

FAMILY RESILIENCE AND ROLE NEGOTIATION AMONG KAILI WOMEN IN CENTRAL SULAWESI, INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the dynamics of family resilience and role negotiation among Kaili women in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, within socio-cultural, economic, and ecological contexts. Using a qualitative interpretive approach grounded in family resilience theory and gender analysis, data were collected through in-depth interviews and observations involving six Kaili women from Palu City and Donggala Regency. The findings reveal that Kaili women play a central role in sustaining family resilience through three primary mechanisms: emotional regulation, their role as guardians of family cohesion, and the internalization of cultural values that underpin family resilience. Emotional regulation enables women to manage conflict constructively and maintain family stability, while flexible role negotiation facilitates the equitable distribution of responsibilities between husbands and wives. Furthermore, family resilience is strengthened by local cultural concepts such as bulonggo and taiganja, which position women as central figures in the maintenance, continuity, and well-being of family life. The study finds that resilience among Kaili families is not merely an individual psychological capacity but a relational and culturally embedded process shaped by collective values, kinship relations, and indigenous belief systems. By integrating insights from family psychology, gender studies, and local wisdom, this study contributes to a contextualized understanding of resilience that challenges individualistic paradigms and highlights its collective, gendered, and culturally grounded dimensions.

Keywords: *Family resilience; gender; Kaili women; local wisdom; role negotiation*

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the concept of family resilience has become an increasingly important topic in social, cultural, and gender studies, particularly in societies experiencing rapid social change and

recurring crises. Family resilience refers not only to a family's ability to withstand adversity but also to its capacity to adapt, reorganize, and develop new strategies in response to social, economic, cultural, and environmental pressures (Maisyanah & Asror, 2024). Walsh (2003) argues that

resilience is a dynamic process that enables families to recover from adversity through shared belief systems, organizational flexibility, and effective communication patterns. In this sense, resilience is not merely an individual attribute but a collective social capacity shaped by cultural values, social relationships, and lived experiences.

This issue is particularly relevant in the context of Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, a region that has faced multiple and overlapping challenges over the past decades. Communities in Central Sulawesi continue to experience economic vulnerability, unstable livelihoods, limited access to resources, and rapid socio-cultural transformation driven by modernization and globalization. At the same time, the region remains highly susceptible to ecological disasters, including earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, and liquefaction, especially following the devastating Palu disaster of 2018. Such crises significantly affect household stability and compel families to continuously negotiate survival strategies and adaptive mechanisms. Research on post-disaster recovery in Indonesia shows that resilience is often sustained not only through institutional interventions but also through local social networks, cultural solidarity, and family-based coping practices (Kusumasari, 2015).

Within these circumstances, the role of women becomes particularly significant. In many Indonesian communities, women are traditionally associated with domestic responsibilities, including childcare, household management, and emotional caregiving (Sukma Erni et.al., 2024). However, among the Kaili ethnic group, the indigenous population of Central Sulawesi, women's responsibilities extend far beyond the domestic sphere. Kaili women actively participate in economic activities, social networks, and cultural practices while simultaneously maintaining family cohesion and

providing intergenerational care. They contribute to household income through agriculture, trade, informal labor, and small-scale entrepreneurship, while also preserving the family's emotional stability.

Culturally, Kaili women are often referred to as *bulonggo*, meaning the “backbone” or “pillar” of the family. This metaphor reflects a local understanding that women play a central role in sustaining household continuity and resilience. A recent study by Jusmiati et al. (2025) found that Kaili women contribute to family functioning through several interconnected strategies, including collaborative problem-solving, strengthening interpersonal communication, fostering positive emotions, maintaining intimacy among family members, and supporting extended kinship networks. The study further highlights that the cultural value of *bulonggo* reinforces women's adaptive roles as both caregivers and economic contributors within the household. These findings suggest that resilience among Kaili families is deeply rooted in collective cultural values and gendered social practices.

In times of crisis, women often emerge as the primary actors sustaining daily survival and social stability. Studies on women's resilience in disaster contexts in Indonesia indicate that women possess significant adaptive capacities related to social capital, communication, community competence, and economic flexibility (Kusumasari, 2015). Similarly, Hendrastiti, Kusujiarti, and Sasongko (2023) argue that women's local knowledge and environmental awareness contribute substantially to ecological resilience and disaster adaptation. Their findings reveal that women not only respond to crises but also actively shape strategies for environmental sustainability and community recovery.

