creswell explains that a convergent design begins with collecting quantitative data and qualitative data, then analyzing the data sets, then combining the results of the analysis with the aim of validating one data set with another.

In this research, the data collection technique was carried out by distributing questionnaires to obtain primary data. After the primary data was received, the researcher continued to collect qualitative data through FGD interviews with several informants to enrich the findings. Even though the informants involved in the FGD were only a small portion when compared to the entire research sample, it was intended to develop or enrich the results of this study. Both types of data were then analyzed descriptively

respectively and continued with discussion and conclusion. Descriptive analysis in this study is intended as a research procedure that seeks to produce descriptive explanations of the findings occurring in research based on data in the form of numbers which have meaning or findings through FGD. Therefore, this study will systematically describe the facts and conditions of the characteristics of a particular area of interest factually.

Quantitative data analysis is carried out by descriptive statistics. Using a 5-point Likert Scale, the respondent's answer score obtained is then compiled into assessment criteria using grand mean analysis for each indicator. According to Everitt (Nahar, et.al., 2022) assessment criteria using grand mean analysis are used to determine the condition of each variable by dividing it into several specified categories. The categories of respondents' answers in this study are divided into 5 categories, specifically very low, low, medium, high, and very high with the following division: $\text{Scale Range} = (5-1) / 5 = 0.80$. Each category has a scale range of 0.80.

Table 1. Respondent's Answer Assessment Category

Score	Category
1.00 – 1.80	Very low or indicates a very unstable variable condition
1.81 – 2.60	Low or indicates an unstable condition of the variable
2.61 – 3.40	Medium or indicates a moderately stable condition of the variable
3.41 – 4.20	High or indicating a stable condition of the variable
4.21 – 5.00	Very high or indicating a very stable variable condition

Source: Author's processed results

Result and Discussion

Internal Dialectics of Couples of Childbearing Age in Underprivileged Chinese Ethnicity Families

Based on the current findings, only 18 percent or 18 couples of childbearing age in poor ethnic Chinese families admit to using contraception, while 82 others admit

not to use contraception. From the 18 respondents who used contraception, 9 people or 50% of them stated the reason for using contraception was because they wanted to postpone children and the other 50% stated the reason for not wanting more children. The use of contraceptives is part of a family planning program which aims to regulate birth spacing, and reduce maternal and infant mortality due to pregnancy at too

young or too old in age. This condition of very low use of contraceptives shows that the reproductive health messages initiated or related to family planning were not conveyed well to those in underprivileged ethnic Chinese families.

From the 82 respondents who admitted that they did not use contraception, researcher found various reasons. The respondents explained the reasons they were reluctant to use contraception, apart from the reason "wanting children soon" which was chosen by 29 respondents or 35.36 percent, other very dominant reasons were "not receiving information about services" and "lack of partner support" which respectively 24.39 percent and 23.17 percent. The high percentage for reasons of "not receiving service information" and "lack of partner support" stated by respondents is possible due to the minimal direct intervention in health promotion or family planning health services which is usually carried out by a family planning instructor to meet the community in order to increase public awareness about reproductive health issues. Apart from that, 7 people out of 82 respondents who did not use contraception said they were "pregnant" and 7 other people said they had "no money" as the main reasons for not using contraception. Referring to the results of research conducted by Handayani (in Lontaan, et.al., 2014: 30), income also has a close relation with the respondents' choice of contraception. Respondents with better economic status will choose to use long-term protection which is relatively expensive. The level of socio-economic status of a couple will be related to the ability to buy contraceptives to be used. For example, families who are sufficient will be more able to participate in the family planning program than families who cannot afford it because for

families who are less well-off, family planning is not a basic necessity. The results of the research conducted by Handayani are in line with the findings in this research, that out of 18 people who used contraception, only 8 people or 44.40 percent of them chose to use long-term contraception, that is tubectomy (Women's Medical Operation) for 7 people and Implant for 1 person. Researcher who see this opportunity point out that there is a contextual contradiction, especially in the context of underprivileged families, that is between their decision to fulfill their basic needs (clothing, food, house) and fulfill their desire to use contraception.

Contradiction is something which is absolute to occur in the relationship between husband and wife. This situation is unavoidable for married couples who have been in a relationship since the early stages of marriage to the mature age of marriage. There are three major contradictions which occur in internal dialectics, to be specific connection-autonomy, certainty-uncertainty and openness-closedness. According to Griffin (2012: 154-160), contradiction is a core concept of relational dialectics. Contradiction is a dynamic interaction between united oppositions.

