

# Ninik Mamak Pattern in Resolving Marriage Problems and Implications for Cultural Counseling

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**Abstract.** Marriage problems that occur in Minangkabau are not only the responsibility of the husband and wife, but also the responsibility of the ninik mamak in the Minangkabau people. This study aims to reveal the pattern of ninik mamak in solving marital problems and its implications for cultural counseling. Data collection techniques through observation and interviews, while data analysis through three stages, namely; reduce data, present data and verify data. Testing the validity of the data using triangulation. The results of the study found that; firstly, the ninik mamak pattern in problem solving begins with problem mapping, building care and togetherness of family members, empowering the potential of highly respected families to mediate, secondly the mediation process is carried out persuasively, thinking clearly, spacious and visionary, thirdly reflecting and evaluating, and the findings of these four studies, namely the pattern of solving marital problems have implications for the process of cultural-based marriage counseling services with pre-mediation stages, mediation processes and evaluation of Minang culture-based mediation.

**Keywords:** ninik mamak; marriage; counseling; culture

## 1 Introduction

Marriage problems are analogous to a time bomb that one day can destroy the household ark. Married couples have various problems in living their household. These problems include communication, emotional, economic, social relations and sexual problems [1] [2] [3]. Marriage problems experienced by couples will have an impact on family harmony [4]. If the family is not harmonious in communicating, then life in the household is not fun and feels empty. Conflict in the family affects the academic performance of children at school [5], and also has an impact on the child's adjustment, psychological development and social relationships [6]. The problem of marriage in the family requires a solution through the right treadman so that the problem can be resolved properly. Especially in Minang, the problem of marriage is not only a problem for husband and wife orders but also a big family problem. The resolution process is through a respected person in the family. In Minangkabau custom, the highest decision maker in problem solving is ninik mamak [7].

Ninik mamak are the men of the mother's sister. The existence of ninik mamak is an informal leader in the Minangkabau realm with a fairly large role [8]. ninik mamak plays a role in finding the best solution in solving marital problems [9]. Ninik mamak plays a role in helping to solve problems in the family to prevent divorce [10]. The role played by the ninik mamak is very important because the ninik mamak is a respected individual in the family. This study aims

to reveal qualitative data about ninik mamak patterns in resolving marital problems and their implications for cultural counseling.

## **2 Method**

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method, namely research that aims to understand what phenomena are experienced by research subjects in a natural context [11]. The research respondents involved ninik mamak as customary holders in the Padang City. The research instrument is the researcher himself [12]. The data collection technique uses in-depth observation and interviews. Data analysis used descriptive qualitative analysis technique, with three stages; namely reducing data, presenting data and verifying data [13]. While checking the validity of the data is done through triangulation techniques, which consist of source triangulation, technical triangulation and time triangulation.

## **3 Result and Discussion**

Based on the data obtained through interviews and observations related to the ninik mamak pattern in resolving marital problems, it can be explained; First, Ninik Mamak did a plan to solve the problem of marriage. The initial step taken by ninik mamak was to review the problems experienced by the nephew through family members, related to what problems occurred, how long the problem had occurred and what efforts had been made for the resolution process. This review was carried out on family members including mothers and fathers and other close family members. The review of the problem is carried out wisely and wisely so that the problematic nephew does not feel offended and embarrassed because the problems he is experiencing are a burden to his family members.

In this planning process, ninik mamak adheres to the principle of “the same shame, the same pain is felt”, meaning that the problems experienced by her niece are part of her problems. The responsibility of being a ninik mamak also keeps all the disgrace (problems that occur in the clan) experienced by the nephew are stored properly and neatly. This principle is held because, niece problems are part of a big family problem and extended families have shared responsibilities. This explanation indicates the finding that the planning for solving marriage problems carried out by ninik mamak, by mapping problems for problem solving, creates concern for family members and builds togetherness.