Despite these important contributions, the mechanisms through which Kaili women strengthen family

resilience remain underexplored in the academic literature. Existing scholarship tends to examine gender roles and resilience as separate areas of inquiry. Studies on gender often focus on women's domestic labor or patriarchal constraints, whereas resilience research primarily emphasizes institutional disaster management, post-disaster recovery, or economic adaptation. Consequently, limited scholarly attention has been paid to the intersection of gender, indigenous culture, and family resilience, particularly within local ethnic communities.

Moreover, many previous studies continue to portray women primarily as vulnerable subjects affected by poverty, inequality, and disaster. While these perspectives remain important, they often overlook women's agency and active participation in shaping resilient family systems. Kaili women continuously negotiate their positions within family structures shaped by both traditional cultural expectations and contemporary socio-economic demands. They simultaneously perform multiple roles as mothers, wives, caregivers, economic contributors, and community mediators. These negotiations involve complex interactions among gender norms, religious values, kinship systems, and everyday survival strategies.

This study seeks to address this gap by examining the experiences and roles of Kaili women in the construction of family resilience. Specifically, it explores how Kaili women negotiate their roles within family structures and how these processes of role negotiation contribute to the development and maintenance of family resilience.

Through this analysis, the study contributes to broader discussions on gender and resilience by emphasizing the importance of local cultural contexts in understanding family adaptation and survival. Rather than portraying women merely as passive victims within patriarchal systems, this paper positions

Kaili women as active agents who continuously create, sustain, and transform resilience practices in everyday life. Their experiences demonstrate that family resilience emerges not only from economic resources or institutional support but also from cultural knowledge, emotional labor, social solidarity, and women's adaptive agency within households and communities.

Literature Review

In the Indonesian context, family resilience is shaped by the interaction of internal and external factors. Internal factors include individual capacities within the family, such as emotional regulation, positive coping strategies, self-efficacy, self-acceptance, adaptability, and religiosity, all of which serve as sources of psychological strength in dealing with stress and adversity (Hamim et al., 2024; Alicia et al., 2021; Syafni et al., 2025). External factors encompass open communication, emotional support among family members, healthy family functioning, secure attachment, and social support from the broader community (Wahyudin, 2022; Mawarpury & Mirza, 2017). Family resilience can therefore be understood as the product of an integration between personal capacities, the quality of intrafamilial relationships, and socio-ecological support systems. Together, these factors determine whether a family merely survives a crisis or is able to recover, adapt, and thrive in its aftermath.

Within Kaili society, women occupy strategic positions in both the family and the wider community (Utama, 2023; Jusmiati, Attamimi, & Darlis, 2025; Jusmiati, 2023). They not only perform domestic responsibilities as household managers but also contribute to economic activities, social networks, and the preservation of cultural traditions. This multidimensional position creates a continuous space for negotiating family obligations and public engagement. Furthermore, the Kaili bilineal kinship

system provides women with a relatively significant role in family structures and customary practices. The cultural value of *ni linggu mpo toboyo* further emphasizes that, although women actively participate in public life, they maintain a strong commitment to family and spiritual values. As a result, domestic and public roles are performed in a dynamic and complementary manner (Utama, 2023).

Recent studies have shown that extended family support, family rituals, and emotional regulation contribute significantly to family stability and the psychological well-being of family members. Research by Jusmiati et al. on Kaili women in Central Sulawesi found that women play a central role in sustaining family functioning through effective interpersonal communication, emotional management, role negotiation, and support for extended kinship networks. These findings indicate that Kaili women not only fulfill domestic responsibilities but also serve as key pillars of family resilience through the cultural concept of *bulonggo*, which portrays women as the backbone of the family.

However, several important gaps remain in the existing literature. Studies on Kaili women have primarily focused on family economics, local culture, and social structures, whereas research on family resilience has largely been developed from the perspective of family psychology, with limited attention to the cultural contexts of indigenous communities. Likewise, studies on women's role negotiation remain concentrated in urban settings and have rarely examined the experiences of indigenous women in responding to social change, poverty, and ecological crises. Furthermore, little research has explored how Kaili women actively construct family resilience through the negotiation of domestic and public roles, emotional labor, spirituality, cultural solidarity, and extended family support within the post-disaster social context of Central Sulawesi. This study therefore seeks to address these

gaps by examining the role of Kaili women in sustaining family resilience. In doing so, it contributes to the development of culturally grounded family resilience scholarship while highlighting indigenous women as key actors in maintaining the continuity of family and community life.

