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Psychosocial Analysis of Familicide Offenders: A Forensic Psychology Perspective in Indonesia

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Abstract

Familicide represents a complex form of interpersonal violence that cannot be adequately explained solely through psychopathological or legal approaches. This study examines familicide in Indonesia through an integrated psychosocial and forensic psychology perspective. The study aims to analyze the interaction between psychological vulnerabilities and socio-structural factors that contribute to violent behavior within family relationships. A qualitative design using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach was employed by synthesizing findings from Indonesian and international scholarly sources related to familicide, forensic psychology, and psychosocial criminology. The findings indicate that familicide is shaped by the accumulation of multiple risk factors, including emotional dysregulation, impulsivity, low self-control, economic hardship, family conflict, dysfunctional family dynamics, and limited social support. These factors interact over time and increase the likelihood of violence within the domestic environment. The review further highlights the role of forensic psychology as an integrative framework that connects psychological assessment with broader social and environmental influences in understanding offender behavior. The study concludes that familicide should be viewed as a multidimensional phenomenon requiring comprehensive assessment and intervention. The findings imply the need for culturally sensitive forensic assessment protocols, early prevention strategies, multidisciplinary collaboration, and community-based support systems to strengthen familicide prevention and intervention efforts in Indonesia.

Keywords

Criminal Profiling, Familicide, Forensic Psychology, Psychological Vulnerability, Psychosocial Factors, Socio-Structural Pressure.

1. Introduction

Familicide, particularly cases involving intra-familicide, represents one of the most disturbing forms of interpersonal violence, as it violates not only legal norms but also the fundamental expectations of familial protection and emotional bonding. The death of Sarkawi, a 60-year-old father in South Bangka who was killed by his own daughter, Harina (also known as Nos), in August 2023, has left profound emotional and social impacts within Indonesian society. Rather than being perceived as an isolated criminal incident, this tragedy has raised broader questions regarding the complexity of family relationships and the underlying factors that may drive individuals to commit extreme acts of violence against those closest to them. As highlighted by Hozeng et al. (2021) and Awalokita (2024), such cases reflect how dysfunctional family dynamics can escalate into severe and unexpected violent outcomes. In criminological terms, these incidents are categorized as familicide, a specific form of homicide characterized by unique psychological and relational dynamics that require a more nuanced analytical framework.

In the Indonesian context, where familial bonds and cultural values strongly emphasize kinship, harmony, and collective identity, familicide cases represent a profound social contradiction. They challenge conventional assumptions that family structures inherently function as protective environments. Instead, they reveal how psychological distress, relational conflict, and socio-economic pressures may converge within the domestic sphere. Consequently, a purely legalistic or punitive approach is insufficient to explain or address such complex phenomena. Instead, interdisciplinary perspectives, particularly forensic psychology, are increasingly recognized as essential in bridging psychological science and the criminal justice system. Forensic psychology contributes to offender assessment, motive reconstruction, and criminal profiling, thereby offering a more comprehensive understanding of violent behavior within familial contexts. As emphasized by Fadillah et al. (2025), the role of forensic psychology in Indonesia's justice system is becoming increasingly important in understanding offender backgrounds and behavioral motivations.

International literature further supports this complexity. Research conducted by Karlsson et al. (2021) and Tavone et al. (2023) on familicide cases in Italy reveals that although psychiatric disorders are present in some offenders, the majority do not exhibit clear clinical diagnoses. This finding challenges the dominant psychopathological explanation of familicide and suggests that mental illness alone cannot sufficiently account for such behavior. Instead, it highlights the importance of integrating psychosocial frameworks within forensic psychological analysis. This perspective rejects the simplistic dichotomy between "mental illness" and "criminality," and instead emphasizes the dynamic interaction between internal factors such as personality traits, emotional regulation, and psychological vulnerability and external influences, including social, cultural, economic, and structural conditions.

Despite growing recognition of these multidimensional factors, there remains a significant research gap in understanding how psychosocial and forensic psychological perspectives can be systematically integrated within the Indonesian context. Existing studies tend to focus either on individual psychopathology or on broader socio-structural explanations, without sufficiently exploring their interaction in a unified analytical framework. Moreover, limited attention has been given to how cultural values, family structures, and local socio-economic conditions in Indonesia shape the manifestation of familicide. This gap underscores the need for a more holistic and context-sensitive analytical approach.