As for the ninik mamak pattern in the process of resolving marital problems by approaching family members who are considered the most respected by nephews who are having problems. The closest family member to the troubled niece is her mother. So the customary holders encourage mothers from problematic nephews to approach and listen to the problems experienced by their children. In this session, Ninik Mamak teaches Minang culture principles to the mother of a nephew who is having problems with the principle of “there will be no cloudy water that will not be clear and there will be no tangled threads”. The meaning that every problem that occurs there will be a solution. In this process.

In the next approach, a mother explores the problems and expectations her child wants from the problems they are experiencing in a persuasive way. The mother invites her child to think

clearly and have an open heart by looking at the good in the future. The considerations that were made emphasized the goodness for children, goodness for the troubled self, the goodness of the family and the consideration of the views of many people. Furthermore, the mother encourages her child to use positive logic and kindness according to Minang customs. In this process, the mother also invites her child to be patient, with the philosophical view of "a spoon with a cauldron when cooking food will definitely touch". This means that problems that occur in family life are normal and there our role is to forgive each other.

In the process of problem solving, a mother listens to her child more about what is really going on, if there is negative talk then the mother tries to straighten it out in a better direction and vice versa if there is something positive, reinforcement is done. This process does not always go well, sometimes there are things that are contrary to expectations, so the mother invites her child to think before deciding on the problems and actions to be taken, then also encourages them to do *istiqoroh* prayer and read the Qur'an to clear their minds in making decisions.

As for marital problems that occur in nephews, then *ninik mamak* becomes a mediator in the problem-solving process. The process carried out by *ninik mamak* invites nieces (children of sisters) to think clearly and positively, have an open heart, and use the logic of kindness for future children. All considerations given by *ninik mamak* still adhere to the principle of independence for nephews and decisions that do not come out of the traditional philosophy of customs based on *syar'i*, *syar'i* based on the Qur'an. This means that all action decisions that will be taken in solving problems always adhere to the Qur'an and *hadith*.

The next action taken by *ninik mamak* is to discuss in the family the results of the settlement process that has been carried out. All decisions that have been taken will be used as material for deliberation at a meeting of both the male and female parties. The results of the meeting of the two parties, if there is an agreement, the process of referring the men to the women's houses and vice versa if there is no common ground between the two parties, the deliberation process is carried out to find the least harm. As for the agreement to recover, the next effort is to hold a reconciliation event in front of the *ninik mamak* and other family members by bringing in a cleric to advise and pray to Allah. This activity is carried out at women's homes, why is this done at women's homes because men actually climb women's houses or homes that are made together by problematic couples. This process also involves next-door neighbors, this is done so that neighbors know that the problematic couple is getting along again.

Furthermore, related to the evaluation of problem solving actions that have been carried out, it can be explained that *ninik mamak* will conduct a review of extended family members related to the relationship of the niece who has been reconciled (repair). The review was done by asking family members and making observations by pretending there was a need with the nephew's children. This action is carried out by *ninik mamak* with the application of the saying "day is seen and seen, night is heard and heard", meaning that a *ninik mamak* should not be careless with the problems experienced by his nephew's.

Based on the explanation above, it was found that the evaluation of the problems that occurred was carried out by *ninik mamak* as customary holders with the *ninik mamak* principle that they should not be careless with the problems of their nephew's. This shows *Ninik Mamak's* concern for children and nephews who are part of her responsibilities as customary holders in the *Minangkabau*.

The resolution of marriage problems by *ninik mamak* as the traditional leader in Minang has a unique pattern. *Ninik mamak* acts as a facilitator and mediator, so that problems can be resolved properly in accordance with the traditional philosophy of the "sarak-sarak-based

tradition of the Kitabullah". The pattern of problem solving if it is associated with culture-based family counseling can be explained as follows.