Conceptual Framework

Family resilience is understood not merely as the ability to withstand adversity but as the capacity of the family system to adapt positively, restore its functioning, and thrive in the face of challenges and crises (Tan et al., 2024; Vladislav et al., 2024). A resilient family is generally characterized by its ability to recover from setbacks, manage adversity adaptively, and foster a sense of competence, confidence, and cohesion among its members (Walsh, 2021; Huang et al., 2023).

Walsh (1996) explains that family resilience is shaped by three core processes: family belief systems, organizational patterns, and communication and problem-solving processes. Contemporary scholarship has expanded this framework by incorporating psychological resources and social support as additional dimensions that strengthen a family's adaptive capacity (Tan et al., 2024; Vladislav et al., 2024). When these components function synergistically, families are better equipped to respond constructively to stress, maintain emotional stability, and transform experiences of adversity into opportunities for growth.

Meanwhile, the negotiation of women's roles is closely related to their agency in negotiating, bargaining, and influencing decision-making processes for the benefit of themselves and their families across domestic, economic, and social spheres. In practice, these negotiations take various forms. Some women adopt accommodative strategies by outwardly accepting patriarchal norms while simultaneously creating space to maintain

influence and protect their interests (Agha, 2021; Ustunel et al., 2022). Others employ more subtle forms of resistance, such as leveraging their economic contributions, involvement in children's education, or moral and religious authority to influence family decisions (Agarwal, 1997; Elias, 2020; Saikia & Sharma, 2024). In addition, women often engage in gradual negotiation strategies by expressing aspirations incrementally, building consensus, and preserving relational harmony while slowly transforming existing norms and practices (Ustunel et al., 2022; Johnson et al., 2025; D'Souza & Kapoor, 2024). In certain cultural contexts, women also draw upon their identities as wives, mothers, and moral guardians of the family to legitimize and expand their participation in public and social spheres (Elias, 2020).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using an exploratory case study design (Crowther & Lauesen, 2017; Agarwal, 2019). Theoretically, it seeks to contribute to the development of family resilience theory by providing a culturally grounded understanding of resilience among indigenous communities. The research design was developed to explore, in depth, how Kaili women build and sustain family resilience amid various social, economic, and ecological challenges in Central Sulawesi. It also aims to examine how Kaili women negotiate roles across domestic, economic, social, and cultural domains of family life, as well as to identify the cultural, religious, and social factors that support both family resilience and role negotiation processes. The study was conducted in Palu City and Donggala Regency, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, between March and October 2024. The research focused on urban areas of Palu City and Toaya Village as sites that reflect diverse socio-cultural and economic conditions within Kaili communities.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, a technique that involves the deliberate selection of informants whose characteristics align with the objectives of the study (Creswell, 2013; Benson, 2012). Recruitment was conducted through direct engagement with potential participants who voluntarily agreed to participate and provided informed consent. Based on this process, six participants were selected and took part in the study, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Participant	Code	Length of Marriage	Participant's Occupation	Husband's Occupation
1	E	25 years	Home maker	Temporary Worker
2	HU	30 years	Civil Servant Teacher	Temporary Worker
3	LI	20 years	Home maker	Temporary Worker
4	SE	23 years	Home maker	Temporary Worker
5	KA	30 years	Home maker	Temporary Worker
6	SA	30 years	Civil Servant	Temporary Worker

Source : Data Analysis

The participant selection process began with the establishment of specific inclusion criteria. Participants in this study were required to meet the following criteria: (1) Kaili women who performed dual roles as wage earners and homemakers, reflecting their involvement in both domestic and economic responsibilities; (2) women whose husbands were of Kaili ethnicity and lacked stable employment, a condition that often creates economic uncertainty and additional emotional and relational pressures within the family; (3) women who had children, enabling the study to explore various dimensions of family dynamics, including communication patterns, role distribution, caregiving responsibilities, and emotional support; and (4) women who voluntarily agreed to

participate in the study and provided written informed consent.

