



[DOI: 10.6160/ajis.v4i1.1103](https://doi.org/10.6160/ajis.v4i1.1103)

## ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Dynamics of Family Disharmony Without Offspring from The Perspective of Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'ah and its Implications for Household Resilience (A Case Study in Ketapang Village, Sungkai Selatan District, North Lampung Regency)

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## ABSTRACT

The presence of children within a family holds a strategic function as a continuation of lineage, a carrier of traditions, and an outpouring of affection. However, not all couples are blessed with children. The absence of children has the potential to generate dynamics of disharmony that threaten household resilience. This study aims to analyze the factors influencing disharmony in childless families, its implications for household resilience, and solutions grounded in maqāṣid al-sharī'ah. The research employs a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach in Ketapang Village, North Lampung. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with three couples who have been married for more than eight years without children, participant observation, and documentation. The findings indicate that internal factors (weak religious foundation, lack of exemplary models, and incomplete application of Islamic values) and external factors (social pressure and lack of family support) contribute to disharmony. Negative impacts include infidelity, chronic quarrels, and divorce. Maqāṣid al-sharī'ah-based solutions encompass the protection of religion (ḥifẓ al-dīn), life (ḥifẓ al-nafs), intellect (ḥifẓ al-'aql), lineage (ḥifẓ al-nasl), and property (ḥifẓ al-māl). This research confirms that family harmony without children can be achieved through the strengthening of spirituality, effective communication, and constructive social support.

**Keywords:** Family Disharmony, Childless, Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, Household Resilience



## ABSTRAK

Keberadaan anak dalam keluarga memiliki fungsi strategis sebagai penyambung garis keturunan, penerus tradisi, dan curahan kasih sayang. Namun, tidak semua pasangan dikaruniai anak. Ketidakhadiran anak berpotensi menimbulkan dinamika ketidakharmonisan yang mengancam ketahanan rumah tangga. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi ketidakharmonisan keluarga tanpa keturunan, implikasinya terhadap ketahanan rumah tangga, serta solusi berbasis maqashid syariah. Penelitian menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi di Desa Ketapang, Lampung Utara. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan tiga pasangan suami istri yang telah menikah lebih dari delapan tahun tanpa keturunan, observasi partisipatif, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa faktor internal (lemahnya landasan ibadah, kurangnya keteladanan, dan tidak diterapkannya nilai-nilai Islam secara menyeluruh) dan faktor eksternal (tekanan sosial dan kurangnya dukungan keluarga) berkontribusi terhadap ketidakharmonisan. Dampak negatif meliputi perselingkuhan, pertengkaran kronis, dan perceraian. Solusi berbasis maqashid syariah mencakup perlindungan agama (hifz al-din), jiwa (hifz al-nafs), akal (hifz al-aql), keturunan (hifz al-nasl), dan harta (hifz al-mal). Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa keharmonisan keluarga tanpa keturunan dapat diwujudkan melalui penguatan spiritualitas, komunikasi efektif, dan dukungan sosial yang konstruktif.

**Keywords:** : Ketidakharmonisan Keluarga, Tanpa Keturunan, Maqashid Syariah, Ketahanan Rumah Tangga

**How to cite:** Shalihin, R., Asnawi, H. S., & Iwannudin, I. (2026). Dynamics of Family Disharmony Without Offspring from The Perspective of Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'ah and its Implications for Household Resilience (A Case Study in Ketapang Village, Sungkai Selatan District, North Lampung Regency). *Assyfa Journal of Islamic Studies*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.61650/ajis.v4i1.1103>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The family constitutes the most important primary group in society, formed through a valid marriage bond. Islam, as a religion of *rahmah li al-'ālamīn* (mercy to all worlds), has established that marriage is the sole lawful means of fulfilling biological needs while simultaneously building human civilization. Among the objectives of marriage are the realization of a happy family founded upon love and compassion (*mawaddah wa rahmah*), as well as the attainment of legitimate offspring, as mentioned in QS. Al-Rūm [30]: 21. This verse affirms that tranquility (*sakinah*), love (*mawaddah*), and compassion (*rahmah*) are fundamental pillars that must be built within every marital bond, irrespective of the presence or absence of offspring.