In the internal dialectic variable, there are three dimensions, specifically the intimacy dimension (connection-autonomy), the certainty dimension (certainty-uncertainty), and the openness dimension (openness-closedness). Each dimension has its own measurement indicators and the intimacy dimension has three indicators, that is passion, commitment, and closeness. The certainty dimension uses two indicators, specifically dependence, and trust in the relationship and the openness dimension uses indicators of breadth and depth of conversation.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Internal Dialectic Variables

Dimension	Indicator	Mean	Category
Intimacy	Passion	3.99	High
	Commitment	4.15	High
	Closeness	4.03	High
Certainty	Dependence	4.27	High
	Trust	4.02	High
Openness	Breadth of Conversation	4.18	High
	Depth of Conversation	4.09	High
Total		4.10	High

Source: Primary Data, 2023

Baxter (in Putri, et.al., 2021: 227) in his theory explains that autonomy-connection is the most central contradiction compared to the other two contradictions in interpersonal or internal relationships. Relationships will not be formed unless the parties involved give up their autonomy. However, excessive connection will actually damage the relationship because it can eliminate the individual entity itself. Conversely, a situation which is too inclined to autonomy will damage individual identity because connections with others are important in forming identity and maintaining relationships. This means that a balance is needed in dealing with the autonomy-connection contradiction which occurs in a relationship.

The autonomy-connection contradiction in this study is represented in the intimacy dimension which is measured by three indicators, specifically passion, commitment, and closeness. The three indicators showed relatively high or good scores, getting an average score of 3.99; 4.15, and 4.03 respectively. Based on this data, researcher see the respondents were able to overcome the internal dialectics in the autonomy-connection contradiction which occurred, especially regarding the use of contraceptives. Each statement associated

with the intimacy of the respondents showed a relatively high value.

Among the three indicators, the commitment indicator obtained the highest average score of 4.15. This shows that commitment is something which is best maintained and maintained in a relationship despite the dialectics which can sway household harmony. According to Zhafirah (2020: 102), commitment is the most basic thing in building a household. Commitment must be held tightly by husband and wife so that the relationship is considered successful, problems will be resolved if the couple is concerned with the sustainability of the relationship and they remember the main goal from the beginning of the relationship. Couples who are oriented towards protecting their relationship will always be able to survive. A commitment is implemented with hard work and putting aside personal ego. Meanwhile, the passion indicator obtained a lower average value than the others. This means that passion in a domestic relationship is more difficult to maintain or more dynamic than commitment or closeness when contradictions occur.

In the second contradiction, that is certainty-uncertainty, which is represented in the certainty dimension, the results are

also relatively high. The average value of the two indicators in the certainty dimension shows 4.27 for the dependence indicator and 4.02 for the trust indicator. Both indicators actually indicate that when dialectics related to contraceptive use occur in relationships, dependence and trust in partners are still relatively high. However, the distance between the scores of the two indicators is quite far, meaning that dependence experiences stronger stability than trust. Asmarina & Lestari (2017: 240) argue that interpersonal relationships will produce an attitude of interdependence on each other. The form of interpersonal relationship which has the strongest level of dependence is the husband-and-wife relationship in marital life.

The third contradiction is openness-closedness which is represented in the openness dimension. Openness itself can actually be a barometer and measure of quality in interpersonal relationships as revealed by Zhafirah (2020: 100). Through openness which is strengthened by mutual trust and supportive attitudes, there will be an urge to understand and appreciate each other and most importantly develop mutual quality in interpersonal relationships.

The results obtained from statistical data on the openness dimension also show a relatively high average number. As for each indicator, the breadth of conversation has an average score of 4.18, and the depth of conversation with a score of 4.09. When compared between the two, the depth of conversation has a greater effect on the dialectic which occurs than the breadth of conversation.

Based on the results of descriptive statistical analysis on the average value of the internal dialectic variable, it shows an

average score of 4.10. This figure refers to the high category, meaning that even though they are experiencing an internal dialectic situation related to the use of contraceptives, the respondents show a relatively stable condition or in other words when there is a conflict in determining the use of contraceptives, the respondents are able to cope with the dialectic that occurs properly.