Therefore, this critical review article aims to examine and analyze the psychosocial determinants of familicide behavior through an integrated forensic

psychology perspective in Indonesia. The study specifically focuses on the interaction between psychological and socio-structural factors in shaping violent behavior within familial relationships. By synthesizing empirical findings from both international and Indonesian contexts, this study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of familicide as a multidimensional phenomenon.

The contribution of this study lies in its effort to develop an integrated psychosocial-forensic framework that can be applied within the Indonesian criminal justice and mental health systems. It is expected to support the development of more effective prevention strategies, improve forensic psychological assessment practices, and provide a foundation for early detection systems aimed at identifying familial risk factors before violence escalates. Ultimately, this study emphasizes the importance of a multidisciplinary, culturally sensitive, and evidence-based approach in addressing familicide in Indonesia.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Psychopathological Perspectives on Familicide Behavior

The understanding of familicide offenders has historically been dominated by psychopathological perspectives that position individual factors as the primary explanation for criminal behavior. This approach is based on the assumption that extreme acts of violence, particularly the killing of one's own family members, are closely associated with mental disorders, emotional instability, or maladaptive personality characteristics. Within psychological and criminological studies, conditions such as major depression, schizophrenia, psychosis, paranoia, and impaired impulse control are frequently linked to an increased risk of violent behavior. Empirical evidence supports this view. A study conducted by Tavone et al. (2023) on familicide cases in Italy found that 24.14% of offenders had diagnosed psychiatric disorders, including major depression, schizophrenia, and psychosis. Alifah et al. (2015) and Azalia et al. (2025) suggested that certain psychological conditions may influence how individuals perceive reality, regulate emotions, and respond to conflicts occurring within the family environment.

In the Indonesian context, the significance of psychological factors has also been demonstrated by Abel and Alfinuha (2020) and Monika (2023), who employed the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2 (MMPI-2) to identify the psychological characteristics of premeditated murder offenders. Their findings revealed exceptionally high scores on schizophrenia, paranoia, and hypomania scales, indicating substantial psychopathological tendencies among several offenders. Nevertheless, these findings do not imply that all perpetrators of familicide can be classified as individuals with mental disorders. Numerous cases by Hisyam et al. (2025) and Hasibuan (2026) indicate that offenders do not exhibit clear clinical diagnoses, suggesting that psychopathology alone cannot fully explain the occurrence of familicide. Therefore, psychological factors should be understood as one important component in explaining criminal behavior, while also being examined alongside broader social and environmental influences that contribute to the development of familicide cases (Tavone et al., 2023).

2.2. Psychosocial–Forensic Approaches in the Analysis of Familicide

In response to the limitations of perspectives that focus solely on individual factors, socio-structural and psychosocial approaches have emerged to emphasize the influence of environmental conditions on criminal behavior. Agnew's Strain Theory argues that an individual's inability to achieve socially valued goals may generate frustration, pressure, and negative emotions that, under certain circumstances, develop into violent actions. Likewise, Hirschi's Social Control Theory suggests that the strength of social bonds with family, educational institutions, and the wider community significantly affects an individual's likelihood of adhering to social

norms. According to Husna and Yusuf (2025) and Kausar et al. (2025), when these bonds weaken or deteriorate, the risk of deviant and criminal behavior increases substantially.

More recently, forensic psychology has offered a broader analytical framework by integrating individual and environmental factors into a single explanatory model. This perspective aligns with the General Theory of Crime, which identifies low self-control as a major predictor of criminal behavior while also recognizing that self-regulation is shaped by social experiences, parenting practices, and cultural contexts (Yeni et al., 2017; Wicaksana & Nurhadiyanto, 2024). Within the Indonesian setting, a psychosocial–forensic approach is particularly relevant because it considers collectivist values, family hierarchies, social pressures, and cultural norms that influence individual behavior. Consequently, familicide is understood as the result of a complex interaction between psychological, personality, biological, and developmental factors and environmental influences such as family conditions, community relationships, cultural expectations, economic stressors, and broader social systems. This integrated perspective enables a more contextual and comprehensive understanding of familicide while supporting the development of more effective prevention and intervention strategies that are responsive to Indonesia's socio-cultural characteristics (Lauren et al., 2024; Mubina, 2024).

3. Methods

This study employed a qualitative research design using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to comprehensively analyze familicide behavior through an integrated psychosocial and forensic psychology perspective in Indonesia. This design was selected because it enables a structured synthesis of empirical findings from diverse academic sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and documented case studies. The approach is particularly suitable for examining the interaction between individual psychological factors and broader socio-structural influences in explaining familicide phenomena within a culturally specific Indonesian context.