Every married couple generally desires children, as children constitute the nuclear family and serve as the successor of generations. The presence of children within a marital bond is closely related to the function of children toward parents, namely as a continuation of lineage, a carrier of family traditions, an outpouring of affection, and a source of hope for parents in their old age. However, reality demonstrates that not all couples are blessed with children for many years. This condition of childlessness (infertility) socially impacts couples through negative stigma, potentially triggering decisions to divorce, practice polygamy, adopt children, or continue living together without children.

The phenomenon of family disharmony resulting from the absence of offspring constitutes a pressing issue requiring examination, particularly within the context of agrarian societies such as Ketapang Village, Sungkai Selatan District, North Lampung Regency. This village covers an area of 531 hectares with a population of 6,837 people, the majority of whom are of Lampungese and Javanese descent. Based on a preliminary survey conducted in October 2025, diverse dynamics were found among childless couples in this village. The couple TA and RN, who have been married for eight years, experienced infidelity due to the absence of children, yet the wife chose to remain for the sake of family integrity. The couple WH and IS, married for ten years, admitted to frequent quarrels despite attempting to live their lives with acceptance (*iḥtisāb*). Meanwhile, the couple AR and AN, who have been married for sixteen years, chose to adopt a daughter in the eighth year of their marriage as a solution to the emptiness of childlessness.

This phenomenon demonstrates that the absence of children does not automatically lead to the destruction of a household; rather, it creates complex dynamics requiring specific adaptive strategies. Previous research by Faridah (2025) in Tambusai District showed that childless couples are able to maintain harmony through open communication, mutual trust, quality time, and caring for children from extended family. This research employed *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* as an analytical framework and found that the five objectives of *sharī'ah* (religion, life, intellect, lineage, property) can still be fulfilled despite the absence of biological children. Research by Herman (2023) in Parepare City revealed that religious factors, love, and economic stability are primary determinants of household integrity among infertile couples, with the finding that under Islamic law, polygamy, adoption, and even divorce are permissible if infertility causes disharmony, while still considering *maṣlaḥah*.

Other research by Harahap et al. (2025) on the childfree marriage phenomenon found that the decision not to have children is based on the desire to achieve happiness and mutual well-being with one's partner, as well as to avoid toxic family environments, with wives holding a key role in decisions regarding reproductive rights. Alkausar & Kusumawati (2023), in their study, concluded that the child-free lifestyle from the perspective of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and the NU scholars of Tebuireng is considered *makrūh* (disliked) and *tark al-afḍal* (abandoning the more virtuous) because it contradicts the natural disposition (*fiṭrah*) for offspring. Meanwhile, Effendi (2024) examined the provision of housing maintenance (*nafaqah*) from the perspective of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and emphasized the importance of fulfilling the family's basic needs to realize the five objectives of *sharī'ah*.

The research gap identified is the limited number of studies specifically examining the dynamics of disharmony—not merely harmonization—in childless families using the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* approach in the rural areas of North Lampung. The novelty of this research lies in: (1) its focus on the causative factors of disharmony, rather than merely efforts to maintain harmony; (2) analysis of the implications of disharmony for household resilience; and (3) the formulation of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*-based solutions contextualized to the socio-economic realities of agrarian communities. This research is significant as it provides a theoretical contribution to the development of Islamic family law and a practical contribution for childless couples, policymakers, and communities in building inclusive household resilience.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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This research employs field research (field research) with a qualitative descriptive approach. Field research was chosen because the focus of the study is on social phenomena occurring naturally in society, namely the dynamics of disharmony in childless families in Ketapang Village. A phenomenological approach was employed to explore and understand the subjective experiences of married couples in facing childlessness and their strategies for either maintaining or experiencing the breakdown of their households. This approach enables the researcher to capture in depth the psychological, social, and spiritual realities underlying the dynamics of disharmony.

