

Family Communication and Coping Strategies on Soldier Children's Independence: A *Maqasid Al-Shariah* Perspective

Hartatiah*, Akhmad Khalimy**, Muh. Isra Bil Ali***

Postgraduate Program of UIN Siber Syekh Nurjati Cirebon*,**

Institut Teknologi Bisnis Akademi Akuntansi Surakarta***

hartatiahdrive18@gmail.com*, akhalimy@uinssc.ac.id**, israbil94@gmail.com***

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ABSTRACT

The dynamics of military families, characterized by high mobility and father absence due to operational duties, pose unique challenges to child development. This study aims to analyze the influence of family communication and coping strategies on the independence of soldiers' children, viewed through the lens of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*. Using a mixed-method explanatory sequential design, quantitative data were collected from 200 respondents in the Kodam III/Siliwangi battalion, followed by in-depth interviews with selected informants. The results indicate that family communication and coping strategies significantly influence children's independence, explaining 75.5% of the variance. The study theoretically contributes to Islamic Family Law by reframing psychological resilience as a spiritual necessity: effective communication is *hifz al-nafs* (preservation of the soul). At the same time, adaptive coping strategies manifest as *hifz al-din* (preservation of religion) and *hifz al-nasl* (preservation of progeny). Practically, these findings urge military institutions to integrate spirituality-based counseling into family support programs.

Keywords: Child Independence; Coping Strategy; *Maqasid Al-Shariah*; Military Family Resilience; Soldier Family

A. INTRODUCTION

The family unit serves as the primary environment for a child's character development, including the formation of independence. However, military families face a distinct ecosystem characterized by high mobility, frequent separation, and the looming risk of loss due to state duties.¹ These conditions create a "culture of absence" where the father figure is frequently unavailable, placing a disproportionate burden on the mother to maintain family stability. Recent studies indicate that living with the uncertainty of a loved one's safety during deployment significantly impacts the mental health and lived experiences of military spouses and children.² This unique pressure requires specific adaptation mechanisms to ensure that children do not suffer developmental setbacks but instead grow into resilient individuals.

The fundamental problem arising from this context is the potential disruption to the child's development of independence. Adolescence and childhood are critical periods for the development of self-regulation and autonomy.³ When a father is absent, the intensity and quality of family communication become the lifeline for the child's emotional stability. As noted by Djamarah, effective communication is not merely about information exchange but is the foundation of educational values within the family.⁴ Simultaneously, the family must employ adaptive coping strategies to manage stress. Lazarus and Folkman define coping as dynamic cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage external and internal demands.⁵ Without effective communication and adaptive coping, soldier children are at risk of experiencing emotional fragility rather than developing the independence required for their future.

While numerous studies have explored family resilience, most literature approaches the subject from a secular or general psychological perspective.⁶ For instance, Cheng et al. (2024) and Vladislav (2024) have extensively discussed the association between family resilience and mental health in a social-ecological context.⁷ However, there is a significant scarcity of literature that explicitly connects military family dynamics to Islamic legal philosophy (*Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah*). Existing studies

¹ Senior et al., "Living with a Loved One's Mental Health Issue: Recognizing the Lived Experiences of Military Spouses," *PLOS One* 20, no. 11 (2025): 1-21.

² Gabriela Misca and Janet Walker, "Strengthening Military Families: Evaluating the Impact of Relationship Counseling on UK Naval Families," *Family Court Review* 63, no. 4 (2025): 619-639., <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/fcre.70018>.

³ Laurence Steinberg, *Adolescence*, ed. 10 (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2011).

⁴ Syaiful Bahri Djamarah, *Pola Komunikasi Orang Tua Dan Anak Dalam Keluarga* (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 2014).

⁵ Richard S. Lazarus and Susan Folkman, *Stress, Appraisal, and Coping* (New York: Springer, 1984).

⁶ Xu Cheng et al., "The Association Between Family Resilience and Mental Health: A Cross-Sectional Study," *Journal of Family Psychology*, *Archive Of Psychiantri Nursing* 53 (2024): 224-31.

