

The Resilience of Couples with Disabilities in Achieving a Sakinah Family in Palu City

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the resilience of couples with disabilities in achieving a *sakinah* family in Palu City and identifies the factors that support and hinder this process. Using a qualitative socio-legal approach, data were collected through observation, structured interviews, and document analysis involving married couples with disabilities in Palu City. The findings reveal that couples with disabilities demonstrate strong family resilience despite facing physical limitations, social challenges, and economic pressures. Their resilience is reflected in their ability to adapt to adversity, maintain mutual support, foster effective communication, strengthen spiritual values, and cooperate in fulfilling family responsibilities. These capacities enable them to build harmonious family relationships and pursue the ideals of a *sakinah* family. Supporting factors include spousal support, family and community assistance, religious values, and participation in inclusive social networks. Conversely, limited religious knowledge, restricted employment opportunities, low educational attainment, and inadequate accessibility to public facilities constitute major obstacles. The study concludes that family resilience serves as a fundamental foundation for couples with disabilities in achieving a *sakinah* family, highlighting the importance of psychological, social, economic, and spiritual support in strengthening family well-being.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Keywords:

family resilience, couples with disabilities, *sakinah* family.

1. Introduction

Indeed, every individual who enters into marriage aspires to establish an ideal family characterized by peace, harmony, and happiness. (M. Masykur, 2006)

Islam views marriage as more than a legal union or a means of procreation; it is a sacred institution intended to establish a family founded on *sakinah* (tranquility), *mawaddah* (love), and *rahmah* (compassion), as emphasized in *Surah Ar-Rum* (30:21). This principle is consistent with Indonesian Marriage Law No. 16 of 2019, which defines marriage as a physical and spiritual bond

between a man and a woman aimed at forming a harmonious and enduring family based on devotion to Allah SWT. Accordingly, the realization of a *sakinah* family requires the mutual fulfillment of rights and obligations, emotional support, and a shared commitment to family responsibilities. (Basir, 2018; Tihami & Sahrani, 2009)

In Indonesian society, including in Palu City, there is still a social perception that people with disabilities are a burden on the family or a group deemed unsuitable for family life. As a result, many couples with

disabilities experience discrimination, ostracization, and even pressure to remain unmarried. They also often struggle to access marriage education, family counseling services, and spiritual guidance, which are their rights as citizens.

It is at this point that this research needs to be conducted, considering that the family life of disabled couples in Indonesia, especially in Palu City, is unique and completely different from the lives of other normal families.

2. Literature Review

2.1 *The Concept of Family Resilience*

Family resilience refers to the characteristics and capacities that enable a family to withstand pressure, adapt to change, and cope effectively with adversity. It reflects the family's ability to adjust, recover, and grow in response to challenges, both during periods of difficulty and after overcoming them. (Lestari, 2023; Rahmawati, 2018)

Walsh explained that family resilience is the ability of a family as a functioning system to survive and recover from extremely difficult situations or conditions. Strong resilience allows a person to remain resilient despite facing pressure from their environment. Adolescents with high resilience can avoid drug use, inappropriate behavior, school failure, and mental health problems. (Walsh, 2016)

According to Walsh, family resilience consists of three interrelated dimensions: belief systems, family organizational patterns, and communication processes. The belief system dimension enables families to find meaning in adversity, maintain a positive outlook, and draw strength from spirituality and transcendent values. Through these capacities, families are better able to understand challenges, sustain hope, and develop confidence in overcoming difficulties. Family organizational patterns emphasize flexibility, connectedness, and the

mobilization of social and economic resources. Resilient families adapt to changing circumstances, maintain supportive relationships among members, and effectively utilize available resources to manage stress and recover from crises.

The communication dimension focuses on clarity, open emotional expression, and collaborative problem-solving. Effective communication allows family members to share thoughts and emotions honestly, build mutual understanding, and work together in addressing challenges. Previous studies also indicate that family resilience is influenced by several factors, including the duration of adversity, stages of family development, and the availability of internal and external support systems. In addition, individual characteristics, family relationships, and community conditions such as economic opportunities and social support play significant roles in strengthening a family's capacity to adapt, recover, and thrive in the face of adversity. (Walsh, 2016)

2.2 *The Terminology of Disability*

The term disability originates from the phrase different ability, which emphasizes that individuals possess diverse abilities rather than deficiencies. It emerged as a more respectful alternative to stigmatizing terms and reflects the recognition that every person has unique capacities and potential. (Amrullah & Rafli, 2025; Hanun et al., 2022)

Persons with disabilities include not only individuals born with impairments but also those who acquire physical, sensory, intellectual, or mental disabilities due to natural disasters, armed conflict, illness, or other conditions that affect their ability to perform daily activities.

