

An Islamic Legal Perspective on Fatherlessness and the Responsibility to Realize Family Resilience: A Case Study of Tanjungbalai City

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Abstract

This study examines the phenomenon of fatherlessness from an Islamic legal perspective and its implications for family resilience in Tanjungbalai City. The research employs a qualitative approach combining juridical-normative and sociological methods through in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis. Empirical findings reveal that fatherlessness largely stems not from physical absence but from limited emotional involvement and caregiving engagement caused by economic pressures, occupational mobility, and insufficient understanding of paternal roles within the family. This condition contributes to weakened family resilience, particularly in the psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of children. Based on these findings, the study proposes strengthening fatherhood education through religious institutions, developing community-based father-child engagement programs, and promoting family-friendly labor policies to improve caregiving quality. These recommendations are directly derived from field-based evidence, thereby enhancing contextual relevance and analytical coherence in efforts to strengthen family resilience.

Keywords: Islamic law, fatherlessness, family resilience.



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Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji fenomena *fatherless* dalam perspektif Hukum Islam serta implikasinya terhadap ketahanan keluarga di Kota Tanjungbalai. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan kombinasi yuridis-normatif dan sosiologis melalui wawancara

mendalam, observasi lapangan, dan studi dokumentasi. Temuan empiris menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar kasus fatherless terjadi bukan karena absennya ayah secara fisik, tetapi karena rendahnya keterlibatan emosional dan pengasuhan akibat tekanan ekonomi, mobilitas pekerjaan, dan kurangnya pemahaman peran ayah dalam keluarga. Kondisi ini berdampak pada melemahnya ketahanan keluarga pada aspek psikologis, sosial, dan spiritual anak. Berdasarkan temuan tersebut, penelitian merekomendasikan penguatan pendidikan peran ayah melalui lembaga keagamaan, pengembangan program komunitas berbasis keterlibatan ayah-anak, serta kebijakan kerja ramah keluarga untuk meningkatkan kualitas pengasuhan. Rekomendasi ini dirumuskan langsung dari pola masalah yang ditemukan di lapangan sehingga mendukung upaya penguatan ketahanan keluarga secara lebih kontekstual.

Kata Kunci: Hukum Islam, *fatherless*, ketahanan keluarga.

Introduction

Children are the next generation whose future roles determine the continuity of social life. For that reason, children require attentive care, directed upbringing, and education from an early age so that they grow into persons of sound character. Character education provided at the start of life shapes habits, values, and dispositions that persist into adulthood. Children who are guided from early childhood toward good conduct tend to internalize moral values in daily life. Children who grow up without proper guidance face the risk of value confusion and difficulty in self-regulation. This condition underscores how decisive parents are for child development across cognitive, affective, and moral domains. The responsibility for educating children does not rest solely with mothers, it is a joint duty of fathers and mothers as a unified caregiving unit within the family.¹

The family in Islamic thought occupies a central position as the first and foremost institution of a child's education. The family environment is the primary space where personality, religious values, and social ethics are initially formed. Good character in children reflects the success of the parenting patterns applied within the household. Conversely, problematic character often correlates with weak parental supervision, poor role modeling, and inadequate guidance. Several studies emphasize that the family is the principal environment that continuously shapes a child's personality. Personality does not form spontaneously, it emerges from prolonged interaction with parents. Fathers and mothers play key roles in ensuring the success of this long-term process.²

¹ Kurnia Jatiningtyas et al., *Overview of Fatherless in Senior High School Adolescents*, 6, no. 5 (2024).

² S. Aisyah and A. Hidayah, *The Concept of Qiwamah and Its Implications for Gender Justice in Islamic Family Law in Indonesia*, sects 145-162, 16, no. 2 (2023).

Within family systems fathers are normatively positioned as leaders and protectors who carry responsibility for the family's welfare: provision, moral formation, guidance, and emotional support. From both religious and social-normative perspectives, this paternal role is understood as structural and affective a source of security, attachment, and behavioral modelling that contributes to children's personality development, social competence, and gender identity formation.