External Dialectics of Couples of Childbearing Age in Underprivileged Chinese Ethnicity Families

The external dialectical condition in question is a condition of dialectical tension faced by couples of childbearing ages in poor Chinese ethnic families and their social environment. In this case, it is related to the tension in the decision to use contraceptives. This tension can be illustrated by three external contradictions in the theory of relational dialectics, specifically the contradictions of inclusion-seclusion, conventionality-uniqueness, and revelation-concealment. These three contradictions occur between the couple and the public or their social environment.

In this variable, there are also three dimensions which will be measured. First, the dimension of friendliness (inclusion-seclusion) which is choosing to participate or choosing to set boundaries with others as measured by the social distance indicator. The second dimension is social inclusion (uniqueness-conventionality) which will be measured by two indicators, that is social participation and social engagement. The third dimension is revelation-concealment which will be measured by the social trust indicator.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of External Dialectic Variables

Dimension	Indicator	Mean	Category
Friendliness	Social Distance	3.60	High
Social inclusion	Social Participation	3.47	High
	Social Engagement	3.54	High
Disclosure	Social Trust	3.38	Medium
Total		3.49	High

Source: Primary Data, 2023

The first contradiction is inclusion-seclusion which is an external form of integration-separation. This contradiction relates to a couple's desire to make their relationship less public or keep it more private. For example, introducing the couple to family, friends, and neighbors living near the house as a form of inclusion or trying to avoid outside pressure or judgment by others as a form of seclusion (Lusk, 2008: 10). This contradiction is represented by the dimension of friendliness. To measure the dimension of friendliness, one indicator is used, that is the social distance indicator which relates to closeness to the social environment. Based on the findings of the social distance indicator, the average score of the social distance indicator in couples when experiencing external dialectics related to contraceptive use is 3.60. The value of 3.60 indicates that the respondents are in a relatively high category, which means that when there is external dialectic, couples of childbearing age can overcome the conditions which occur on social distance, but not optimally.

The conditions which result in social distance not being able to be overcome optimally are very likely due to the majority of respondents being at a certain marriage age. As do Williams, et.al. (2006) divides the marriage cycle into four phases, specifically the initial phase of marriage, the phase of raising children, middle age phase, and

aging phase, so this study will also adopt the four categories of marriage age. Most respondents admitted that they were in 1-10 years of marriage, that is 60 percent or 60 respondents. Meanwhile, there were 37 people who already married for 10-20 years, while only 2 people said they were married for 20-30 years and 1 person had been married for more than 30 years. The age at marriage factor is very likely to make a difference to the external dialectics which occur in a family. In a family, communication is an important aspect of interaction. Each family thinks in its own way, which makes the family a complex organization. The external tensions and dialectics in newly married families will be different from the external dialectics which occur in families with a more mature marriage age. External dialectics will always occur in every married couple and this is because the emotional needs of the couple will not be the same as their social environment.

In the second dimension, the social inclusion dimension (uniqueness-conventionality) is measured by indicators of social participation and social engagement. Social participation means being active in the social environment. Based on the findings of the social participation indicator, an average of 3.47 was obtained, while social engagement obtained an average value of 3.54. This figure also shows a relatively high category and can be interpreted in the

same way as the previous dimension, that respondents are able to cope well with the condition of external dialectics, which has an impact on their social participation and social engagement which are in the high category, but not yet maximized. Cultural issues also tend to influence the social inclusion dimension. The individualist-collectivist contradiction can clarify the situation when an individual or couple wants to exercise personal esteem, but on the other hand, must also act as social beings who act according to social norms. This is also found in the marital relationships of couples of childbearing ages in underprivileged ethnic Chinese families in Medan City. Ethnic Chinese couples of childbearing ages in Medan City do not escape the negative stigma in the community. The stigma of society also causes the emergence of dialectics in the external order, especially in the dimension of social inclusion.

The third dimension in the external dialectic is the revelation-concealment dimension. This dimension is measured by one indicator, that is the social trust indicator. Social trust means the degree of trusting other people and their social environment. Based on the results presented in the research results, there is an average value of the social trust indicator of 3.38. This means that when experiencing external dialectics, the respondents' social trust conditions are still fairly moderate or quite stable. Compared to the previous two indicators, the social trust indicator experiences a more unstable situation, this can occur because the couples of childbearing Chinese ethnic experience a loss of social trust due to the negative stigma condition which is still attached to them.