The next stage involved data collection through in-depth interviews and direct observation (Court & Abbas, 2022; Benson, 2012). These methods enabled the researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of participants' perspectives, lived experiences, and social realities within their natural settings. Furthermore, the combination of interviews and observation facilitated the collection of rich and contextualized data while allowing researchers to capture both participants' narratives and their everyday practices. To respect participants' family and occupational responsibilities, interviews were scheduled according to their availability and convenience.

To ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the findings, this study employed data triangulation by comparing and cross-checking information obtained from multiple sources and methods. Triangulation was conducted through the integration of interview data, field observations, and relevant contextual documents to identify patterns of consistency and discrepancy across data sources. This process enhanced the credibility of the findings, reduced potential researcher bias, and strengthened the depth and accuracy of the interpretation of participants lived experiences.

DISCUSSION

From a family resilience perspective, Kaili women emerge as key actors in sustaining family resilience through three primary mechanisms: emotional regulation, their role as guardians of family cohesion, and the internalization of cultural values as a foundation for family resilience.

Emotional Regulation

Kaili women demonstrate a strong capacity for emotional regulation as an important strategy for managing various

family challenges, particularly those involving relationships with husbands and children. Although most participants were unfamiliar with the theoretical concept of emotional regulation, they practiced a range of adaptive strategies in their daily lives to manage emotions effectively. This capacity is reflected in their ability to maintain emotional stability, control responses to conflict, and remain committed to preserving affection and harmony within the family. Emotional regulation functions not only as a means of reducing psychological stress but also as an essential component of family problem-solving processes.

Mrs. E explained that when experiencing emotional distress, she managed her feelings by redirecting negative emotions into other activities, such as walking around the house:

"When I feel upset or angry, I prefer to walk around the house first so that I can calm myself down." (I-E, Personal Interviews, April 5, 2024)

Mrs. E consciously employs emotional regulation as a strategy for maintaining family harmony and relational stability. When confronted with situations that provoke anger, she chooses not to respond impulsively by expressing her frustration toward other family members or directing it toward surrounding objects. Instead, she temporarily distances herself from the source of conflict by leaving the immediate situation and engaging in simple activities around the house or yard until she regains emotional composure. This behavior reflects a strong capacity for self-regulation, characterized by the ability to recognize emotions, control behavioral responses, and postpone reactions until emotional stability is restored.

From a family resilience perspective, this strategy reflects the participant's active efforts to prevent conflict escalation and preserve household harmony. By choosing to calm herself emotionally before re-engaging

with family members, she not only protects herself from making impulsive, emotion-driven decisions but also safeguards family relationships from the psychological harm that may result from uncontrolled conflict. Emotional regulation, therefore, functions as an adaptive capacity that strengthens family resilience by enabling families to remain stable, communicative, and capable of coping with challenges without undermining interpersonal bonds.

Similarly, Mrs. HU described how, when experiencing emotional distress, she preferred to ask her husband to take her to the estuary (*Kuala*), a place that served as a meaningful space for emotional release. As she explained:

"Back when I was still living with my parents, our house did not have a reliable water supply, so I often said, 'Take me to Kuala so I can use the toilet.' However, it also became an excuse for me to leave the house whenever I was angry. Usually, we would go together to Kuala or to the beach. Once I was there, watching the large waves and listening to the sound of the ocean, it felt as though all the anger that had built up inside me could finally be released. Rather than expressing my anger inside the house, I chose to take it outside under various pretexts. Out there, no one could hear me, so I was free to release my emotions until I felt relieved." (I-HU, Personal Interviews, May 24, 2024)

At the estuary, Mrs. HU released her emotions until she felt relieved, away from the presence of others who might overhear her. Once her emotions had subsided, she returned home ready to address the situation. In contrast, Mrs. LI regulated her emotions in a different manner. Rather than leaving the house when upset, she chose to remain silent and stay at home. Her challenges extended beyond disagreements with her husband, as she also frequently experienced tensions in her relationship with her mother-in-law. This complex family dynamic required her to develop distinct strategies for managing interpersonal relationships and

maintaining family harmony. One of these strategies involved reframing her relationships with family members, as reflected in the following interview excerpt:

"I have always considered caring for my parents-in-law the same as caring for my own parents. Whatever they do, I regard them as my own parents, and I position myself as their child. The same goes for my husband, Ma'am. I treat him like my own child, someone I deeply care for. So, whenever I feel angry, I try to remind myself of all these things so that I can better regulate my emotions." (I-LI, Personal Interviews, April 5, 2024)