The research location was Dusun V, Ketapang Village, Sungkai Selatan District, North Lampung Regency. The selection of this location was based on preliminary survey findings showing variations in the dynamics of childless couples with diverse socio-economic backgrounds and levels of religious understanding. The research was conducted over one month, with five days of field data collection and twenty-five days of data processing and analysis. This timeframe was considered sufficient to reach key informants, conduct repeated observations, and achieve data saturation.

Research subjects were determined using purposive sampling with the following criteria: (1) married couples who have been married for at least five years; (2) have no offspring (primary infertility); (3) willing to become informants and provide information voluntarily. Based on these criteria, three couples were selected as informants: (1) TA and RN (eight years of marriage, experienced infidelity); (2) WH and IS (ten years of marriage, frequently quarreling); (3) AR and AN (sixteen years of marriage, adopted a child). Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with the three couples, while secondary data were sourced from books, scholarly journals, village documents, and relevant legislation.

Data collection techniques included semi-structured interviews with guidelines developed based on indicators of family harmony and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, participant observation of the couples' daily interactions, and documentation of village profiles and religious activities. Data validity was tested through source triangulation (comparing information between couples and with village officials), technique triangulation (comparing interview, observation, and documentation results), and member checking (confirming findings with informants). Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, encompassing data reduction, data presentation in narrative and matrix forms, and conclusion drawing verified with *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* theory.

### 3. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

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#### Description of Informants

The description of informants reveals the diversity of characteristics among childless couples in Ketapang Village. The first couple, TA (36 years old, farmer, high school education) and RN (34 years old, housewife, bachelor's degree), have been married for eight years. RN acknowledged that the absence of children triggered her husband's infidelity, yet she chose to remain for the sake of family integrity. Family support was limited to medical advice without adequate emotional support. The second couple, WH (40 years old, teacher, bachelor's degree) and IS (38 years old, teacher, bachelor's degree), have been married for ten years. They admitted to frequent quarrels due to loneliness without children, but they attempt to resolve conflicts through open communication and quality time. The third couple, AR (42 years old, farmer, high school education) and AN (40 years old, farmer, high school education), have been married for sixteen years and adopted a daughter in the eighth year of marriage. They emphasized the importance of mutual concession and resolving problems without external interference.

#### Internal Factors of Disharmony

Internal factors causing disharmony were identified across three main aspects. First, the weakness of the religious foundation in building the household. The TA-RN couple admitted that they rarely performed congregational prayers and had no shared religious routines, so when faced with the trial of childlessness, they were easily provoked emotionally and blamed each other. Second, the absence of a tangible role model (*qudwah*) from parents in maintaining household integrity without children. RN stated that her parents often pressured her to provide grandchildren soon, adding psychological burden. Third, the incomplete application of Islamic values in daily life, especially in patience (*ṣabr*), gratitude (*shukr*), and trust in God (*tawakkul*). The WH-IS couple admitted that they complained to others more often than they increased their prayers and efforts. Fourth, the lack of mutual assistance in resolving problems, where each party tended to be selfish and defended their own opinions.

#### External Factors of Disharmony

External factors causing disharmony include social pressure from the surrounding environment. RN revealed that neighbors frequently asked "when will you have children" in piercing tones, causing her to withdraw from social interaction. The lack of support from the extended family also constituted a significant factor, where parents and in-laws tended to blame one party rather than providing emotional support. The WH-IS couple stated that they actually received pressure from family to practice polygamy or adopt a child, without considering their psychological readiness. Economic stability also played a role; couples with more stable economies (WH-IS as teachers) tended to manage stress better compared to couples with fluctuating incomes (TA-RN as farmers).

#### Impact on Household Resilience

The impact of disharmony on household resilience varied among couples. For the TA-RN couple, disharmony reached a critical level marked by infidelity, minimal communication, and loss of

mutual trust. Although they remained together, relationship quality was very low and vulnerable to divorce. For the WH-IS couple, disharmony was fluctuating—worsening at certain times (e.g., when a family member gave birth) but improving after shared activities. They still maintained a commitment to stay together due to religious values and social responsibility as teachers. For the AR-AN couple, child adoption proved to be an effective solution in restoring harmony, although it left some sadness due to the absence of biological children. Their household resilience was stronger because they had passed through difficult times in the early years of marriage and had developed a mature coping system.