Based on the results of descriptive statistical analysis on the average value of the external dialectic variable, the average score which appears is 3.49. This average value refers to the high category, meaning that when experiencing an external dialectic situation related to the use of contraceptives

the respondents showed a stable condition or in other words when there was a conflict in determining the use of contraceptives, the respondents were able to cope with the dialectics which occurred well.

Strategies for Resolving the Internal Dialectic of Couples of Childbearing Age in Underprivileged Chinese Ethnicity Families

As a step to address the dialectic occurred, a dialectic resolution strategy is needed. Dialectical resolution strategies are included in the praxis element in relational dialectical theory. This element explains that humans can act as decision-makers. Individuals are considered active and conscious in making these decisions. More specifically, the concept of praxis based on Hegel's view (in Seo & Creed, 2002: 230) consists of three aspects, as specified below.

1. Self-awareness: which is a person's critical understanding of their social conditions. It appears when one needs and interests are not met.
2. Mobilization of actors: inspired by a new understanding of their condition and social conditions
3. Multilateral action or collective action: action to reconstruct oneself and the existing social order.

In relation to aspects of self-awareness in the praxis element in Chinese ethnic groups in Medan City itself, it is still found that there are values in community groups which state that men or husbands must have more dominance than wives. Based on the results of FGD conducted in this study, it can be said that the normative view of Chinese ethnic community groups towards decision-making in the household still emphasizes the role of men as a family. In Chinese ethnic culture, according to Meij (2009: 78), the role of men in Chinese families is more dominant, where the father will control all family members, family property, and a father as a

man who will make all decisions regarding the family. Meanwhile, the position of women in Chinese families is generally not too valuable compared to men. The position and role of men are very privileged and glorified because they act as leaders, breadwinners, and bearers of the honor of the family name in society.

Previous research conducted by Lusk (2008: 2) illustrates that tension exists in relationships, then gender and relationship status are the variables that most strongly influence attitudes towards dialectical tension.

This previous research also reinforces the assumption that gender differences will also influence decision-making strategies in the dialectical tension which occurs. This is evident even though the male informants did not explicitly state that wives must fully follow their husbands, but their statements show the dominance that they are the leaders in the household. As said by informant 5 (male/30 years old) and informant 6 (male/29 years old) that they served as protectors and acted as family leaders.

Table 4. Internal Dialectic Resolution Strategy

No.	Internal Dialectic Resolution Strategy	Amount	Percentage
1	Compromise to find the best way (balance)	39	39
2	Concede with your partner (disorientation)	21	21
3	Finding and Unifying Common Ground (reframing)	13	13
4	Accepting and then concluding your own decision according to principles (integration)	12	12
5	Rejecting the Spouse's Opinion (denial)	6	6
6	Following his/her wishes first and then asking him/her to follow mine (cyclic alternation)	4	4
7	Not caring and believing the debate will never end (reaffirmation)	4	4
8	Looking for other arguments that put the other person in a bad light (segmentation)	1	1
Total Amount		100	100

Source: Primary Data, 2023

The interesting thing about the findings of this research is that even though the self-awareness aspect of the informants leads to normative values that emphasize the role of men who dominate the household, the strategy with the statement "Compromise to find the best way with your partner" was chosen by 39 people or 39 percent of the total respondents, and this strategy was the choice most frequently chosen by respondents. Actually, in each problem, a person can apply different strategies in overcoming dialectical tensions in the household. As it happens

in the case of the couples of childbearing ages of ethnic Chinese underprivileged families who were also respondents of the study chose to compromise to find the best way as the best strategy to resolve internal dialectical tensions related to the use of contraceptives. The results of the FGDs on the collective action aspect in this study also reinforce the findings related to the internal dialectical resolution strategy of couples of childbearing ages from underprivileged Chinese families in Medan City. This is reflected in the informants' answers during

the FGDs, which stated that they chose to discuss or compromise in resolving domestic contradictions as expressed by informant 1 (female/44 years old), informant 2 (female/36 years old), informant 3 (female/28 years old), informant 5 (male/30 years old) and informant 6 (male/29 years old). This means that there has been a shift in normative values in ethnic Chinese husband-and-wife relationships which emphasize the role of men who dominate in the household, and the role of women is also considered important so that compromise to find the best way as the best strategy to resolve internal dialectical tensions in ethnic Chinese couples. This is reinforced by previous research conducted by Sulaeman & Homzah (2013) on the values of the status and role of women in the family structure found a bargaining process in the dialectical process shows that there has been a shift in values toward the position of women who work in the household.