In the first, *ninik mamak* conducts a review of the problems experienced by the niece, this review in the counseling process is called the *diagnosis* process. The uniqueness of the diagnosis is done by *ninik mamak* by building concern and togetherness of members in solving problems. This means that in the cultural-based family counseling process for the problem-solving process, it is very necessary to care for each family member. The process of creating awareness is an important part of the mediation process in counseling. As for togetherness, counselors can create media with collective strength from various existing potentials.

In the second session, the counselor provides content for the readiness of the mediator to deal with the client so that the client can think clearly, be broad-minded, be patient, look forward to the good of the child and the client. The content provided by the counselor to the mediator as a reference for the mediator in carrying out the approach and problem solving process. During this session, the mediator is expected to always communicate intensely with the counselor so that the approach process is carried out as expected. The mediator will provide a report and discuss the best solution for the client. This process is very appropriate in the prognosis process in the counseling session.

In the third session, the counselor conducts an assessment, which is an assessment of the counseling process and results that have been implemented. The assessment process is carried out through observations and interviews of the results of mediation that has been carried out by the mediator in the process of resolving marital problems. In this process the counselor functions more as an expert.

*Ninik mamak's* model of solving marital problems is unique in building relationships. [14] stated that building strong relationships with clients through cultural and linguistic diversity is an important part of the counseling process. In the Minang culture-based counseling process, relationships not only with clients but also with other parties are very much needed in the next counseling process. Other parties can be used for problem mapping before the counseling process. This is an important part of the findings as a force that can be applied to the marriage counseling process.

The uniqueness found is that there is a problem mapping process before the counseling process is carried out to mediate marital problems. The problem mapping process is very well done, because it has a novelty in the marriage counseling process. As for the process of building support and togetherness, as well as involving other parties who are considered honorable by the conflicting parties, this is something unique and can be applied in the counseling mediation process. This illustrates the importance of another force in assisting the counseling process of mediation techniques. Mediation is an effort to resolve family problems with the help of a neutral and professional third party as a mediator [15] [16]. In the culture-based marriage counseling process, the third party is *ninik mamak*.

Furthermore, in the mediation process, a clear mind, spaciousness and kindness-oriented family members in the future is a unique feature of the counseling process. This is in line with research [17] the mediator reminds the parties to be realistic. The power of mediation is largely determined by good and effective communication. Effective communication, where all parties have the same understanding [18]. The marriage counseling process in principle can improve communication patterns between husband and wife to create family harmony [19] [20]. Through good communication, it can be used as a strength in solving appropriate and good problems.

Regarding the evaluation of the process and results carried out by *ninik mamak*, it is very appropriate and in line with the stages of counseling. Its uniqueness is that *ninik mamak* conducts a review of external parties related to the results and implementation of the mediation

results. This is very appropriate if applied to the cultural-based counseling process. What Ninik Mamak does can be used as a reference in the Minang culture-based counseling process.

The above study provides space for counselors in the community, who can apply cultural-based counseling for marital problems services. Culture as part of identity formation [21]. The value system is a determining element in culture [22]. Multicultural awareness has a positive contribution to counseling [23]. This can be interpreted that the culturally friendly counseling process is considered appropriate in resolving marital problems, especially in the Minang realm. On the other hand, the counselor can also use other parties who are considered respectable in the process of accelerating the resolution of marital problems. Further recommendations on other local cultural studies can also be constructed by counselors as strengths in the cultural-based marriage counseling process through research. Cultural counseling is a very important issue at this time, so counselors should have competence in providing cultural-based counseling services [24].

#### 4 Conclusion

The results of the study concluded that ninik mamak as customary holders have a very unique pattern in solving marriage problems, firstly ninik mamak does problem mapping, creates concern for family members and builds togetherness. Furthermore, ninik mamak empowers the potential of highly respected families to mediate. The mediation process is carried out with a persuasive approach, encouraging clear thinking, broad-mindedness, and prioritizing the goodness of children and families. The next process is ninik mamak to evaluate through the process of observing and interviewing the results of the mediation that has been carried out. This research has implications for marriage counseling services based on Minang culture.

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