⁷ Elena Otilia Vladislav et al., "Family Resilience in a Social-Ecological Context - Emotional Difficulties and Coping Strategies," *Frontiers in Psychology* 15, no. 1421745 (2024): 1-11.

often overlook the spiritual dimension of coping mechanisms, such as religious coping, which is prevalent in Muslim societies like Indonesia. This study argues that the struggle of soldier families to raise independent children is not only a psychological endeavor but also a manifestation of the preservation of the soul (*hifz al-nafs*) and the progeny (*hifz al-nasl*).⁸

Previous scholarship on military families has predominantly focused on secular psychological resilience. For instance, Senior, Clarke, and Wilson-Menzfeld (2025) examined the lived experiences of military spouses dealing with mental health issues, while Vladislav (2024) highlighted the emotional states and dimensions of family resilience within a social-ecological context.⁹⁻¹⁰ In the Indonesian context, studies by Yulianti (2019) have touched upon parental involvement and family dynamics but often overlook the theological dimension. There is a noticeable scarcity of literature that bridges the rigorous psychological framework of 'family stress' with the normative values of Islamic Law (*Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*). Existing Islamic family law studies tend to focus on divorce or inheritance, rarely addressing the micromanagement of stress as a fulfillment of religious objectives.¹¹

This study offers a threefold novelty. *First*, theoretically, it integrates the 'Double ABCX' family stress model with the *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* framework, proposing that 'coping' is not merely a survival mechanism but a form of ibadah (worship) to preserve the family's religion (*hifz al-din*) and progeny (*hifz al-nasl*). *Second*, contextually, it focuses on the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) families who possess unique cultural and religious characteristics distinct from Western military studies. *Third*, methodologically, the use of a mixed-methods approach enables quantifiable measurement of independence while providing deep theological insights into how these families interpret their spiritual struggles.

Therefore, this study aims to address this academic gap by analyzing the influence of family communication and coping strategies on the independence of soldiers' children and interpreting these dynamics from the perspective of *Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah*. By integrating the psychological framework of family stress with Islamic objectives, this research offers a novel perspective on how soldier families fulfill their religious obligations in child-rearing amidst the challenges of military duty.

⁸ Jasser Auda, , *Maqasid Al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach* (London: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2008).

⁹ Senior et al., "Living with a Loved One's Mental Health Issue: Recognizing the Lived Experiences of Military Spouses."

¹⁰ Vladislav et al., "Family Resilience in a Social-Ecological Context – Emotional Difficulties and Coping Strategies."

¹¹ Kartika Yulianti, Eddie Denessen, and Mienke Droop, "Indonesian Parents' Involvement in Their Children's Education: A Study in Elementary Schools in Urban and Rural Java, Indonesia," *School Community Journal*, 29, no. 1 (2019): 253–78.

B. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a mixed-methods approach using an explanatory sequential design that combines quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. Specifically, this research is categorized as empirical legal research (socio-legal) because it integrates field data on family dynamics with the normative frameworks of *Maqāṣid al-Syari'ah*.¹² A mixed-methods approach was selected as superior for this study because statistical data alone cannot capture the deep spiritual meaning that mothers attach to their coping strategies. While the quantitative phase measures the magnitude of influence, the qualitative phase explains the mechanisms by which religious values are operationalized in daily parenting.

The research was conducted at the Battalion units of Kodam III/Siliwangi in West Java, focusing on families of soldiers who are currently or have previously been assigned to operational duties. This location was selected because of the high intensity of deployment, which provides a representative context for analyzing the independence of soldiers' children.

The study population comprised wives and children of Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) soldiers residing in military dormitories. The quantitative sample comprised 200 respondents (soldiers' wives), selected via purposive sampling using specific inclusion criteria, particularly families experiencing father absence due to state service. This sample size exceeds the minimum requirement calculated via the Slovin formula (171 respondents) to ensure greater data validity.¹³ For the qualitative phase, informants were selected based on data saturation principles, including mothers, children, and administrators of Persit Kartika Chandra Kirana (the soldiers' wives organization), to gain in-depth insights into the social support systems.

Data regarding children's independence were obtained through parental reporting (mothers). This proxy method was chosen because of the children's varying ages and developmental stages, which may limit their ability to self-assess complex psychological constructs. Furthermore, mothers in military families serve as the primary observers and regulators of their children's behaviors during the father's absence.

Data were collected using two primary instruments. Quantitative data were gathered using a closed questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale to measure three variables: Family Communication, Coping Strategies, and Child Independence. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation. The data analysis procedure was conducted in two stages. *First*, quantitative data were analyzed using Structural

¹² Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Dan R&D* (Bandung: Alfabet, 2018).

¹³ Suharsimi Arikunto, *Prosedur Penelitian Suatu Pendekatan Praktik* (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 2014).

Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) assisted by SmartPLS 4 software to test the research hypotheses.¹⁴ *Second*, qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis to interpret the statistical findings and contextualize them within the values of *Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah*, specifically regarding the preservation of religion (*hifz al-din*), soul (*hifz al-nafs*), and progeny (*hifz al-nasl*).¹⁵

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Respondent Characteristics

The demographic profile serves as a crucial foundation for understanding the context of family resilience within the Kodam III/Siliwangi unit. This study involved 200 respondents, consisting of soldiers' wives (members of Persit Kartika Chandra Kirana) who met the inclusion criteria of having school-aged children and experiencing father absence due to operational duties. The demographic data, comprising the wife's age, the husband's rank, and the duration of deployment, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents (N=200)

Category	Classification	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Wife's Age	< 25 Years Old	22	11.0%
	26 – 35 Years Old	98	49.0%
	36 – 45 Years Old	64	32.0%
	> 45 Years Old	16	8.0%
Husband's Rank	Tamtama (Enlisted)	68	34.0%
	Bintara (NCO)	102	51.0%
	Perwira (Officer)	30	15.0%
Deployment Duration	6 – 9 Months	56	28.0%
	10 – 12 Months	114	57.0%
	> 1 Year	30	15.0%
Total		200	100%

Source: Primary Data Processed (2025)

The demographic data presented in Table 1 reveal that the majority of respondents are between 26 and 35 years old (49%) and have experienced husband deployment for 10–12 months (57%). This specific demographic suggests a mature adaptation phase where wives have likely developed stable coping mechanisms.

¹⁴ Jr. Joseph F. Hair et al., *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2014).

¹⁵ Lexy J. Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2019).

2. Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

Before testing the structural hypotheses, the measurement model was evaluated to ensure construct validity and reliability. This evaluation encompasses Convergent Validity, Discriminant Validity, and Internal Consistency Reliability.

a. Convergent Validity and Reliability

Convergent validity assesses the extent to which a measure correlates positively with alternative measures of the same construct. Table 2 shows that all indicators have outer loadings above 0.70 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above 0.50, indicating adequate convergent validity. Specifically, the outer loadings for Family Communication range from 0.780 to 0.958, Coping Strategies from 0.746 to 0.912, and Child Independence from 0.800 to 0.931. Several indicators (KA1, SC5, SC6, SC7) were removed during pruning because they did not meet the threshold of 0.70.

Furthermore, internal consistency was measured using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (rho_c). As presented in Table 2, all constructs exhibit Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values well above the recommended threshold of 0.70. The variable Child Independence demonstrated the highest reliability (CR = 0.977), followed by Family Communication (CR = 0.974). This confirms that the instrument used is highly reliable and consistent in measuring the psychological dynamics of military families.

Table 2. Measurement Model Assessment (Loadings, AVE, Reliability)

Construct / Indicators	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_c)
Family Communication		0.969	0.974
KK1	0.780		
KK2	0.869		
KK3	0.876		
KK4	0.951		
KK5	0.929		
KK6	0.958		
KK7	0.948		
KK8	0.935		
Coping Strategies		0.895	0.923
SC1	0.912		
SC2	0.887		

SC3	0.890		
SC4	0.755		
SC8	0.746		
Child Independence		0.974	0.977
KA2	0.915		
KA3	0.895		
KA4	0.929		
KA5	0.915		
KA6	0.870		
KA7	0.915		
KA8	0.838		
KA9	0.880		
KA10	0.908		
KA11	0.931		
KA12	0.800		

Source: Primary Data Processed with SmartPLS 4 (2025)

The evaluation of the measurement model (Outer Model) confirms that all constructs are valid and reliable. As shown in Table 2, all indicators exhibit outer loadings > 0.70 , and Composite Reliability values exceed the 0.70 threshold, with Child Independence showing the highest reliability (CR = 0.977). Discriminant validity was also established using the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Table 3), ensuring that Family Communication, Coping Strategies, and Child Independence are empirically distinct constructs.

b. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity ensures that a construct is empirically distinct from other constructs in the structural model. This study employs the Fornell-Larcker criterion, which compares the square root of the AVE with the latent variable correlations. As shown in Table 3, the square root of the AVE for each construct (diagonal values in bold) is greater than its highest correlation with any other construct. For instance, the square root of the AVE for Family Communication is 0.907, which is higher than the square roots of the AVEs for Child Independence (0.832) and Coping Strategies (0.804). This confirms that the constructs are statistically distinct.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