The female informants seem to prioritize compromise and conversation, as reflected in the answers to the FGD results regarding the mobilization of actors and the collective actions of female informants who prioritize dialogue or compromise strategies to find the best way as strategy for resolving internal dialectics. In a previous study conducted by Szczęśna & Przybyła-Basista (2019: 415), they also found that the only constructive conflict resolution strategy for a wife is the information support dialog she receives from her partner. Women need emotional support and supportive messages from husbands are essential in building a right marriage.

The dialectic resolution strategy may also be related to the family communication orientation applied in the husband-and-wife relationship. Communication which occurs in a family can be explained by the family communication pattern theory (FCPT) which is one of the theories trying to describe the types of orientations in family communication. Currently, this theory

has been redeveloped by Fitzpatrick & David Ritchie in 1990 into a revised family communication pattern theory (RFCPT) by dividing two types of family communication types into conversation orientation and conformity orientation. Fitzpatrick & Ritchie (in Koerner & Schrodt, 2014: 4) formulated that family communication with a discussion orientation is a communication pattern between family members who are involved in extensive interactions and topics of conversation in a family. In this type, each family member has the right and freedom to interact with each other without any strict boundaries. Everyone can exchange ideas, experiences, and feelings with each other. All decisions are joint decisions and are not dominated by one party alone. Meanwhile, family communication with a conformity orientation has characteristics which tend to agree with one family member without going through an open discussion process first.

In the case of resolving the internal dialectic of childbearing age couples in underprivileged ethnic Chinese families, they tend to use discussion-oriented family communication. This is reflected in the choice of the majority of respondents who prioritize compromising to find the best way with their spouses as a strategy for resolving internal dialectics. The strategy is identical to the type of discussion-oriented family communication in RCFPT theory.

Strategies for Resolving the External Dialectic of Couples of Childbearing Age in Underprivileged Chinese Ethnicity Families

According to Christian (2017: 12), Chinese ethnic in Indonesia are divided into several sub-groups based on different dialects, domicile areas, ancestral origins or clans. These variations will reflect the culture, customs, characteristics, and noble values of each sub-group. Subanindyo (in Lubis, 2012: 16) revealed that in Medan City, there

is no ethnic and cultural dominance. Even native cultures such as Malay and Karo tend to fade. Each ethnic group tends to view its own cultural group norms and values as absolute values and are often used to measure and act on the behavior of others. Although the Chinese ethnic community is also not dominant in Medan City, they are able to form a significant cultural influence on the people of Medan City. It is just that open interaction between ethnic Chinese and other ethnicities is still difficult until now. Yusa, et.al. (2021: 5) describe when intercultural communication takes place, there will be differences in frames of reference, these differences make communication more complicated and complex, so it will be difficult to do. The obstacles are mainly because the people involved have not realized the different aspects of culture.

The terms which appear in the general public against Chinese ethnic groups often corner the Chinese community, such as exclusive, arrogant, stingy and so on. Ethnic Chinese are also considered to have several tendencies, such as they are more concerned with achievement motives, and more concerned with personal needs than building social friendships with other groups outside their ethnicity. With this stigma against minority groups, it is quite difficult for communicating with cultural differences. Even if language barriers are not a problem, sometimes people still fail to understand

each other. The negative impact arising from this is the widening of the gap or social distance between ethnicities. Ethnic Chinese become more closed because they are underestimated and not accepted as part of society (Saputra & Muhiroh, 2020: 149). Yusa, et.al., (2021: 5) describe when intercultural communication takes place, there will be differences in frames of reference, these differences make the communication which takes place more complicated and complex, so it will be more difficult to achieve common ground. The obstacles are mainly because the people involved have not realized the different aspects of culture.

In relation to the mobilization aspect of actors in external dialectical praxis, life in the household, whether from the male side or from the female side, will certainly be affected by the social conditions of society. So that the decisions made in the household will cause contradictions and tensions felt by each party. This also applies to the respondents of ethnic Chinese couples of childbearing ages. Tension can also occur as a result of constructing things which come from outside the relationship. The existence of various cultural and ethnic differences also creates diverse cultural characteristics in each family. This happens because cultural differences in general give birth to different family cultures in aspects of life. Each family has value systems adopted from the general culture to address any problems experienced.