Contrary to this normative ideal, empirical evidence from community settings increasingly documents a narrowing of the father's practical role to that of breadwinner. Economic pressures, occupational mobility, and entrenched caregiving expectations that assign daily childcare to mothers reduce fathers' everyday caregiving and emotional engagement. In such situations "fatherless" refers not solely to physical absence but to a functional and psychosocial disengagement: fathers may be present biologically yet fail to provide caregiving, emotional availability, or moral guidance in practice.³

This study examines that disjunction between the normative prescriptions concerning fathers and the empirical realities of paternal involvement in Tanjungbalai. By tracing how specific socioeconomic and normative conditions produce reduced paternal engagement and how that reduction affects family resilience (economic, psychosocial, and spiritual dimensions), the research links observed patterns of fatherlessness directly to policy and practice-oriented recommendations for strengthening father involvement and family wellbeing.⁴

The fatherless phenomenon is increasingly visible in modern families. Changes in work patterns and economic demands lead fathers to spend more time away from home. Occupations that cross regional borders, labor migration abroad, fisheries work with long at sea rotations, and jobs with high mobility are major contributors to paternal absence in children's lives. Children continue to have fathers who provide materially. Children lose interaction, communication, and emotional companionship from their fathers. This situation creates a void in the father figure during children's developmental processes.⁵

Field data from Tanjungbalai City provide concrete evidence of this phenomenon. Interviews and observations reveal that several children experience forms of fatherlessness because their fathers are absent for extended periods due to occupational demands, including overseas employment, long-term fishing deployments, mobile business activities, and work assignments in other cities. While material provision is generally maintained, paternal emotional presence and everyday psychological engagement are often limited. This empirical pattern

³ BKKBN, 'Surat Edaran Nomor 14 Tahun 2025 Tentang Gerakan Ayah Mengambil Rapor Anak Sekolah', Menteri Kependudukan dan Pembangunan Keluarga Republik Indonesia., 2025.

⁴ R. Wae and Y. Chandra, 'The Impact of Fatherless on Child Development', 2, no. 2 (2024).

⁵ E. E. Smith, *Psychology of Father Absence* (Harper & Row, 1972).

demonstrates that fatherlessness in this context is primarily functional and psychosocial rather than purely physical. The observed consequences emotional instability, resistance to parental guidance, reduced openness toward parents, and declining academic performance indicate a gap between economic support and the fulfillment of children's psychosocial needs. These findings strengthen the analytical argument that paternal involvement functions not merely as economic provision but as a relational resource essential for children's emotional regulation, social adjustment, and educational resilience.⁶

A growing body of research shows that paternal involvement significantly influences children's academic and psychological development. Functional absence of fathers is correlated with lower learning motivation and poorer academic outcomes among adolescents. Children who grow up in fatherless conditions often struggle with study discipline and lack the emotional support necessary for the educational process. This evidence demonstrates that academic success depends not only on school-based factors but also on the quality of family caregiving, particularly the father's role in providing encouragement and learning accompaniment.⁷

International empirical studies confirm that low patterns of paternal engagement negatively affect children's cognitive and emotional domains. Limited paternal cognitive stimulation is associated with weaker executive function in children and lower academic self-efficacy. Fatherlessness also contributes to psychological stressors such as anxiety and a sense of lacking a role model, especially during adolescence.⁸ These findings indicate that fathers are important not merely as providers of livelihood but also as co-companions in intellectual and emotional development.⁹

Within the Indonesian context, several studies find that the negative effects of fatherlessness can be mitigated by social support from extended family and the local community. Such support plays an important buffering role but cannot fully substitute for a father's presence in building academic resilience and psychosocial well being. Accordingly, scholars recommend strengthening paternal engagement through community-based parenting programs and family-friendly policies that enable fathers to take a more active part in family life. These measures

⁶ Iryna Culpin et al., 'Father Absence and Trajectories of Offspring Mental Health across Adolescence and Young Adulthood: Findings from a UK-Birth Cohort', *Journal of Affective Disorders* 314 (October 2022): 150–59, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2022.07.016>.

⁷ Firda Nurmalasari et al., *Dampak Ketiadaan Peran Ayah (Fatherless) terhadap Pencapaian Akademik Remaja: Kajian Sistematis*, sects 1-14, 1, no. 4 (2024).

⁸ H. Husaemad et al., *Fenomena Fatherless Perspektif Hukum Islam*, sects 1-18, 3, no. 1 (2024).