The findings of this study indicate that emotional regulation is one of the primary strategies employed by Kaili women to maintain family functioning and resilience. Kaili women serve not only as managers of domestic responsibilities but also as guardians of the family's emotional stability through their ability to respond adaptively to stress and conflict. Two major emotional regulation strategies were identified in this study. The first is attentional deployment, whereby women temporarily distance themselves from sources of conflict to regain emotional composure. The second is cognitive reappraisal, which involves reinterpreting situations in ways that reduce their emotional impact. These findings suggest that Kaili women possess a strong reflective capacity for responding to family pressures, even though such strategies are not necessarily understood within a formal psychological framework. This finding is consistent with Vertsberger et al., (2021), who found that cognitive reappraisal weakens the relationship between parental stress and parental burnout, whereas maladaptive strategies such as rumination intensify the negative effects of stress on family functioning.

Interestingly, emotional regulation among Kaili women does not stop at efforts to calm themselves but extends to

the willingness to confront the source of conflict and address it directly. This ability positions Kaili women as emotional anchors within the family, serving as central figures who maintain emotional stability, reduce conflict, and support family resilience (Utama & Roslinwati, 2024; Jusmiati, Attamimi, & Darlis, 2025). This pattern suggests that emotional regulation functions not only as a self-protection mechanism but also as a relational strategy aimed at maintaining harmony, preventing conflict escalation, and preserving the quality of relationships among family members. In other words, the ability to “step back for a moment,” as demonstrated by the participants, is not a form of permanent avoidance but part of an adaptive strategy that creates space for reflection before re-engaging in dialogue. These findings reinforce the view that, in a collectivist culture such as Kaili society, emotional regulation is oriented not only toward individual well-being but also toward maintaining relational balance and family cohesion.

From a family resilience perspective, the ability to regulate emotions constitutes an important foundation for the development of family resilience. Adaptive emotional management enables Kaili women to respond to pressure more calmly, maintain the quality of communication, and prevent conflicts from escalating into crises that may damage family relationships. These findings are consistent with studies by Low et al. (2019), Panzeri et al., (2024), and Taurino et al., (2025), which show that maladaptive emotion regulation strategies, such as disengagement and rumination, tend to reduce the effectiveness of conflict resolution and lead to less positive family experiences. In contrast, active engagement in emotional management during conflict is associated with more effective problem-solving, warmer family interactions, and

greater parental responsiveness to children. Thus, in the context of Kaili women, emotional regulation can be understood as both a psychological resource and a protective mechanism that enables families to maintain stability, adapt to pressure, and emerge stronger after facing life’s challenges (Taurino et al., 2025; Sepehrianazar & Chitsaz, 2025).

In the context of family resilience, the ability to regulate emotions constitutes an important foundation for the development of family resilience. Adaptive emotional management enables Kaili women to respond to pressure more calmly, maintain the quality of communication, and prevent conflicts from escalating into crises that may damage family relationships. This finding is consistent with the studies of Low et al., (2019), Panzeri et al., (2024), and Taurino et al., (2025), which show that maladaptive emotion regulation strategies, such as disengagement and rumination (i.e., repetitive negative thinking), reduce the effectiveness of conflict resolution and lead to less positive family experiences as well as lower parental responsiveness to children. In contrast, adaptive engagement in emotional management during conflict is associated with more effective conflict resolution and warmer family interactions. Thus, emotional regulation functions not only as an individual psychological resource (Hamim et al., 2024; Alicia et al., 2021; Syafni et al., 2025) but also as a protective mechanism that enables families to maintain stability, adapt to pressure, and recover collectively when facing various life challenges (Taurino et al., 2025; Sepehrianazar & Chitsaz, 2025).

Guardian of Family Cohesion

In their efforts to strengthen family functioning, Kaili women actively promote household balance through the

organization of role distribution among family members. This process involves a clear division of duties and responsibilities among husbands, wives, and children, ensuring that each family member understands their respective roles and contributions. Such role distribution not only helps maintain order in everyday life but also serves as an important mechanism for fostering family balance and harmony.