Table 5. External Dialectic Resolution Strategy

No.	External Dialectic Resolution Strategy	Amount	Percentage
1	Accepting and then concluding your own decision according to the principle (integration)	31	31
2	Compromise to Find the Best Way (balance)	20	20
3	Finding and Unifying Common Ground (reframing)	14	14
4	Rejecting Other People’s Opinions (denial)	13	13
5	Not Caring and Believing the Debate Will Never Finish (reaffirmation)	11	11
6	Give in to Others (disorientation)	6	6
7	Looking for other debates that demonize others (segmentation)	3	3
8	Following his wishes first and then asking him to follow my wishes (cyclic alternation)	2	2
Total Amount		100	100

Source: Primary Data, 2023

The external dialectic settlement strategy is a praxis in addressing conflicts which occur with the social environment. Based on the results of the research analysis, couples of childbearing ages from underprivileged ethnic Chinese families in Medan City tend to carry out integration strategies by “Accepting and then concluding themselves according to principles”. This strategy was chosen by 31% of respondents in resolving the external dialectics occurred regarding the use of contraceptives. This strategy is closely related to the values of honor upheld in the personality of ethnic Chinese people. Ning (in Muas, 2020: 219) explains that the values of honor are listed in the concept of *mianzi* (face). The concept of *mianzi* includes the principle of *gu mianzi* (keeping the face), as well as *baoquan mianzi* or saving face is a primary imperative for all humans as part of society. The strategy of maintaining honor is also reinforced by the results of FGDs on the aspect of collective action with informant 1 (female/44 years old) who stated that if honor is disturbed, it is natural to be angry, but if the input given is good, then they will be happily accepting it. As she said “What

is clear is that if our honor is disturbed, we are understandably angry, but if something is good, we are happy to accept it”.

Compromising to find the best way is also a strategy option which is quite widely chosen in resolving external dialectics. There are 20 respondents prioritized this balance strategy as a solution to the dialectic which occurred. This may also be due to the very multicultural social conditions in the city of Medan so that they are inspired by the existing social conditions then take the initiative to apply a balanced strategy or consider the contradictions which occur because they see both dialectical patterns as having the same legitimacy. So that in the end compromise is considered as a solution to the contradictions which occur in the external order. This result is also very likely related to the values adopted by the respondents in Chinese ethnic culture. Hidayati (2016: 5) said that one of the core values in Confucian teaching is the value of *zhongyong* which can be interpreted as a middle way, humans are required to always act according to the path of balance. This means that this concept emphasizes balance in every situation.

In dialectical settlements, ethnic Chinese respondents tend to seek compromises which integrate different views or interests. They try to find a point of understanding and a fair solution for all parties involved.

Conclusions

Based on the facts of the findings and discussions which have been carried out previously, several conclusions can be detailed from this study.

1. The condition of internal dialectics on childbearing age couples Chinese ethnic on the use of contraceptives in Medan City is known to be well managed or in a stable condition. The average value of the internal dialectic variable shows a score of 4.10. This figure refers to the high category, meaning that even though they are experiencing internal dialectic situations related to the use of contraceptives, the respondents show a relatively stable condition or in other words when there is a conflict in determining the use of contraceptives, the respondents are able to overcome the dialectic condition which occur well.
2. The condition of external dialectics childbearing age couples of Chinese ethnic on contraceptive use in Medan City is known to be moderately manageable or in a less stable condition. The mean value of the external dialectic variable shows a result of 3.49. The average value refers to the high category, meaning that when experiencing external dialectical situations related to the use of contraceptives, respondents show a stable condition or in other words, when there is a conflict in determining the use of contraceptives, respondents are able to overcome the dialectical condition which occurs well.
3. The strategy of resolving internal dialectics in childbearing age couples Chinese ethnic on the use of contra-

ceptives in Medan City generally tends to do a balanced strategy and another option which is also dominantly chosen is the disorientation strategy. In the case of resolving the internal dialectic of childbearing age couples of underprivileged ethnic Chinese families, they also tend to use discussion-oriented family communication.