Construct	Child Independence	Family Communication	Coping Strategies
Child Independence	0.891		

Family Communication	0.832	0.907	
Coping Strategies	0.818	0.804	0.841

Source: Primary Data Processed with SmartPLS 4 (2025)

Although correlations among variables are relatively high, reflecting the strong theoretical interconnections among communication, coping, and independence in family dynamics, the Fornell-Larcker condition is fully satisfied. This confirms that, despite their close relationship, the constructs of Family Communication, Coping Strategies, and Child Independence are statistically distinct and are not affected by multicollinearity. Consequently, the measurement model is deemed valid for proceeding to structural equation modeling.

3. Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

Having established the validity and reliability of the measurement model, the next step is to evaluate the structural model (Inner Model). This evaluation focuses on the model's predictive power and the significance of the relationships among the constructs.

a. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The primary criterion for assessing the structural model is the coefficient of determination (R^2), which measures the model's predictive accuracy. As illustrated in the analysis, the proposed model accounts for a substantial proportion of the variance in soldier children's independence ($R^2 = 0.755$). This R-squared value indicates that 75.5% of the variability in a child's independence within military families is attributable to the simultaneous influence of family communication quality and the mother's coping strategies. The remaining 24.5% is attributable to factors outside the scope of this study. According to Hair et al., an R^2 value above 0.75 is considered "substantial," indicating that the model exhibits extreme explanatory power for the phenomenon of resilience in military children.

b. Hypothesis Testing (Direct Effects)

To validate the proposed hypotheses, a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples was conducted. This analysis determines the statistical significance of the path coefficients (β) between the exogenous variables (Family Communication and Coping Strategies) and the endogenous variable (Child Independence). The hypothesis-testing results confirm that both exogenous variables have positive and significant effects on the endogenous variable. The detailed results for the path coefficients, T-statistics, and P-values are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of PLS-SEM Analysis (Direct Effects)

Path	Coefficient (β)	T-statistics	P-value	Description
Family Communication → Child Independence	0.494	6.349	0.000	Significant
Coping Strategy → Child Independence	0.420	5.615	0.000	Significant

Source: Primary Data Processed with SmartPLS 4 (2025)

The structural model assessment (Inner Model) demonstrates a substantial predictive power, with an R^2 of 0.755. This indicates that the combined effects of family communication and coping strategies account for 75.5% of the variance in soldier children's independence. Hypothesis testing (Table 4) confirms that Family Communication ($\beta = 0.494$, $p < 0.001$) and Coping Strategies ($\beta = 0.420$, $p < 0.001$) have positive and significant effects.

The statistical evidence robustly supports the conclusion that the independence of military children is not accidental but is structured by the quality of maternal communication and deliberate coping strategies employed during the father's absence.

4. Family Communication as *Hifz al-Nafs* (Preservation of the Soul)

The study finds that family communication is the most dominant factor influencing child independence. This aligns with recent findings by Senior, Clarke, and Wilson-Menzfeld (2025), who emphasize that open communication about mental health is crucial for the "lived experience" of military spouses and children to survive the trauma of separation.¹⁶ Unlike civilian families, communication in military families serves as a psychological lifeline. When mothers facilitate virtual interactions between children and their deployed fathers, they are effectively mitigating the anxiety that often plagues military children.¹⁷

From the perspective of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, this function transcends mere psychology; it is a manifestation of *Hifz al-Nafs* (Preservation of the Soul). Al-Shāṭibī in *Al-Muwāfaqāt* categorizes the preservation of the soul as a *ḍarūriyyāt* (necessity). In this context, maintaining the child's mental stability through communication

¹⁶ Senior et al., "Living with a Loved One's Mental Health Issue: Recognizing the Lived Experiences of Military Spouses."

¹⁷ Mario J. Valladares-Garrido et al., "Mental Health and Other Factors Associated with COVID-19 Vaccination Intention toward Children of Military Parents in Lambayeque, Peru," *The Scientific World Journal* 2024, no. 1 (2024): 1-13, <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci14100599>.

protects them from psychological destruction (*fasad*), which is strictly forbidden in Islam. By keeping the soul tranquil (*nafs al-mutmainnah*), the child gains the internal capacity to act independently. This contradicts the earlier assumption that independence stems solely from strict discipline; rather, it arises from the “safety” afforded by consistent parental connection.