The findings of this study indicate that role distribution within Kaili families is not always rigidly structured according to traditional gender norms but is often flexible and adaptive to the family's needs. In many cases, husbands and wives actively participate in both domestic and public spheres, creating a more egalitarian partnership in managing family life. Interviews with participants revealed that such role-sharing arrangements help family members understand, appreciate, and fulfill their respective responsibilities more effectively as husbands, wives, and parents. Thus, role distribution represents an important strategy employed by Kaili women to maintain family stability and strengthen family resilience.

This adaptive allocation of responsibilities is illustrated by the experience of Mrs. SE, whose family demonstrates a flexible division of roles in response to economic pressures. Mrs. SE's husband works in the construction sector, but his income is often delayed. Faced with rising living costs and the financial demands of supporting children's education, the couple sought additional sources of income together. As a civil servant, Mrs. SE not only performs her formal occupational responsibilities but also takes the initiative to supplement the family income by selling food in front of her house after working hours. As the participant explained:

"We helped each other, just me and my husband. Everything was done together. If there was work at home, we did it together. My husband works in the

construction sector, but sometimes his salary is delayed, and the same thing happens with my salary as an employee. So, if my salary has not yet been paid, we rely on his income first. If the income is insufficient, we manage it together. The point is that we support each other. In addition, after returning from the office, I sell food in front of the house to supplement my family's income. My husband also does not hesitate to help me in the kitchen; he washes the dishes, does the laundry, and cooks." (I-SE, Personal Interviews, April 5, 2024)

In addition to Mrs. SE, Mrs. HU described a family situation similar to that of Mrs. SE. Mrs. HU is a civil servant, while her husband is an artist who is active in the local music scene. According to Mrs. HU, in addition to working as a teacher, she also sells various goods and food items to supplement the family income. Because of her numerous responsibilities, she often feels challenged by balancing work, household management, and childcare. To address these demands, she and her husband share household duties and responsibilities. While Mrs. HU works outside the home, her husband primarily takes responsibility for childcare and household tasks. The participant recounted this experience as follows:

"I have quite a busy schedule. At 7 a.m., I leave to teach at school. By around 10 o'clock, I'm picked up by a car to head to college, and I usually return home at around 5:30 in the evening. During that time, my husband stays at home with the children. When he goes out to perform with his band, I bring our older kids with me to campus. Alongside studying and taking care of the children, I also manage selling peanuts and bananas (hahaha). We live with his family, which includes his parents and older sibling, and in addition, I also go out to work. Meanwhile, my husband takes on the primary responsibility of caring for the children at home." (I-HU, Personal Interviews, April 5, 2024)

The distribution of responsibilities is evident not only in the

families of Mrs. SE and Mrs. HU but also in those of Mrs. SA and Mrs. KA, who described cooperation and role-sharing within their households. According to these participants, domestic tasks such as cooking, meal preparation, and ironing are generally handled by the wife. In contrast, responsibilities involving substantial financial expenditures are typically managed by the husband. However, decisions concerning their children's education and development are made jointly by both parents.

The findings of this study indicate that although Kaili women experience a double burden by performing productive roles in the public sphere while simultaneously carrying domestic responsibilities, they do not face these challenges alone. Instead, they navigate them through an adaptive process of role negotiation with their spouses. The involvement of husbands in domestic tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, and childcare, reflects a transformation in gender relations within the family, where the division of responsibilities is no longer determined solely by traditional gender norms but is adjusted to the needs and circumstances of the family. This finding suggests that social roles within Kaili families are neither fixed nor absolute but can be negotiated and exchanged according to situational demands, in line with the findings of Abubakar et al. (2023) and Erandy et al. (2024). Such flexibility in role distribution not only serves as a practical strategy for maintaining family functioning but also strengthens family cohesion through emotional closeness, a sense of belonging, and solidarity among family members. Previous studies have shown that strong family cohesion and flexibility are associated with greater job satisfaction and family satisfaction (Sztányi-Szekér et al., 2024).

In this context, Kaili women function not only as household managers or supplementary breadwinners but also

as guardians of family cohesion, serving as central figures who maintain emotional connections and ensure harmony within the family. Through their ability to negotiate roles, maintain communication, and balance the needs of individual family members, Kaili women become the custodians of relationships that enable families to remain emotionally connected amid various social and economic pressures. This role is particularly important because family cohesion does not emerge automatically but is built through continuous relational efforts. In this regard, Kaili women play a significant role in sustaining family cohesion (Jusmiati, Attamimi, & Darlis, 2025).