4. The strategy of resolving external dialectics in childbearing age couples Chinese ethnic on the use of contraceptives in Medan City generally tends to do the integration strategy and another option which is also dominantly chosen is the balance strategy.

The mean value of the internal dialectic variable shows a relatively high or stable condition compared to the external dialectic. It can be concluded that the couples of childbearing ages in underprivileged Chinese families who are respondents in this study tend to be more able to cope with the internal dialectics which occur than the external dialectics of contraceptive use. In relation to the resolution strategy, there is a shift in normative values within the internal sphere, where the role of men who dominate in decision making does not always apply. Cultural, family and economic factors are the most likely to cause the initial symptoms of the emergence of dialectics in the use of contraceptives. On the other hand, it was also found from the 82 respondents, they stated their reasons for not using contraception are they wanted to have children immediately (35.36 percent of respondents or 29 people). Then 20 people (24.39 percent) admitted that they did not receive information about family planning services as the main reason, then 19 people (23.17 percent) admitted that they did not have partner support and the remaining 7 people (17.06 percent) said they were "pregnant" and 7 other people (17.06 percent) said they had "no money" as the main reasons for not using contraception.

References

- Aris, A. A., Asrina, A., & Kurnaesi, E. 2019. Keikutsertaan Pasangan Usia Subur Marga Tionghoa Dalam Program Keluarga Berencana. *Patria Artha Journal of Nursing Science*, 3(1), 29–34.
- Asmarina, N., & Lestari, M. D. 2017. Gambaran Kepercayaan, Komitmen Pernikahan dan Kepuasan Hubungan Seksual Pada Istri dengan Suami yang Bekerja Di Kapal Pesiar. *Jurnal Psikologi Udayana*, 4(2), 239–249.
- Baxter, L. A., & Scharp, K. M. 2015. Dialectical Tensions in Relationships. In *The International Encyclopedia of Interpersonal Communication* (pp. 1–6). Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118540190.wbeic017>.
- BKKBN. 2022. *Hasil Pendataan Keluarga 2021*. <https://portalpk21.bkkbn.go.id/laporan/tabulasi>
- Burhan, O. K., & Sani, J. 2014. Prasangka Terhadap Etnis Tionghoa Di Kota Medan : Peran Identitas Nasional Dan Persepsi Ancaman. *Psikologia: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Penelitian Psikologi*, 8(1), 25–33. <https://doi.org/10.32734/psikologia.v8i1.2562>.
- Christian, S. A. 2017. Identitas Budaya Orang Tionghoa Indonesia. *Jurnal Cakrawala Mandarin*, 1(1), 11. <https://doi.org/10.36279/apsmi.v1i1.11>.
- Cools, C. 2011. Relational Dialectics in Intercultural Couples' Relationships. *Jyvässkylä Studies in Humanities*, 171.
- Creswell, J. 2020. Pengantar Penelitian Mixed Methods Terjemahan Hema Malini. In *Yogyakarta*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Griffin, E. M. 2012. *Communication Theory. Eight Edison*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Hidayati, L. 2016. Nilai Moral Dalam Film Biografi Confusius 《孔子》 Karya Hu Mei (胡玫) Pendekatan Sosiologi Sastra). *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Mandarin UNESA*, 1(01).
- Koerner, A. F., & Schrod, P. 2014. An Introduction to the Special Issue on Family Communication Patterns Theory. *Journal of Family Communication*, 14(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15267431.2013.857328>.
- Lontaan, A., Kusmiyati, K., & Dompas, R. 2014. Faktor–Faktor Yang Berhubungan Dengan Pemilihan Kontrasepsi Pasangan Usia Subur Di Puskesmas Damau Kabupaten Talaud. *JIDAN (Jurnal Ilmiah Bidan)*, 2(1), 27–32.
- Lubis, L. A. 2012. Komunikasi Antarbudaya Etnis Tionghoa dan Pribumi di Kota Medan. *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi Terakreditasi*, 10(1), 13–27.
- Lubis, L. A., & Wijaya, H. 2017. Communication Strategy on Family Planning Campaign by the Field Officer for Family Planning Campaign in North Sumatera. *International Journal of Innovation and Economic Development*, 3(4), 53–59. <https://doi.org/10.18775/ijied.1849-7551-7020.2015.34.2005>.
- Lusk, H. M. 2008. A Study of Dialectical Theory and its Relation to Interpersonal Relationships. In *Chancellor's Honors Program Projects*. Knoxville : University of Tennessee.
- Meij, L. S. 2009. *Ruang Sosial Baru Perempuan Tionghoa: Sebuah Kajian Pasca Kolonial*. Jakarta : Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia.
- Muas, R. T. N. M. E. 2020. Konfusianisme Sebagai Sabuk Pengaman RRT. *Paradigma: Jurnal Kajian Budaya*, 10(2), 206. <https://doi.org/10.17510/paradigma.v10i2.306>.
- Muslim, M. 2018. Varian-Varian Paradigma, Pendekatan, Metode, Dan Jenis Penelitian Dalam Ilmu Komunikas. *Media Bahasa, Sastra, Dan Budaya Wahana*, 1(10). <https://doi.org/10.33751/wahana.v1i10.654>.
- Nahar, N., Hossain, Z., & Mahiuddin, S. 2022. Assessment of the environmental perceptions, attitudes, and awareness