Persons with disabilities are generally classified into two broad categories: physical disabilities and mental disabilities. Physical disabilities include

mobility impairments (physical disabilities), visual impairments (blindness or low vision), hearing impairments (deafness or hard of hearing), and speech impairments. These conditions may be congenital or acquired through illness, injury, or other life events, and can affect an individual's ability to perform daily activities and participate fully in social life. Mental disabilities, on the other hand, encompass intellectual and psychosocial impairments that affect cognitive functioning, behavior, learning capacity, and social interaction. (Hana Christin, 2018; Khasanah, 2022)

From both legal and Islamic perspectives, persons with disabilities possess equal dignity, rights, and social status as other members of society. Indonesian laws and international human rights instruments guarantee their rights to accessibility, protection from discrimination, equal opportunities, education, employment, healthcare, and social participation. Similarly, Islamic teachings emphasize justice, inclusion, and respect for persons with disabilities, rejecting all forms of stigma and discrimination while affirming their right to live with dignity and contribute meaningfully to family and community life. (Hanun et al., 2022; Wahyudi & Wibawa, 2023)

2.3 The Theory of the Sakinah Family

The family is the fundamental unit of society and serves as the primary environment for fostering peace, security, happiness, and mutual affection among its members. In Islamic thought, the ultimate goal of marriage is the establishment of a *sakinah* family, characterized by harmony, tranquility, and emotional well-being. The term *sakinah*, derived from Arabic, refers to peace, serenity, and inner contentment, reflecting a family life free from persistent conflict and instability. (Zulkarnain & Khasanah, 2024)

A *sakinah* family is formed through a lawful marriage and is able to fulfill both the

spiritual and material needs of its members in a balanced manner. This concept is rooted in *Surah Ar-Rum* (30:21), which emphasizes tranquility, love (*mawaddah*), and compassion (*rahmah*) as the foundations of marital life. Accordingly, a *sakinah* family is characterized by mutual affection, strong faith, moral integrity, and harmonious relationships both within the family and with the wider community. (Az-Zuhaili, 2021)

2.4 Criteria of a Sakinah Family

The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs classifies families into five levels within the *Sakinah* Family Development Program: Pre-*Sakinah*, *Sakinah* I, *Sakinah* II, *Sakinah* III, and *Sakinah* III Plus. These categories reflect the extent to which a family fulfills spiritual, material, social, and psychological needs. A Pre-*Sakinah* family lacks the basic requirements of a lawful and stable family life, whereas *Sakinah* I and *Sakinah* II families progressively demonstrate greater fulfillment of religious obligations, economic stability, educational attainment, and social participation. *Sakinah* III families further exhibit strong religious commitment, moral development, and active involvement in community life. (Salsabila & Faruq, 2024; Taufik, 2017)

The highest level, *Sakinah* III Plus, represents families that not only fulfill spiritual, social, economic, and moral responsibilities but also serve as role models within society. Such families demonstrate exemplary faith, ethical conduct, social leadership, charitable engagement, and commitment to community development. Overall, the classification provides a framework for assessing family well-being based on the integration of religious values, harmonious relationships, economic sufficiency, educational achievement, and social responsibility. (Salsabila & Faruq, 2024; Taufik, 2017)

Efforts to establish a *sakinah* family begin with a lawful marriage as the

foundation for creating a harmonious, peaceful, and loving household. In the Islamic perspective, marriage is not merely a means of fulfilling biological needs but a sacred bond aimed at building a family characterized by *sakinah* (tranquility), *mawaddah* (love), and *rahmah* (compassion). This objective is consistent with the teachings of the Qur'an and national legal regulations, both of which emphasize that marriage is intended to establish a happy and enduring family. A harmonious family life requires a shared vision, mutual understanding, openness, and a strong commitment between husband and wife in facing the challenges of life together. Family harmony is further strengthened through the fulfillment of mutual rights and obligations, the cultivation of religious values, family education, and the maintenance of positive relationships with extended family members, neighbors, and the wider community. Therefore, the family serves not only as a place for fulfilling physical and emotional needs but also as a medium for character development, moral education, and the cultivation of healthy social relationships. (Alwi Arafat & Herman, 2023; Fauziah, 2018)