⁹ Susan Yoon et al., 'Patterns of Father Involvement and Child Development among Families with Low Income', *Children* 8, no. 12 (2021): 1164, <https://doi.org/10.3390/children8121164>; Bruce J. Ellis et al., 'Does Father Absence Place Daughters at Special Risk for Early Sexual Activity and Teenage Pregnancy?', *Child Development* 74, no. 3 (2003): 801–21, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00569>.

are essential for addressing the challenges of fatherlessness and for sustaining the quality of future generations.¹⁰

Recent scholarship over the past decade has reinforced the critical importance of paternal involvement for child development. Active fathers contribute to healthy emotional development, robust social competence, and higher academic achievement. Children raised with engaged fathers show greater resilience. By contrast, fatherless children face elevated risks of behavioral problems and difficulties in social adjustment. Research also indicates that father absence adversely affects the development of self-concept and emotional regulation.¹¹

A father's responsibility toward his children has a strong normative foundation. The father is positioned as *qawwām* within the family, bearing obligations that include providing maintenance, protection, education, and moral formation. The concept of *qawwāmah* does not merely signify structural leadership but also encompasses moral and spiritual responsibility. Fathers are therefore obliged to ensure the fulfillment of children's rights in both material and immaterial dimensions. The absence of a father in the caregiving process stands in contradiction to the objectives of Islamic law, which emphasize the protection of lineage and the moral cultivation of future generations. This principle is affirmed in the Qur'an through Luqman's counsel to his son as a form of direct parental involvement in the education of faith and morality. Allah says:

وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ ۖ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ ۖ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ

Translation: "And [remember] when Luqman said to his son, while admonishing him, 'O my son, do not associate anything with Allah. Indeed, associating others with Allah is truly a great injustice.'" (Qur'an, 31:13).¹²

Childrearing is normatively conceived in Islamic ethics as a shared religious trust between father and mother and not as a responsibility to be delegated exclusively to one parent. Contemporary social practice frequently narrows fatherhood to the role of economic provider, creating a disjunction between prescribed duties and everyday parenting. Empirical scholarship has documented developmental harms associated with limited paternal involvement, but it remains dominated by quantitative associations that leave causal mechanisms underspecified. To address this gap, the present study advances an

¹⁰ Rizka Putri A. L. Fajar et al., *Pengaruh Fatherless Terhadap Academic Resilience Anak Sekolah Dasar*, 8, no. 2 (2024), <http://dx.doi.org/10.24952/gender.v8i2.12615>; Noor Fitri and Varinia Pura Damaiyanti, *Fatherless: Minimnya Keterlibatan Ayah Dalam Pengasuhan Anak Remaja Perempuan di Kota Banjarmasin*, sects 384-396, 4, no. 4 (2025).

¹¹ Champion Zharima et al., "To Have a Father, Maybe I Was Going to Be a Better Person": A Qualitative Study Exploring the Effects of Biological Father Absence on Young Men in South Africa, *Journal of Applied Youth Studies*, ahead of print, 30 May 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43151-025-00181-2>.

¹² Kementerian Agama RI, *Al-Quran Terjemahan Kementerian Agama RI (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an (LPMQ) Kementerian Agama RI, 2019)*.

integrated juridical and normative approach combined with empirical inquiry that explicitly theorizes the pathways linking Islamic norms to observable parenting practices and to family resilience.¹³

Methodologically, the study combines close exegesis of normative texts on *qanwāmab* with qualitative fieldwork, including in-depth interviews, participant observation, and purposive sampling across diverse paternal occupations in Tanjungbalai. Analytically, I propose a tripartite framework. First, *qanwāmab* is translated into three empirically tractable parenting domains: economic provisioning, moral and religious guidance, and affective caregiving. Second, variation in these domains is mapped onto measurable dimensions of family resilience, namely economic stability, psychosocial functioning, and spiritual coherence. Third, the study examines social and occupational mechanisms such as labor mobility, normative gender scripts, and religious pedagogy that mediate the relationship between paternal practice and resilience outcomes.¹⁴ This design moves beyond mere correlation by specifying mechanisms and by demonstrating how limited paternal caregiving, particularly deficits in everyday emotional availability and moral mentorship, produces identifiable declines in children's emotional regulation, social adaptation, and educational resilience. The study also tests whether contextualized readings of *qanwāmab* explain variation within the community, thereby contributing to Islamic family law scholarship by empirically grounding normative claims and enriching family resilience research through an analysis of the relational functions of fatherhood in a Muslim urban setting.