### **Analysis Based on Harmony Indicators**

Analysis based on family harmony indicators showed that the AR-AN couple had the highest level of harmony, followed by WH-IS, and the lowest was TA-RN. The weakest indicators in disharmonious couples were effective communication and conflict resolution. RN admitted that they rarely discussed feelings and expectations, so problems accumulated without resolution. The strongest indicators in harmonious couples were mutual understanding and cooperation. AN stated that the key to harmony was "understanding each other's circumstances and never taking problems outside the home." Protective factors distinguishing harmonious from disharmonious couples were active participation in religious activities (study circles, Qur'anic recitation gatherings) and positive social support from the community.

## **4. DISCUSSION**

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### **Internal Factors of Disharmony in the Perspective of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah**

The research findings identified weak religious foundation as the primary internal factor causing disharmony. Within the maqāṣid al-sharī'ah framework, the protection of religion (ḥifẓ al-dīn) constitutes the highest objective that must be realized in every aspect of life, including household life. Couples who do not make worship the foundation of their household will lose spiritual orientation when facing trials, including the trial of childlessness. As explained in QS. Al-Faṭḥ [48]: 4, tranquility (sakinah) only descends into the hearts of believers. Without this tranquility, couples are easily provoked emotionally, blame each other, and lose the perspective that children are a trust and provision from Allah, not merely the result of human effort. Faridah's research (2025) also affirmed that good religious understanding constitutes a primary supporting factor for harmony in childless families.

The absence of a tangible role model (qudwah) from parents contributed to disharmony because couples lacked a behavioral model in facing infertility. In family psychology literature, Bandura's social cognitive theory emphasizes the importance of observational learning in shaping adaptive behavior. Parents who pressure their children to provide grandchildren actually hinder the couple's adaptation process to childlessness. Herman's research (2023) in Parepare found that positive family support—in the form of advice to be patient and not blame each other—constitutes a determining factor in the integrity of infertile couples' households. Conversely, families that blame

one party exacerbate the couple's internal dynamics. Within the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* perspective, the family plays a role in protecting life (*ḥifẓ al-naḥs*) by providing security and tranquility, not by adding psychological burden.

The incomplete application of Islamic values, especially patience (*ṣabr*), gratitude (*shukr*), and trust in God (*tawakkul*), constitutes a critical factor causing disharmony. The TA-RN couple admitted that they complained more often and compared themselves to other couples who already had children. Whereas in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 155-157, Allah promises that those who are patient when afflicted with calamity (including childlessness) will receive blessings and mercy from Him. Alkausar & Kusumawati's research (2023) highlighted that the child-free lifestyle is considered *makrūh* (disliked) because it contradicts the natural disposition for offspring, yet a distinction must be drawn between child-free as a conscious choice and infertility as an undesired trial. In cases of infertility, what is required is patience and effort, not mutual blame. The value of gratitude is also crucial—couples who focus on existing blessings (a good spouse, health, provision) tend to be more harmonious compared to those who continually lament the absence of children.

### **External Factors and Social Pressure**

The research findings indicate that social pressure from the surrounding environment contributes significantly to disharmony. RN revealed that accusatory questions from neighbors caused her to withdraw from social interaction. Within the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* perspective, the protection of intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*) encompasses the individual's right to be free from psychological disturbances that can damage mental health. A civilized society should not interfere in the private affairs of families, especially regarding sensitive issues such as infertility. Faridah's research (2025) found that supportive social environments—where the status of children is not questioned—constitute a supporting factor for harmony. Conversely, judgmental environments worsen couples' conditions. Public education on social ethics and sensitivity to infertility issues is an urgent necessity.