Theoretically, these findings reinforce family systems theory and family resilience perspectives, which view the family as a dynamic system that continuously adapts to internal and external changes (Hamim et al., 2024; Vladislav et al., 2024; Black & Lobo, 2008). Flexible role distribution enables families to respond more effectively to pressure because responsibilities are shared collectively rather than concentrated on a single individual (Erandy et al., 2024). When husbands and wives are able to negotiate roles openly and support one another, families are better positioned to maintain emotional stability, reduce conflict, and strengthen the quality of relationships among family members. Thus, family resilience among Kaili women is not built solely on women's ability to bear multiple responsibilities but also on their capacity to maintain family cohesion as a key foundation of resilience. This highlights family resilience as a collective process built through cooperation, mutual support, and the shared capacity to adapt to life's challenges.

Belief and Values as Cultural Foundations of Family Resilience among Kaili Women

Kaili women not only employ practical strategies such as problem-solving, communication, role-sharing, and emotional regulation, but also ground their actions in deeply held beliefs and cultural values, including patience, respect, sacrifice, the preservation of family honor, and the conviction that the family must be maintained. This belief is evident in the participant's account:

"Not inside the house, but outside. There are big waves... No one heard me, so I was free to let out my emotions." (I-HU, Personal Interviews, April 5, 2024)

According to the participant, this statement reflects the belief that family conflicts should not be publicly exposed, as family problems are considered private matters that should be resolved collectively within the family. Similarly, Mrs. LI believes that "fire should not be fought with fire," suggesting that conflict is better de-escalated than confronted with further hostility. Meanwhile, Mrs. KA emphasized patience as a key strategy for maintaining household stability. As she explained:

"If hardship is met with hardship, it will turn into a fire." (I-KA, Personal Interviews, April 5, 2024)

These findings indicate that Kaili women believe conflicts should not be avoided but managed in ways that preserve family unity. In addition to their beliefs regarding conflict management, Kaili women also view marriage as a long-term commitment that requires continuous effort and mutual support. This perspective is reflected in Mrs. LI's statement:

".....Let us work together to ensure that our family remains intact", ".....If you take care of each other's feelings, you will surely succeed." (I-LI, Personal Interviews, April 5, 2024)

These statements suggest that marriage is regarded as a bond that must be nurtured and sustained through cooperation, mutual respect, and emotional support. Mrs. HU further explained that when disagreements arise

between her and her husband, they avoid criticizing each other in front of their children. This practice reflects the belief that spouses should protect each other's dignity, cooperate, and maintain mutual respect.

The findings of this study also show that family functioning among Kaili women is not built solely through practical strategies such as problem-solving, communication, and role negotiation, but is also deeply rooted in the belief systems and cultural values that shape their daily lives. Within the Family Resilience Framework, Walsh (1996) emphasized that belief systems constitute a fundamental component of family resilience because they help families make meaning of adversity, sustain hope, and develop adaptive responses. For Kaili women, these belief systems are reflected not only in the view that conflicts should be managed to preserve family unity, as expressed in the phrase "fire should not be fought with fire," but also in local cultural concepts such as *bulonggo* and *taiganja*.

The concept of *bulonggo* positions the first daughter as the central figure and caretaker of the family, not merely on the basis of birth order but as a cultural mandate that shapes women's identities as family caregivers. This position encourages Kaili women to view conflict management, role-sharing, and the maintenance of family cohesion as cultural responsibilities inherent to their role. Meanwhile, the concept of *taiganja*, which views women as the source of life, reinforces the belief that women are central to the maintenance and continuity of the family, both emotionally and socially. Together, these concepts demonstrate that family resilience among Kaili women is not simply derived from individual capacities but is rooted in a cultural system of meaning that positions women as the primary guardians of family harmony and continuity. Thus, this study expands Walsh's theory by

showing that family resilience in the Kaili context is culturally embedded and grounded in indigenous knowledge, emerging from local systems of understanding that are transmitted across generations and serve as a foundation for family functioning.

This study also shows that these belief systems are strongly influenced by collectivist cultural values (Fadmawaty & Wasludin, 2021). From Hofstede's (2011) perspective, collectivist societies place group harmony, family loyalty, and social obligations above individual interests. This is reflected in the tendency of Kaili women to remain silent, yield, consider their partner's feelings, and avoid open conflict to preserve family integrity. Such actions should therefore not be understood merely as forms of obedience, but as culturally informed strategies for maintaining relational harmony.