Discussion

Overview of the Fatherless Phenomenon in the Local Context of Tanjungbalai City

Fieldwork was conducted in several neighborhoods of Tanjungbalai during January 2026. The empirical foundation of this subsection consists of in-depth interviews with affected family members, primarily mothers and, when available, fathers, together with school teachers, religious figures such as imams and pesantren or madrasah teachers, and local community leaders. These interviews were complemented by participant observation undertaken within households, mosque study circles, community health-post activities, and informal neighborhood gatherings. Interview protocols explored participants' understandings of paternal roles, allocation of time, decision making processes, and perceived consequences for children. Observational inquiry focused on daily caregiving routines including meal and bedtime practices, patterns of leisure and

¹³ Hadiye Kucukkaragoz, 'Review of the Research Literature on the Impact of Father Absence on Child Development in Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)', *Journal of Lifestyle and SDGs Review* 5, no. 4 (2025): e06117, <https://doi.org/10.47172/2965-730X.SDGsReview.v5.n04.pe06117>.

¹⁴ Annisa Rahmadhani et al., 'Fatherless Generation: Mengungkap Dampak Kehilangan Peran Ayah Terhadap Psikologis Anak dalam Kaca Mata Islam', *Darajat: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 7, no. 2 (2024): 128–46, <https://doi.org/10.58518/darajat.v7i2.3017>.

discipline, forms of parental presence and communication, and the organization of religious instruction and community support. Fieldnotes documented interactional details, temporal rhythms of presence and absence, and the social arrangements through which caregiving responsibilities were organized, while practitioner perspectives from teachers and community leaders offered additional corroboration of observed patterns.

The analytical approach in the following discussion employs triangulation of these data sources in order to move beyond description toward explanation. Interview quotations and observational vignettes are treated not as isolated anecdotes but as empirical expressions of recurring social patterns. Points of convergence between interview narratives and field observations are used to identify plausible causal mechanisms, including temporal constraints produced by occupational mobility, normative expectations that assign caregiving primarily to women, and the tendency to position material provision as a substitute for emotional presence. By clearly specifying who participated in the interviews, what was observed, and where and how the observations were carried out, these introductory paragraphs establish the evidentiary basis for the empirical claims presented in this subsection and demonstrate how specific observations support analytical interpretations concerning psychosocial needs and family resilience.

The term fatherless denotes the absence of a functional father figure in a child's developmental process. In empirical practice the term goes beyond biological absence to denote a lack of emotional involvement, caregiving, and moral formation despite the father's continued physical presence.¹⁵ Observations in several households in Tanjungbalai reveal that the phenomenon is latent in nature. Material needs are typically met while affective presence and daily caregiving remain minimal, leaving children without an integral paternal figure.¹⁶

In-depth interviews expose recurring patterns of lived experience. One informant described a husband working in Malaysia and the consequent emotional distance within the household. She recalled, "*When he comes home he is often tired, the child is afraid to ask him to tell stories. The child says, 'Father is busy, let Mother do it'*".¹⁷ Field notes from the researcher's visit to that home documented very limited father-child interaction. During the visit the child kept physical and conversational distance from the father and exchanges remained formal and brief. Another informant reported a different occupational pattern that produced a similar outcome. She explained, "*My husband often travels out of town. Even when he is home he is busy with work calls. If the child needs to talk, she goes to a neighbor or to her teacher'*".¹⁸ Observational data confirm that children in such households tend to

¹⁵ Smith, *Psychology of Father Absence*.

¹⁶ F. Arsyia and A. N. Umam, *Dampak Fatherless Terhadap Karakter Anak Dalam Pandangan Islam*, sects 25-39, 3, no. 1 (2023).

¹⁷ I. Siti, 'In-Depth Interview on Overseas Employment and Emotional Distance between Father and Child', (Tanjungbalai City, Indonesia), 18 January 2026, Personal interview.

¹⁸ I. Nur, 'In-Depth Interview on Work Mobility and Father-Child Interaction Patterns', (Tanjungbalai City, Indonesia), 18 January 2026, Personal interview.

seek emotional support outside the nuclear family, thereby shifting the primary source of daily psychosocial care from parents to external actors.