Inadequate family support, even tending toward blame, exacerbates the dynamics of disharmony. In patriarchal cultures, infertility is often attributed to the wife, despite the fact that medically, male factors contribute to approximately 40-50 percent of cases. Herman's research (2023) revealed that the stigma experienced by infertile women manifests as discredited stigma (feelings of being demeaned and discredited). Families that should serve as a safe haven instead become a new source of pressure. Within the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* perspective, the family bears responsibility for preserving lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*) at a macro level, which encompasses support for infertile couples to still have offspring through lawful means (adoption, medical treatment) or accept childlessness with openness. Blaming attitudes are counterproductive to the objective of preserving lineage because they can trigger divorce, which is more damaging to the social order.

Economic stability proves to be both a protective factor and a risk factor depending on management. The WH-IS couple, with stable income as teachers, were better able to access marital counseling and recreational activities together as coping mechanisms. Conversely, the TA-RN couple, with fluctuating income as farmers, were more vulnerable to financial stress that exacerbated conflicts arising from childlessness. Effendi's research (2024) on housing maintenance in the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* perspective affirmed that fulfilling basic needs (clothing, food, shelter) is a prerequisite for realizing tranquility within the family. Unstable economies threaten the

protection of property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*) while also threatening the protection of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*) due to the psychological pressure caused. However, it should be noted that economy is not the sole factor—the AR-AN couple, with simple farming economies, were actually more harmonious because they possessed strong social and spiritual capital.

### **Implications for Household Resilience**

Prolonged disharmony impacts the weakening of household resilience across various dimensions. In the TA-RN couple, the husband's infidelity demonstrates the fragility of commitment and the loss of trust—two fundamental pillars of household resilience. Harahap et al.'s research (2025) on childfree marriage found that wives hold a key role in reproductive decisions; however, in the TA-RN case, the husband made destructive decisions (infidelity) without involving his wife. Within the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* perspective, infidelity violates the protection of lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*) because it can result in children born out of wedlock whose status is unclear, while simultaneously violating the protection of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*) because it causes psychological trauma to the wife. Fragile household resilience such as this runs a high risk of ending in divorce, the impact of which extends to the broader social stability of the community.

Conversely, the AR-AN couple demonstrates strong household resilience despite the absence of biological children. The adoption of a daughter proved to be a successful adaptive strategy in fulfilling the psychological need for children while simultaneously maintaining social legitimacy. Within the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* perspective, adoption is permissible as long as it does not erase the child's lineage to biological parents (Q.S. Al-Aḥzāb [33]: 4-5). Herman's research (2023) mentions that adoption is one option for infertile couples to still fulfill the objective of preserving lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*) even if not biologically. The success of the AR-AN couple was also supported by a mature coping system: they did not take problems outside the home, conceded to each other, and focused on each other's strengths. This finding aligns with Faridah's research (2025) that maintaining household privacy (not disclosing a partner's shortcomings to others) is one effort to sustain harmony.

The WH-IS couple demonstrates moderate household resilience—vulnerable to conflict yet possessing sufficiently effective recovery mechanisms. Open communication and quality time became their primary strategies for alleviating tension. Contemporary research on household harmony emphasizes the importance of courteous communication patterns (*qawl karīm*) and avoiding criticism that attacks the partner's character. WH admitted that when angry, he chose to leave the house to calm down, then after his wife had calmed down, the issue was discussed properly. This strategy aligns with the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* principle of protecting life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*) by avoiding verbal and physical violence that can wound a partner's dignity. However, the still-high frequency of quarrels indicates that they have not fully achieved optimal resilience—strengthening spirituality and improving the quality of shared worship is still needed.