In addition to supporting factors such as effective communication, sound religious understanding, prudent financial management, and quality time management between spouses, several obstacles may hinder the realization of a *sakinah* family. These include limited religious knowledge, economic difficulties, differences in educational backgrounds that are not properly managed, and behaviors that can disrupt family harmony, such as prolonged conflicts, excessive jealousy, gambling, alcohol consumption, promiscuity, and the failure to maintain personal dignity and moral integrity (Tihami & Sahrani, 2009). Consequently, every family member should cultivate mutual respect, honesty, openness, tolerance, and wisdom in resolving conflicts. Ultimately, a *sakinah* family is reflected in the

ability of its members to practice religious teachings, maintain harmonious relationships, fulfill their rights and responsibilities in a balanced manner, and create a peaceful, prosperous, and affectionate environment that serves as the foundation for a resilient and high-quality family life. (Fauziah, 2018; Nadeak et al., 2019)

3. Methodology

This study employs an empirical legal research design, which examines law as it operates and develops within society through data obtained directly from the field. Primary data were collected from members of the community as the main source of information, while secondary data were utilized to support and strengthen the analysis.

The study adopts an interdisciplinary approach by integrating perspectives from sociology and Islamic law. This approach was selected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the resilience of persons with disabilities and their spouses in establishing a **sakinah** family, encompassing both social and religious-normative dimensions.

As a field study employing a case study approach, this research focuses on gaining an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Therefore, a descriptive qualitative method was applied to explore and describe the experiences, conditions, and family dynamics of couples with disabilities in building a *sakinah* family based on their lived realities.

According to Sugiyono, qualitative research is a method grounded in the philosophy of post-positivism and is used to examine phenomena in their natural settings. In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument, while data collection and analysis are conducted qualitatively, emphasizing the

interpretation and meaning of the phenomena being studied. (Sugiyono, 2017)

This research was conducted at Rumah Difabel Berkarya in Palu City. The site was selected because it serves as a community-based institution that supports persons with disabilities in developing their potential, fostering independence, and maintaining social and family life. Furthermore, the location was considered highly relevant to the focus of this study, as it provided the researcher with access to in-depth data regarding the resilience of couples with disabilities in establishing a *sakinah* family.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 *The Resilience of Couples with Disabilities in Establishing a Sakinah Family in Palu City*

The findings of this study indicate that resilience is a fundamental factor in enabling couples with disabilities to realize a *sakinah* family. The informants generally interpreted a *sakinah* family as a household characterized by tranquility, comfort, mutual acceptance, and unconditional support despite physical limitations. For them, family harmony is not defined by the absence of problems but by the ability to face challenges together with patience, gratitude, and understanding. The findings reveal that couples with disabilities view their limitations not as obstacles to family happiness but as opportunities to strengthen solidarity, cooperation, and emotional bonds within the household.

The study also found that couples with disabilities frequently encounter negative social stigma and discriminatory attitudes from both the broader community and, in some cases, their own families. Many respondents reported being perceived as incapable of building a successful marriage due to their physical limitations. Such assumptions often create emotional distress, reduce self-confidence, and add

psychological pressure to family life. Nevertheless, these experiences have encouraged many couples to develop resilience by fostering positive thinking, strengthening their faith, and maintaining a strong commitment to preserving their marriages. Their ability to reinterpret adversity as a test that can be overcome together contributes significantly to family stability and harmony.

Another important finding is that resilience is strengthened through mutual support, adaptive role-sharing, and effective communication between spouses. Husbands and wives consistently strive to understand each other's limitations, share responsibilities according to their capacities, and provide emotional encouragement during difficult situations. Open communication enables them to discuss financial challenges, work-related problems, and personal concerns, thereby reducing psychological burdens and preventing conflicts from escalating. The study demonstrates that empathy, cooperation, flexibility in family roles, and a willingness to forgive are essential components in maintaining harmonious relationships among couples with disabilities.

The findings further reveal that social and spiritual support play a significant role in enhancing family resilience. The Rumah Merah Putih Difabel Berkarya Community in Palu serves as an inclusive space where persons with disabilities can receive emotional support, develop social networks, and participate in empowerment programs. These programs include entrepreneurship development, vocational training, disability assistance services, and regular religious activities such as Islamic study sessions. Through these activities, participants gain spiritual reinforcement, motivation, and practical skills that help them cope with life challenges while strengthening their commitment to family wellbeing. Religious guidance, particularly teachings on patience,

gratitude, and perseverance, contributes substantially to the development of psychological resilience and family harmony.