Accounts from other households point to occupational fatigue as a key factor in reduced paternal engagement. One mother recounted her husband's routine: *"He comes home exhausted, eats, then sleeps. When the child wants to tell something at night he only says 'later'"*.¹⁹ Field notes show that family routines generate moments together of low quality, interactions are transactional and focused on material provision rather than dialogical caregiving that fosters emotional bonding. A further case presented by another mother described a father who repeatedly returned home late, finding the child already asleep and leaving little opportunity for heart-to-heart conversation. The nightly quiet in such homes illustrates lost opportunities for forming secure attachments.

Thematic analysis of the interviews and observations points to recurring structural conditions. Fathers whose work requires mobility or long hours tend to be present primarily as earners, while everyday caregiving remains centred on mothers. In such households children are less communicative with parents, more resistant to guidance, and more vulnerable to academic decline. A primary school teacher involved in the study noted that students who receive little paternal attention are often harder to manage and show unstable academic results.

Observation in neighbourhood meetings and community health activities indicates that local expectations still define fatherhood largely in economic terms. Expressions of affection and daily supervision are widely understood as maternal responsibilities, which normalises an unequal distribution of care. At the same time, some families draw on extended kin and community figures to compensate. Grandfathers, uncles, teachers, and religious leaders occasionally provide guidance and routine supervision. In one observed case, regular afternoon study sessions with an uncle coincided with noticeable improvements in behaviour and school performance.

The evidence from Tanjungbalai suggests that fatherlessness in this context is typically functional rather than biological. Material support is maintained, yet sustained emotional presence is limited. Addressing this pattern requires more than economic security. It calls for practical spaces in which fathers can develop caregiving competence, community initiatives that normalise paternal involvement, and employment arrangements that allow time for meaningful participation in family life.

Perspective of Islamic Law and the Fatherless Phenomenon in Tanjungbalai

Islamic jurisprudence frames the family as the primary site of moral formation and child education, and the father is described in this tradition as *qawwām* with duties that extend beyond economic provision to include

¹⁹ I. Suci, 'Interview on Work Fatigue and Limited Paternal Involvement in Daily Caregiving', (Tanjungbalai City, Indonesia), 18 January 2026, Personal interview.

pedagogical responsibility, moral mentorship, and protection.²⁰ A close reading of scriptural narratives and fiqh literature indicates that these obligations aim to secure the maqāṣid of the shari‘ah, including the preservation of lineage and the cultivation of communal virtue, and thus they entail sustained relational engagement in daily parenting rather than episodic financial support.²¹ Translating these normative claims into local practice requires interpretation that connects textual injunctions to concrete caregiving practices and to the institutional conditions that enable fathers to meet their multidimensional duties.

Fieldwork in Tanjungbalai during January 2026 provides the empirical basis for assessing the gap between norm and practice. Data derive from in-depth interviews with affected family members, primarily mothers and, when available, fathers, as well as interviews with school teachers, religious actors, and community leaders. Data collection also included participant observation in households, mosque study circles, health post activities, and informal neighbourhood gatherings.²² Interview protocols explored paternal roles, time allocation, household decision making, and perceived impacts on children.²³ Observational attention focused on everyday caregiving routines including meal and bedtime practices, patterns of parental presence and communication, and the organization of local religious instruction. Fieldnotes recorded interactional detail and temporal rhythms of presence and absence, and practitioners provided corroborating perspectives on observed patterns.

The combined normative and empirical evidence clarifies the nature of fatherlessness in this setting. Most cases documented in the field are functional rather than biological. Fathers often remain legally and physically present but their day to day caregiving is constrained by long working hours, occupational mobility, and cultural scripts that relegate routine childcare to mothers. Under these conditions interactions between fathers and children concentrate on material provision and formal instruction while sustained emotional availability and informal mentorship are limited. Interview excerpts and observational vignettes converge on three plausible causal mechanisms. First, temporal constraint emerges when work related mobility or extended hours reduce opportunities for routine caregiving, which in turn undermines secure attachment formation. Second, normative scripting assigns affective caregiving to mothers and thereby normalizes paternal non involvement. Third, compensatory substitution treats material provision as a partial substitute for emotional presence, a substitution

²⁰ A. I. Syatibi, *Al-Muwafaqat Fi Ushul al-Syari‘ah* (Dar Al-Ma‘rifah, 2003); M. A. Hilmi and F. Rahman, *Peran Ayah Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur‘an: Studi Kisah Luqman, Ibrahim, Dan Syu‘aib*, sects 78-92, 7, no. 2 (2022).