- of city dwellers regarding sustainable urban environmental management: a case study of Dhaka, Bangladesh. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-022-02354-y>.
- Ninditama, I. P. 2021. Model Machine Learning untuk Klasifikasi Keluarga Sejahtera Study Kasus: Kecamatan Kota Palembang. *Jurnal Tekno Kompak*, 15(2), 37–49.
- Putri, E. K., Lesmana, F., & Yoanita, D. 2021. Strategi Dialektika Relasional Pasangan Suami Isteri di Masa Pandemi Covid-19. *Jurnal Komunikatif*, 10(2), 225–238. <https://doi.org/10.33508/jk.v10i2.3295>.
- Saputra, F. T., & Muhiroh. 2020. Komunikasi Antar Budaya Etnis Tionghoa Dan Penduduk Muslim Di Banten. *Dialektika Komunika: Jurnal Kajian Komunikasi Dan Pembangunan Daerah*, 7(2), 147–156. <https://doi.org/10.33592/dk.v7i2.366>.
- Senjaya, A. J. 2018. Tinjauan Kritis Terhadap Istilah Metode Campuran (mixed method) dalam Riset Sosial. *Risalah, Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Studi Islam*, 4(1, March), 103–118. https://doi.org/10.31943/jurnal_risalah.v4i1.54.
- Seo, M.-G., & Creed, W. E. D. 2002. Institutional Contradictions, Praxis, and Institutional Change: A Dialectical Perspective. *Academy of Management Review*, 27(2), 222–247. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2002.6588004>.
- Sugiyono, P. 2019. Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif dan R&D. *Bandung: Alfabeta*.
- Sulaeman, M., & Homzah, S. 2013. Dialektika Status dan Peran Perempuan dalam Struktur Sosial Masyarakat Petani. *Jurnal Penelitian Kesejahteraan Sosial*, 12(4), 361–366.
- Szczęśna, A., & Przybyła-Basista, H. 2019. Marital Dialogue as a Constructive Response to Dissatisfaction in Marriage and its Predictor. *Scientific Papers of Silesian University of Technology* *Organization and Management Series*, 141, 405–419. <https://doi.org/10.29119/1641-3466.2019.141.31>.
- Wardani, D. W. S. R. 2014. Hubungan Spasial Kepadatan Penduduk dan Proporsi Keluarga Prasejahtera terhadap Prevalensi Tuberkulosis Paru di Bandar Lampung. *Prosiding Seminar Hasil Penelitian*.
- West, R., & Turner, L. H. 2018. *Introducing Communication Theory: Analysis and Application, Sixth Edition*. <https://lccn.loc.gov/2016059715>.
- Williams, B. K., Stacey, C. S., & Carl, M. W. 2006. *Intimate Relationship: Practical Introduction*. Boston: Pearson.
- Yusa, I. M. M., Murdana, I. M., Juliana, J., Iskandar, A. M., Firdausy, S., Nuswantoro, P., & Hairuddin, K. 2021. *Komunikasi Antarbudaya*. Medan: Yayasan Kita Menulis.
- Zhafirah, Z. 2020. Komunikasi Antarpribadi Pasangan Suami Istri Bahagia Studi Interaksi Simbolik Pada Pasangan Suami Istri. *Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengembangan Sains Dan Humaniora*, 4(2), 97–108.