The data sources consisted of scientific literature addressing familicide, forensic psychology, psychosocial criminological theories, and related empirical studies from both Indonesian and international contexts. Data collection was conducted through systematic searches of academic databases, including Google Scholar and other scholarly repositories, as well as documentation of relevant real-life case reports to enrich contextual understanding. The search process employed combinations of keywords such as "familicide," "family homicide," "forensic psychology," "psychosocial factors," "domestic violence," "criminal behavior," and "Indonesia." Only publications that were directly relevant to the research objectives and provided empirical findings or theoretical discussions on familicide and related psychosocial factors were included in the review. Duplicate publications, opinion articles, and studies lacking sufficient methodological information were excluded to ensure the quality and relevance of the synthesized evidence.

Data analysis was conducted using content analysis combined with thematic synthesis. The collected literature was systematically reviewed, coded, and categorized into key themes, including psychological factors (emotional dysregulation, personality traits, and self-control), social factors (economic stress, family conflict, and social environment), and the integrative role of forensic psychology in explaining the interaction between these dimensions. The analysis followed several stages, including data reduction, coding, theme development, and interpretative synthesis to construct a holistic understanding of familicide behavior. The findings were then interpreted to highlight the importance of a psychosocial-forensic integrated approach in improving prevention strategies, risk assessment, and intervention frameworks for familicide cases in Indonesia.

4. Results

4.1. Psychosocial Risk in Familicide Cases

The literature indicates that familicide is closely associated with psychological vulnerabilities that affect emotional regulation, self-control, and decision-making processes. Across several Indonesian cases, perpetrators consistently demonstrated emotional instability, impulsive behavior, and difficulties in managing prolonged psychological stress. The case of Harina (Nos) in Bangka Belitung illustrates how multidimensional pressures, particularly economic burdens and emotional strain, interacted with individual psychological vulnerability and ultimately contributed to violent behavior (Awalokita, 2024). This reflects that psychological factors do not operate independently but emerge within sustained exposure to socio-environmental stressors. Similarly, Pramudia et al. (2025) and Pratiwi and Tobing (2025) found that perpetrators of premeditated homicide frequently exhibited low self-control and impulsive tendencies, indicating that these traits become critical risk factors when individuals lack adaptive coping mechanisms under chronic stress conditions.

Another recurring pattern identified in the literature is the role of emotional dysregulation in escalating interpersonal conflict within family settings. Low self-control is not merely an innate personality trait but is often shaped through adverse developmental and social experiences, including inconsistent parenting, exposure to domestic violence, and absence of supportive role models during emotional development (Muklim & Soesilo, 2018; Purwaningsih & Alam, 2024). These long-term developmental conditions weaken emotional regulation capacities, increasing vulnerability to maladaptive responses when individuals face severe family conflicts. In this sense, psychological vulnerability is constructed through continuous interaction between individual life history and surrounding social environments.

The findings suggest that familicide emerges from an accumulation of psychosocial risks rather than a single determinant. Psychological vulnerabilities such as impulsivity and emotional dysregulation become significant only when embedded within prolonged socio-structural pressures (Awalokita, 2024). This indicates that familicide should be conceptualized as a progressive process of risk accumulation rather than an abrupt behavioral deviation. Accordingly, understanding the interaction between psychological and environmental factors is essential for developing a more comprehensive explanatory framework.

4.2. Socio-Structural Pressure and Cumulative Familicide Risk

The findings consistently highlight socio-structural pressures as central determinants in familicide cases. Economic hardship, chronic family conflict, unequal distribution of responsibilities, and social isolation emerge as dominant factors contributing to escalating family violence. In the DDS case in Magelang, financial stress combined with perceived injustice in household roles created persistent relational tension that ultimately escalated into lethal violence (Wicaksana & Nurhadiyanto, 2024). This demonstrates that structural pressures are not merely background conditions, but active contributors to familial instability and conflict escalation.

Prolonged economic pressure significantly affects both material well-being and psychological stability within households. When individuals lack sufficient social or institutional support, financial stress becomes chronic and increasingly difficult to manage. In such conditions, the family system often shifts from being a source of support to a source of conflict, intensifying emotional strain among members. This transformation illustrates how structural deprivation can indirectly trigger psychological distress that contributes to violent behavior (Pecino-Latorre et al. 2019).

Dysfunctional family dynamics further strengthen this risk accumulation process. Research by Putri et al. (2024) shows that in cases involving child victims, family

members account for approximately 71% of perpetrators. This finding highlights the vulnerability of family systems under chronic relational dysfunction. Poor communication patterns, unresolved conflicts, and unequal family roles repeatedly appear as antecedents of extreme violence. These conditions suggest that familicide is often rooted in long-standing relational breakdowns rather than sudden conflict escalation.