²¹ Aisyah and Hidayah, *The Concept of Qiwamah and Its Implications for Gender Justice in Islamic Family Law in Indonesia*.

²² Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak (KemenPPPA), *Laporan Tahunan Layanan Pengaduan Kekerasan Dan Penelantaran Keluarga* (KemenPPPA RI, 2022).

²³ Kemen PPPA, *Indeks Ketahanan Keluarga Indonesia 2021* (Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak Republik Indonesia, 2021).

that preserves short term economic stability but leaves psychosocial needs unmet.²⁴

These mechanisms link directly to observable child outcomes in three interrelated domains. Emotional functioning is compromised as caregivers report increased irritability, poor emotional regulation, and reluctance to disclose problems. Social development is affected through diminished confidence and inconsistent peer relationships. Educational outcomes decline as teachers report reduced study routines, irregular homework completion, and fluctuating grades among children who receive limited paternal attention. Gender differentiated patterns also appear. Boys frequently struggle with models of responsibility and emotional regulation, while girls more often evidence unmet needs for affection that shape relational patterns over time. Practitioner testimony from a primary teacher in the study corroborates these findings and situates them within everyday classroom dynamics.²⁵

The normative resources of Islamic law provide a compelling rationale for intervention because they frame paternal duty as relational in addition to economic. Religious interpretation that emphasizes the relational dimensions of *qawwām* can shift local expectations when linked to practical programming. Policy entry points include father focused parenting training delivered through mosques and community centres, community activities that create routine father child interaction, and family friendly labour regulations that reduce temporal fragmentation caused by work. These interventions should be designed to work in tandem with normative messaging so that scriptural and juristic claims about paternal responsibility are made practicable rather than merely rhetorical. In short, combining contextual religious interpretation with targeted practical support and enabling public policy bridges the gap between normative ideals and daily practice and strengthens family resilience in measurable ways.

Analysis of Family Resilience from the Perspective of Islamic Law and Its Relevance to the Fatherless Phenomenon

Family resilience in Islamic legal thought is understood as the family's capacity to sustain livelihoods, preserve harmonious relationships, and maintain the spiritual quality of its members over time. Resilience is not measured solely by material sufficiency but also by role balance, emotional stability, and spiritual strength within the household. Islamic law situates the family as the foundational institution for social formation, so a weakened family resilience has direct

²⁴ Nurmalasari et al., *Dampak Ketiadaan Peran Ayah (Fatherless) terhadap Pencapaian Akademik Remaja: Kajian Sistematis*; Jatiningtyas et al., *Overview of Fatherless in Senior High School Adolescents*.

²⁵ Fajar et al., *Pengaruh Fatherless Terhadap Academic Resilience Anak Sekolah Dasar*; Fitri and Damaiyanti, *Fatherless: Minimnya Keterlibatan Ayah Dalam Pengasuhan Anak Remaja Perempuan di Kota Banjarmasin*.

consequences for broader social stability. In this framework the father's role as family leader functions as a key element in preserving that resilience.²⁶

The Islamic conception of family resilience involves several interrelated dimensions. The first dimension is economic resilience. The father bears the principal duty to provide for the family's material needs. Provision encompasses not only basic necessities such as food, clothing, and shelter but also financing for children's education and health care. When a father fails to fulfill his maintenance obligations adequately the family becomes vulnerable to economic stress that undermines members' sense of security and psychological stability. Empirical findings nonetheless indicate that economic resilience alone does not secure overall family resilience when it is not accompanied by paternal emotional involvement in children's lives.²⁷

The second dimension concerns social and psychological resilience. This dimension relates to the quality of intra-family relationships, communication patterns, and the family's capacity to manage conflict and external pressures. Islamic legal and ethical teachings position the father as an educator and exemplar whose conduct shapes children's character, discipline, and sense of responsibility. The absence of the father, whether physical or functional, weakens emotional bonds within the family. Children raised under fatherless conditions tend to exhibit emotional instability, low self-confidence, and difficulty forming healthy social relationships. These outcomes demonstrate that paternal engagement is a decisive factor for the family's social-psychological robustness.²⁸