Despite these positive developments, the study found that limited accessibility to public facilities remains a major challenge for persons with disabilities. Inadequate infrastructure, transportation barriers, and insufficient disability-friendly public services often restrict their independence and social participation. However, collective advocacy efforts undertaken through disability organizations have increased public awareness and encouraged greater governmental attention toward disability inclusion. Support from local authorities, including initiatives aimed at improving accessibility and public services, has provided encouragement and recognition for persons with disabilities. Overall, the findings suggest that the resilience of couples with disabilities in realizing a *sakinah* family is shaped by the interaction of personal strength, marital support, religious values, community empowerment, and broader social inclusion.

4.2 Supporting and Hindering Factors in Realizing a Sakinah Family among Couples with Disabilities

The findings indicate that the realization of a *sakinah* family among couples with disabilities is strongly supported by mutual understanding, emotional support, effective communication, and a supportive social environment. Participants emphasized that family harmony is not determined by physical perfection but by the ability of spouses to accept each other's limitations, provide encouragement during difficult times, and maintain open communication. Mutual empathy and emotional support enable couples to create a peaceful and harmonious family atmosphere despite facing various challenges. In addition, participation in the Rumah Merah Putih Difabel Berkarya

Community in Palu has strengthened their resilience by providing social support, opportunities to share experiences, and a sense of belonging. The presence of an inclusive and supportive community has increased self-confidence and helped couples maintain harmonious family relationships, thereby contributing to the realization of a *sakinah* family.

However, several obstacles continue to hinder the efforts of couples with disabilities in achieving a *sakinah* family. Limited religious knowledge was identified as one of the primary challenges, as many participants acknowledged that they initially lacked sufficient understanding of religious teachings and family values, which affected their ability to resolve family problems constructively. Economic difficulties and restricted employment opportunities also emerged as significant barriers, largely due to social stigma and discrimination that often prevent persons with disabilities from obtaining decent work despite their capabilities and strong work ethic. Furthermore, low educational attainment and limited access to disability-friendly public facilities, including healthcare services, transportation, education, and administrative services, were found to negatively affect family welfare and independence. These findings suggest that strengthening religious education, expanding employment opportunities, improving educational access, and enhancing public accessibility are essential to supporting the resilience of couples with disabilities and fostering the development of *sakinah* families.

The findings of this study reveal that family resilience serves as the primary foundation for disabled couples in establishing a *sakinah* family in Palu City. Despite facing physical limitations, social stigma, and various life challenges, disabled couples demonstrate the ability to adapt, recover, and maintain their aspirations for a harmonious family life. They perceive a

sakinah family as one characterized by peace, security, mutual respect, understanding, and support between spouses. Their resilience is reflected in their capacity to derive positive meaning from adversity, maintain optimism, and strengthen their belief that every hardship is accompanied by a path toward ease. These findings support family resilience theory, which emphasizes a family's ability to withstand, adapt to, and grow through difficult and stressful circumstances.

The resilience of disabled couples is strengthened by several supporting factors, including mutual understanding, open communication, flexible role-sharing, and social support from disability communities. The ability to accept each other's limitations, provide emotional support, and resolve problems through effective communication contributes significantly to family harmony and stability. Furthermore, inclusive community environments provide opportunities for disabled couples to share experiences, receive moral support, and enhance self-confidence. These conditions contribute to stronger family resilience and facilitate the realization of a *sakinah* family characterized by affection, cooperation, and emotional well-being.

However, this study also identifies several barriers to achieving a *sakinah* family, including limited religious knowledge, restricted employment opportunities, low educational attainment, and difficulties in accessing disability-friendly public facilities. These challenges affect not only the economic well-being of families but also the psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of disabled couples' lives. The findings indicate that the obstacles experienced by disabled couples are largely shaped by external and structural factors rather than by disability itself. Therefore, support from families, communities, disability organizations, and inclusive government policies is essential for strengthening family resilience and

promoting the realization of *sakinah* families among disabled couples.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that disabled couples in Palu City demonstrate strong family resilience in overcoming physical limitations and life challenges to achieve a *sakinah* family. Their resilience is reflected in their ability to adapt, find meaning in adversity, maintain open communication, share responsibilities, and provide mutual emotional, practical, and spiritual support. The realization of a *sakinah* family is further strengthened by mutual understanding, effective communication, and supportive community environments. However, several obstacles remain, including limited religious knowledge, restricted employment opportunities, and low educational attainment, which affect the spiritual, economic, and social well-being of disabled couples in their efforts to build a harmonious and stable family life.

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