In addition, limited external social support significantly increases the likelihood of violence within families. Batjo et al. (2024) and Wicaksana and Nurhadiyanto (2024) emphasize that social isolation reduces opportunities for early intervention and external mediation. Without intervention from extended family, neighbors, or community institutions, family conflicts tend to escalate internally without disruption. This absence of social buffering systems contributes to the progression of conflict toward critical levels.

The literature also indicates that familicide cannot be attributed to a single causal factor but rather results from multiple interacting risks. Riduan et al. (2024) and Wilona and Gunatirin (2025) describe familicide as a gradual accumulation of stressors over time, rather than an immediate emotional reaction. Economic pressure, emotional instability, and family conflict interact to create a reinforcing cycle of risk escalation. These conditions demonstrate that familicide should be understood as a systemic phenomenon emerging from interconnected social and psychological pressures.

The case of Harina (Nos) further illustrates this cumulative process, where economic hardship and psychological vulnerability interacted to create a "pressure cooker" dynamic that eventually resulted in violence (Awalokita, 2024). This interaction shows that risk factors do not operate independently but mutually reinforce one another. Economic stress increases emotional strain, emotional strain reduces self-control, and a lack of social support limits coping capacity. As a result, cumulative stress becomes a central mechanism in the development of familicide.

4.3. Psychosocial-Forensic Integration and Prevention Implications

This study emphasizes the importance of an integrated psychosocial-forensic framework in understanding familicide. Forensic psychology provides a structured approach to analyzing the interaction between psychological vulnerabilities and socio-structural pressures in shaping violent behavior. Fernandes (2021) and Yournawan and Hariansah (2025) highlight that forensic psychological assessment extends beyond legal accountability, contributing to the identification of behavioral risk patterns within family contexts. This positions forensic psychology as both an analytical and preventive discipline.

The synthesis of findings indicates that familicide emerges from the interaction between internal psychological vulnerabilities and external socio-structural stressors. Psychological characteristics such as impulsivity and emotional dysregulation interact with economic hardship, family conflict, and social isolation (Awalokita, 2024). This interaction produces a cumulative risk process that develops gradually over time rather than occurring suddenly. Therefore, familicide should be conceptualized as a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by continuous psychosocial interaction.

From a preventive perspective, the literature supports the identification of integrated risk indicators. These include chronic family conflict, prolonged economic stress, emotional dysregulation, low self-control, and weak social support systems. The coexistence of these indicators may function as an early warning framework for identifying families at high risk of violence. Such an approach enables proactive intervention before escalation occurs. Prevention strategies must also address both social and structural dimensions of risk. Batjo et al. (2024) and Wicaksana and Nurhadiyanto (2024) emphasize the importance of community-based support systems in reducing escalation risk through early intervention. In addition, economic

stability plays a crucial role in reducing psychological strain within households. Therefore, effective prevention requires integrated interventions that target both individual psychological functioning and structural living conditions.

Langelo et al. (2021), Wicaksana and Nurhadiyanto (2024), and Fadillah et al. (2025) highlight the necessity of multidisciplinary approaches in addressing familicide. Integrating psychology, criminology, and social policy enables the development of comprehensive prevention systems that are both evidence-based and context-sensitive. This reinforces the importance of forensic psychology in risk detection, intervention planning, and violence prevention. Familicide should be understood as the result of complex and dynamic interactions between psychological and socio-structural factors. The psychosocial-forensic framework provides a comprehensive lens for understanding, assessing, and preventing familial violence in Indonesia. This approach supports the development of culturally sensitive, multidisciplinary, and evidence-based strategies for early detection and prevention of familicide.

5. Discussion

The findings of this review indicate that familicide in Indonesia cannot be adequately explained through a single-factor perspective. Instead, the literature consistently demonstrates that familicide emerges from the interaction between psychological vulnerabilities and socio-structural pressures that develop over time. Psychological factors such as emotional vulnerability, low self-control, impulsivity, and difficulties in emotional regulation frequently appear in familicide cases. At the same time, social factors, including economic hardship, family conflict, dysfunctional family relationships, and limited social support, contribute significantly to the escalation of violence. Cases such as Harina (Nos) in Bangka Belitung and DDS in Magelang illustrate how these factors interact and gradually create conditions that increase the risk of lethal violence within the family environment (Awalokita, 2024; Wicaksana & Nurhadiyanto, 2024).