From Hofstede's (2011) perspective, collectivist societies place group harmony, family loyalty, and social obligations above individual interests. This is reflected in the tendency of Kaili women to remain silent, yield, consider their partner's feelings, and avoid open conflict to preserve family integrity. Such actions should not be understood merely as forms of obedience but as culturally informed strategies for maintaining relational harmony.

In Walsh's perspective, the concepts of *bulonggo* and *taiganja* can be understood as components of family belief systems that function as sources of meaning, guidance, and strength for families in facing various challenges. These cultural concepts not only shape how Kaili women understand their roles and responsibilities within the family but also serve as a psychological foundation that strengthens their adaptive capacity in dealing with conflict and life pressures. Likewise, Kagitcibasi's (2005) framework of relatedness emphasizes that autonomy and relatedness are not

mutually exclusive but can coexist. The concepts of *bulonggo* and *taiganja* demonstrate that Kaili women's identities are constructed relationally, where autonomy develops not through individualism but through responsibility, emotional attachment, and commitment to the family. Thus, family resilience among Kaili women is not only culturally embedded, in the sense that it is shaped by collective cultural values but also grounded in indigenous knowledge systems that position women at the center of family management, care, and continuity. These findings confirm that, within the context of Kaili culture, family resilience is not merely the result of individual adaptive strategies but rather the product of internalized cultural values transmitted across generations and expressed through relational practices in everyday family life.

CLOSING

The findings of this study confirm that Kaili women occupy a central position in building and maintaining family resilience through three primary mechanisms: emotional regulation, their role as guardians of family cohesion, and the internalization of cultural values as the foundation of family resilience. Kaili women function not only as managers of domestic responsibilities and contributors to the family economy, but also as emotional anchors who maintain emotional stability, relationship mediators who foster family cohesion, and key actors in role negotiation processes that enable families to adapt flexibly to various social, economic, and life pressures.

Furthermore, this study demonstrates that family resilience among Kaili women is both culturally embedded and grounded in indigenous knowledge, as it is firmly rooted in collective belief systems and local cultural concepts such as *bulonggo* and

taiganja. These concepts position women not merely as family members but as central figures in the management, maintenance, and continuity of family life. In this context, family resilience is understood not only as the ability to withstand crises but also as a cultural practice transmitted across generations through values such as patience, sacrifice, respect, and relational responsibility. Thus, this study contributes to the family resilience literature by showing that, in a non-Western society such as the Kaili community, family resilience emerges not only from adaptive strategies but also from cultural value systems that position women at the core of family harmony, cohesion, and continuity.

Based on these findings, government agencies and local authorities in Central Sulawesi, particularly the Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (*Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak*) and the Social Affairs Office (*Dinas Sosial*), should move beyond generic, top-down family resilience programs and develop interventions that are grounded in local cultural contexts. Policies should explicitly incorporate the concepts of *bulonggo* and *taiganja* as local psychological and social frameworks within marriage counseling services, family welfare programs (*Pemberdayaan dan Kesejahteraan Keluarga* [PKK]), and community-based empowerment initiatives. Furthermore, local regulations should recognize and support the role of Kaili women as relationship mediators by involving female customary leaders (*Totua Bengke*) in family support and community-based dispute resolution programs, such as the Family Learning Center (*Pusat Pembelajaran Keluarga* [Puspaga]). Finally, to prevent the combined demands of economic contribution and emotional caregiving from becoming an excessive double

burden, economic development and microfinance programs targeting Kaili women should be accompanied by accessible mental health and psychosocial support services.

While this study provides valuable insights into the culturally embedded resilience of Kaili women, several directions for future research remain open. First, future studies could conduct comparative analyses examining how the internalization of *bulonggo* and *taiganja* differs between rural communities and rapidly modernizing urban centers such as Palu, particularly in relation to the influence of digitalization on traditional role negotiations. Second, further research could explore the perspectives of Kaili men and husbands to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how traditional masculinity adapts to, supports, or challenges women's central role in maintaining family cohesion. Finally, future studies could extend these qualitative findings through mixed-methods or longitudinal approaches, including the development of a culturally grounded Kaili Family Resilience Scale to empirically examine how these cultural values and practices are transmitted across generations in an increasingly globalized context.

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