The third dimension is spiritual resilience. In Islam the family is the primary locus for inculcating faith and moral conduct. Fathers carry substantial responsibilities for guiding children in matters of *tawḥīd*, worship, and ethical formation. When fathers do not participate in spiritual education the internalization of religious values becomes uneven. Children then receive a disproportionate share of religious instruction from mothers or external environments whose messages may not fully align with Islamic teachings. The absence of a paternal spiritual mentor thus risks weakening the family's religious foundation and shaping later behavioural outcomes in ways that depart from communal religious aims.²⁹

The fatherless phenomenon documented in Tanjungbalai reveals a direct association between paternal absence and the erosion of family resilience across these three dimensions. Fathers who are present only as providers often cannot secure emotional and spiritual stability within the household. Field data indicate that families with minimally engaged fathers commonly experience

²⁶ Reza Umami Zakiah, 'Pola Pemenuhan Hak dan Kewajiban Suami Istri Long Distance Relationship (LDR)', *Al-Ahwal Al-Syakhsyyah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Peradilan Islam* 1, no. 1 (2020): 71–82, <https://doi.org/10.15575/as.v1i1.7804>.

²⁷ Yupi Anesti et al., *Fenomena Fatherless: Penyebab Dan Konsekuensi Terhadap Anak Dan Keluarga*, sects 89-104, 2, no. 2 (2024).

²⁸ Z. Drajat, *Ilmu Jiwa Agama* (Bulan Bintang, 2010).

²⁹ Syatibi, *Al-Muwafaqat Fi Ushul al-Syari'ah*.

communication breakdowns, latent conflicts, and diminished parent–child relational quality. Such evidence underscores that fatherlessness is a multidimensional condition and cannot be fully apprehended through a single lens.³⁰

Viewed through the *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*, fatherlessness constitutes a challenge to the objective of safeguarding lineage (*hifz al-nasl*). Safeguarding lineage implies not only biological continuity but also the qualitative wellbeing of future generations. Quality includes mental health, moral formation, and religious commitment. If paternal duties are not realized effectively the *sharī‘ah*’s aims regarding the protection and ethical upbringing of offspring risk partial or total frustration. Strengthening the father’s role therefore forms part of a project to actualize the *maqāṣid* within family life.

Islamic relevance to the fatherless issue also appears in the principle of collective responsibility. When fathers cannot discharge their roles adequately due to structural or economic constraints Islam encourages remedial support from extended family, community institutions, and state mechanisms. The notion of *mas’uliyah ijtimā‘iyah* affirms that child protection and family resilience are not solely private matters but public goods requiring shared stewardship. Community programs, active involvement by religious leaders, and family-friendly public policies are therefore critical instruments for bolstering families affected by fatherlessness.³¹

Efforts to strengthen family resilience in Tanjungbalai should integrate Islamic normative values with practical interventions. Mosque-based family education, father-focused parenting training, and awareness campaigns about paternal roles are strategic starting points. Complementary labor policies that provide fathers with time and flexibility to participate in caregiving will reinforce these initiatives. Synergies among religious norms, local cultural practices, and public policy can reduce the harmful effects of fatherlessness and promote sustainable family resilience when implemented coherently.

Overall this analysis indicates that family resilience from the vantage of Islamic law depends heavily on balanced and substantive paternal involvement. Fatherlessness signals a role imbalance within the household that weakens economic, social-psychological, and spiritual capacities. Strengthening fathers’ roles while mobilizing collective support can help realize the *sharī‘ah*’s objectives for protecting lineage and cultivating households that are stable, moral, and spiritually grounded.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the fatherless phenomenon in Tanjungbalai is predominantly functional rather than biological. Fathers generally

³⁰ Tiara Tri Ananda Putri et al., *Dampak Fatherless Terhadap Perkembangan Pada Remaja*, sects 684-702, 5, no. 2 (2025).

³¹ Kemen PPPA, *Indeks Ketahanan Keluarga Indonesia 2021*.

remain present as economic providers, yet their limited involvement in everyday caregiving, emotional communication, and moral mentoring weakens family resilience and contributes to children's emotional instability, social adjustment difficulties, and uneven academic performance. The findings confirm that material provision alone does not fulfil children's psychosocial needs and that sustained paternal engagement plays a central role in balanced child development.

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