### **Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah-Based Solutions**

Based on the research findings, solutions for improving harmony in childless families must be formulated within the framework of the five essential objectives of *sharī'ah* (*al-ḍarūriyāt al-khams*). First, the protection of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*) can be realized by making worship the

foundation of the household. Couples need to establish shared worship routines—congregational prayers, Qur'anic recitation, dhikr, and attending religious study circles—which will cultivate inner tranquility and the perspective that children are not the sole purpose of marriage. The prayer of Prophet Zakariyyā (Q.S. Maryam [19]: 3-6) for offspring can be practiced regularly, yet it must be accompanied by trust in God (tawakkul) that Allah provides what is best according to His time. Improved religious understanding through regular study also helps couples accept the trial of infertility with openness, because they understand that behind calamity there is wisdom and reward for patience.

Second, the protection of life (ḥifẓ al-naḥs) can be realized by building healthy communication and mutual reinforcement. Couples must avoid destructive communication patterns such as criticism, insults, and excessive generalizations (always, never). Instead, they need to develop empathy—attempting to understand their partner's feelings, avoiding blame, and providing unconditional emotional support. If necessary, marital counseling with professionals or religion-based counselors can help couples manage stress and develop adaptive coping strategies. Faridah's research (2025) found that couples who maintain household privacy (not disclosing problems to outsiders) have higher levels of harmony. Within the maqāṣid al-sharī'ah perspective, guarding a partner's shortcomings is part of protecting life and human dignity.

Third, the protection of intellect (ḥifẓ al-'aql) can be realized by increasing literacy about infertility and the available options. Couples need to access accurate information from reliable sources regarding the medical causes of infertility, the chances of successful treatment, and options such as adoption, in vitro fertilization (while still considering sharī'ah aspects), or accepting childlessness. This education is important so that couples do not become trapped in negative stigma or irrational social pressure. Families and communities also need to be educated about social ethics toward infertile couples—not making hurtful inquiries, not blaming, and providing moral support. Alkausar & Kusumawati's research (2023) emphasizes the importance of literacy about maqāṣid al-sharī'ah so that communities understand that the objective of marriage is not solely reproduction but also tranquility, love, and compassion.

Fourth, the protection of lineage (ḥifẓ al-naṣl) in the context of infertility need not be understood narrowly as having biological children. The protection of lineage can be realized through adoption of needy children (while preserving lineage), becoming foster parents for orphans, or actively participating in the education and upbringing of nieces and nephews. The AR-AN couple proved that adopting a daughter not only restored harmony but also provided an opportunity for that child to grow in a loving family. Within the maqāṣid al-sharī'ah perspective, the objective of preserving lineage is the continuity of generations of believing and morally virtuous human beings—which can be achieved through various means, not limited to biological reproduction. Childless couples can also contribute to the protection of lineage by volunteering at religious educational institutions or orphanages.

Fifth, the protection of property (ḥifẓ al-māl) can be realized through wise financial management, especially because medical efforts to address infertility can be very expensive. Couples need to prioritize expenditures for basic needs and future savings, not exhaust all resources for treatments of uncertain success. Research shows that economic pressure worsens conflicts arising from

infertility, thus financial stability constitutes an important protective factor. Couples also need to be grateful for the provision that exists and not compare themselves to other couples who are economically more established or have children. The attitude of *qanā'ah* (being content with what one has) is a *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* value that protects both property and life from anxiety and greed.

## 5. CONCLUSION

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This research concludes that disharmony in childless families in Ketapang Village is caused by internal factors (weak religious foundation, absence of role models, incomplete application of Islamic values, and lack of mutual assistance habits) as well as external factors (social pressure and lack of family support). The impacts of disharmony vary from infidelity and chronic quarrels to divorce, which significantly weakens household resilience. *Maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*-based solutions—encompassing the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property—proved effective in restoring harmony, as evidenced by couples who applied these values and succeeded in enduring and even adopting children. These findings affirm that family harmony does not depend solely on the presence of children but on the quality of the marital relationship and closeness to Allah SWT.

This research recommends the need for *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*-based family strengthening programs initiated by village governments and religious institutions, encompassing marriage counseling, public education about infertility, and the formation of peer support groups for childless couples. For future researchers, it is recommended to conduct comparative studies across regions with different socio-cultural characteristics and longitudinal research following the dynamics of childless couples over an extended period to identify factors predicting successful adaptation.

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