These findings directly address the research objective of this study, which was to examine familicide through an integrated psychosocial and forensic psychology perspective. The reviewed literature suggests that neither psychopathological explanations nor socio-structural approaches alone are sufficient to explain family homicide. Consistent with the findings of Chandra (2021) and Tavone et al. (2023), psychological disorders may be present in some cases, yet many offenders do not exhibit clear psychiatric diagnoses. This indicates that familicide should be understood as a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by the continuous interaction between individual psychological conditions and broader social circumstances. The accumulation of risk factors, rather than a single triggering event, appears to be the dominant pattern underlying many familicide cases.

The integration of psychological and social perspectives provides a more comprehensive understanding of how violence develops within family settings. According to Awalokita (2024), psychological vulnerabilities often become more severe when individuals are exposed to chronic economic pressure, unresolved family disputes, social isolation, and ineffective coping mechanisms. In several reviewed cases, prolonged exposure to these stressors created what psychosocial literature frequently describes as a "pressure cooker" effect, in which emotional tension gradually intensifies until a critical point is reached. This finding highlights the importance of viewing familicide as the product of interconnected risk factors rather than as the result of isolated personal pathology or social disadvantage.

Within this context, forensic psychology functions as an important integrative framework that connects individual behavioral analysis with broader psychosocial conditions. Rather than focusing solely on criminal responsibility or mental illness, forensic psychology enables a more holistic assessment of offender behavior,

emotional functioning, family dynamics, and environmental influences. As emphasized by Fadillah et al. (2025), forensic psychological assessment can assist in identifying behavioral patterns, motivational processes, and risk indicators associated with violent family-related offenses. Consequently, the integration of psychosocial and forensic perspectives offers a stronger foundation for understanding, assessing, and preventing familicide in Indonesia.

Despite its potential, the implementation of this integrated approach faces several challenges within the Indonesian context. One of the primary difficulties is developing culturally sensitive assessment and intervention models that remain scientifically rigorous while accommodating Indonesia's diverse social and cultural backgrounds. According to Sopyani and Edwina (2021), variations in family structures, parenting practices, community values, and local norms may influence both the manifestation of family violence and the effectiveness of intervention strategies. In addition, limited availability of comprehensive empirical data, unequal access to forensic psychological services, and the shortage of trained forensic professionals continue to constrain the development of evidence-based practices across regions.

The findings also generate several practical implications. First, there is a need to develop standardized and culturally appropriate forensic assessment protocols capable of identifying psychological and social risk factors at an early stage. Second, preventive efforts should focus not only on individual psychological intervention but also on strengthening family functioning and social support systems. Third, multidisciplinary collaboration among forensic psychologists, mental health professionals, social workers, and law enforcement agencies is essential for managing complex family violence cases effectively. Furthermore, integrating local wisdom and community-based support mechanisms may strengthen prevention efforts, as families exist within broader social networks that can function as sources of protection, conflict mediation, and early detection. Sopyani and Edwina (2021), together with Fadillah et al. (2025), suggested that combining scientific assessment with culturally grounded community support may provide a more sustainable psychosocial–forensic framework for preventing and addressing familicide in Indonesia.

6. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that familicide cannot be adequately explained through a single perspective, whether psychological or socio-structural. The findings indicate that familicide emerges from the complex interaction between psychological vulnerabilities such as emotional dysregulation, low self-control, impulsivity, and psychological distress and social pressures, including economic hardship, family conflict, dysfunctional family relationships, and limited social support. The review further reveals that these factors tend to accumulate over time, creating conditions that increase the risk of violence within the family environment. In this context, forensic psychology plays an important role as an integrative framework that connects psychological assessment with broader social and environmental influences, allowing a more comprehensive understanding of offender behavior. The findings also highlight the practical importance of culturally sensitive risk assessment, early intervention strategies, multidisciplinary collaboration, and community-based support systems in preventing familicide in Indonesia.

Despite these contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged. This study relies on secondary data and documented case reports, which may limit the depth of analysis regarding individual offender experiences and contextual variations across regions. In addition, the availability and quality of empirical data on familicide in Indonesia remain relatively limited, making comprehensive comparisons difficult. Future research is therefore encouraged to employ primary

data collection methods, including interviews, psychological assessments, and longitudinal studies involving offenders, families, and relevant institutions. Further studies should also explore the influence of local cultural values, family structures, and community dynamics on familicide behavior in different regions of Indonesia to strengthen the development of context-sensitive forensic psychological frameworks and prevention programs.

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The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.



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