5. Adaptive Coping Strategies: Manifesting *Hifz al-Din* and *Hifz al-Mal*

The significance of coping strategies in this study ($\beta = 0.420$) corroborates Vladislav (2024), who argues that family resilience in a social-ecological context depends on “emotional regulation capabilities.” Furthermore, Schümm et al. (2025) found that effective management of work-family conflict directly impacts family stability. In the specific context of TNI families, this coping is unique because it is heavily “spiritualized.” Mothers do not merely manage stress; they “surrender” it through religious rituals (prayer and recitation).¹⁸

This spiritual coping is the essence of *Hifz al-Din* (Preservation of Religion). Ibn ‘Āshūr, in *Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah al-Islāmiyyah*, extends the preservation of religion to include the protection of the community’s spiritual identity. When a soldier’s wife teaches her child to pray for the father’s safety rather than despair, she is instilling reliance on God (*Tawakkul*), thereby ensuring the child’s faith endures the crisis. Additionally, practical coping—such as managing household schedules serves as *Hifz al-Mal* (Preservation of Resources/Time). As noted by Shin and Misca (2025), structured parenting interventions prevent resource depletion in military families, allowing the household to function efficiently despite the father’s absence.¹⁹

6. Child Independence: The Ultimate Goal of *Hifz al-Nasl* (Preservation of Progeny)

The outcome of these dynamics is a resilient and independent child. This finding parallels that of Misca and Walker (2025), who demonstrated that relationship-strengthening programs in naval families significantly reduce adverse outcomes for children. However, whereas Western studies view independence as “social functioning,” this study interprets it as *Hifz al-Nasl* (the Preservation of Progeny).²⁰

¹⁸ Schümm et al., “Reliability and Validation of U.S. Army-Oriented Brief Work-to-Family and Family-to-Work Conflict Scales: An Email Sample of 262 Army Career Officers,” *Social Sciences* 14, no. 10 (n.d.): 2025, <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci14100599>.

¹⁹ Mi E. Shin and Gabriela Misca., “Interventions to Support Parenting in Military and Veteran Families: The State of Play,” *Family Court Review* 63, no. 4 (2025): 575–600, <https://doi.org/10.1111/fcre.70021>.

²⁰ Misca and Walker, “Strengthening Military Families: Evaluating the Impact of Relationship Counseling on UK Naval Families.”

Preserving progeny is not merely about reproduction but about “quality rearing” (*tarbiyah*). Al-Shāṭibī emphasizes that *Hifz al-Nasl* includes safeguarding the moral and intellectual integrity of the next generation. The “independent child” in this study is the antithesis of the “weak generation” (*dhurriyyatan dī’āfan*) warned against in the Qur’an (An-Nisa: 9). By combining effective communication (*Hifz al-Nafs*) and religious coping (*Hifz al-Din*), soldier families are successfully producing a generation capable of carrying the burden of *khilafah* (stewardship), thereby fulfilling the highest objectives of Islamic Law.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, this study concludes that family communication and coping strategies are fundamental determinants of soldier children’s independence, simultaneously explaining 75.5% of the variance. The implications of these findings are profound when viewed through the lens of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī’ah*. Family communication functions as *hifz al-nafs* (preservation of the soul) by maintaining the child’s psychological stability amidst the trauma of separation. Meanwhile, religious coping strategies serve as *hifz al-din* (preservation of religion), transforming parental anxiety into spiritual reliance. Ultimately, the resulting independence in children fulfills the objective of *hifz al-nasl* (preservation of progeny), ensuring the continuity of a resilient generation despite the challenges of military life.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the sample was restricted to the Kodam III/Siliwangi (Army) unit in West Java, which may not fully represent the dynamics of other military branches (Navy or Air Force) with different deployment patterns. Second, the data on children’s independence relied on maternal reports (proxy reports), which may introduce subjective bias relative to direct assessments of the children. Third, the study employed a cross-sectional design, capturing data at a single point in time, which limits the ability to establish long-term causality.

The study recommends that the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) integrate “Spiritual Resilience Training” into their family support programs. Interventions should not only focus on general psychology but also incorporate Islamic counseling modules that frame “coping” as a form of worship, given the strong religious character of Indonesian soldiers. For Future Research: Future scholars are encouraged to conduct longitudinal studies to track the developmental trajectory of soldier children before, during, and after deployment. Additionally, comparative studies involving families from different religious backgrounds would be valuable to test whether the “spiritual coping” mechanism is universal or specific to Muslim military families.

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