

## Post-Divorce Parenting Patterns Among Parents of Adolescent Children

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### ABSTRACT

The rising divorce rate has become a critical issue due to its implications for adolescents' psychosocial and emotional development. Adolescents ideally grow within a stable and supportive family environment, yet parental divorce often disrupts parenting coordination, weakens emotional bonds, and alters parental roles, particularly paternal involvement. These conditions create challenges for adolescents' emotional regulation and sense of security. Despite its relevance, local studies that closely examine post-divorce parenting practices from a qualitative perspective remain limited. This study explores how post-divorce parenting dynamics shape adolescents' developmental well-being by emphasizing emotional relationships and value continuity within the family. Employing a qualitative approach with an instrumental case study design, data were gathered through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, complemented by source and method triangulation to enhance credibility. The findings indicate that post-divorce parenting practices are dynamic and adaptive, reflected in six interconnected themes: emotional sensitivity, regulation and boundary-setting, support for autonomy, parenting consistency, family emotional climate, and spiritually grounded parenting rooted in values of *sabr*, *tawakkal*, and *rahmah*. The study highlights that the integration of psychological and spiritual dimensions serves as a protective foundation that fosters emotional stability, internal resilience, and healthier psychosocial development among adolescents in post-divorce family contexts.

**Keyword: Post-Divorce Parenting, Divorce, Islamic-Based Parenting, Family Psychology**

### ABSTRAK

Meningkatnya angka perceraian telah menjadi isu penting karena memiliki implikasi terhadap perkembangan psikososial dan emosional remaja. Remaja idealnya tumbuh dalam lingkungan keluarga yang stabil dan suportif, namun perceraian orang tua sering kali mengganggu koordinasi pengasuhan, melemahkan ikatan emosional, serta mengubah peran orang tua, khususnya keterlibatan ayah. Kondisi tersebut menimbulkan tantangan bagi regulasi emosi dan rasa aman remaja. Meskipun relevan, kajian lokal yang secara mendalam menelaah praktik pengasuhan pascaperceraian melalui perspektif kualitatif masih terbatas. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana dinamika pengasuhan pascaperceraian membentuk kesejahteraan perkembangan remaja dengan menekankan relasi emosional dan kesinambungan nilai dalam keluarga. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui desain studi kasus instrumental, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipan, dan analisis dokumen, yang dilengkapi dengan triangulasi sumber dan metode untuk meningkatkan kredibilitas penelitian. Temuan

penelitian menunjukkan bahwa praktik pengasuhan pascaperceraian bersifat dinamis dan adaptif, yang tercermin dalam enam tema yang saling berkaitan, yaitu sensitivitas emosional, regulasi dan penetapan batas, dukungan terhadap kemandirian, konsistensi pengasuhan, iklim emosional keluarga, serta pengasuhan berbasis spiritual yang berakar pada nilai sabar, tawakal, dan rahmah. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa integrasi dimensi psikologis dan spiritual berperan sebagai fondasi protektif yang mendorong stabilitas emosional, ketahanan internal, dan perkembangan psikososial yang lebih sehat pada remaja dalam konteks keluarga pascaperceraian.

**Kata Kunci: Pengasuhan Pasca-perceraian, Perceraian, Pengasuhan Berbasis Islam, Psikologi Keluarga**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The ideal family, within the framework of developmental psychology, is understood as a unit that provides a safe, affectionate, and emotionally supportive environment essential for individual personality formation, particularly during adolescence (Cahyarity et al., 2025). However, contemporary social dynamics indicate that family structures have become increasingly diverse, marked by the rising prevalence of divorce as a social phenomenon inseparable from changes in domestic relationships. This condition challenges the normative assumption that an intact family is the sole ideal context for adolescent development. Divorce is recognized as a highly stressful life event, affecting not only the separating couple but also children and adolescents who are in sensitive developmental stages (Azizah, 2017). Changes in family status resulting from divorce are often followed by complex emotional, relational, and structural adjustments. Adolescents in post-divorce families are frequently confronted with shifts in parental roles, communication patterns, and caregiving stability, all of which may significantly influence their developmental experiences.

Theoretical studies suggest that divorce may generate psychological vulnerabilities among adolescents, such as anxiety, depression, and emotional instability, especially when accompanied by prolonged parental conflict

(Dianovinina et al., 2023); (Untari et al., 2018). Nevertheless, developmental literature emphasizes that the quality of parenting remains a key factor in supporting adolescents' adaptation and continuity of developmental processes (Devita, 2020). On the other hand, gaps remain within existing scholarships. Most studies tend to focus on the negative consequences of divorce or discuss parenting styles in general terms, without deeply examining post-divorce parenting practices within specific socio-cultural contexts (Jenz & Apsari, 2021). In fact, research indicates that supportive and adaptive parenting practices can strengthen adolescent resilience, even within non-intact family structures (Cahyarity et al., 2025). This gap becomes more evident when considering issues such as father absence (fatherlessness) and the evolving dynamics of single-parent households, which influence everyday parenting practices (Susantin & Rijal, 2024).

Based on these conditions, the present study is positioned to bridge the gap between theoretical discourse and empirical realities by qualitatively examining post-divorce parenting practices in Bekasi Regency. This study aims to understand how divorced parents manage parenting dynamics and how these practices contribute to adolescents' developmental processes within the local social and cultural context.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach using an instrumental case study design. A qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the meanings, processes, and dynamics of post-divorce parenting practices carried out by divorced parents. Therefore, it requires an interpretive approach that enables researchers to explore participants' perspectives holistically (Creswell, 2013).

The participants in this study were divorced parents who had adolescent children aged 12-18 years. The main participants consisted of three parents selected through purposive sampling. The focus of this study was to explore the subjective experiences and post-divorce parenting practices of divorced parents with adolescent children. This emphasis is consistent with Creswell's view (2013), which states that qualitative research is directed toward achieving an in-depth understanding of phenomena as experienced by participants.

Data were collected using methodological triangulation, which included in-depth interviews and observation. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with divorced parents and adolescents as research participants. The observations focused on communication patterns, the ways parents provided advice, their responses to the child's emotional needs, and the relational dynamics formed in everyday situations.

Data analysis was conducted through a coding process, in which codes were assigned to meaning units relevant to the focus of the study. The coding process was carried out openly and flexibly, allowing categories and themes to emerge inductively from the field data. Codes that shared similar meanings were then grouped into analytical categories, which were subsequently developed into major themes as conceptual representations of

the phenomenon under investigation. The next stage involved thematic analysis, by examining the relationships among categories and assessing the consistency and coherence of the resulting themes.

This study was grounded in the ethical principles of social and psychological research, given the sensitive nature of issues related to divorce experiences and parenting practices. Participation consent was obtained through written informed consent, including consent for audio recording of interviews when applicable, as a form of respect for the principles of autonomy and voluntary participation.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Findings

#### Description of Participant

Participant 1 (P1) was a 47-year-old woman with three children, consisting of two sons and one daughter. The divorce occurred as a result of repeated physical violence perpetrated by her husband, as well as his infidelity, which often took place in front of the children. Following the divorce, two children were cared for by P1, while the other child lived with the father. The family's economic condition was precarious, as P1 lived in a rented house and relied on a small food stall business as her primary source of income. The absence of financial support from her former husband further aggravated the family's economic and psychological situation. Psychosocially, P1 faced multiple layers of pressure, not only due to economic hardship but also because of stigma from her former husband's family, who repeatedly blamed her for the divorce, including through negative narratives conveyed to the children.

Participant 2 (P2) was a 58-year-old woman with six children, one of whom had died due to illness. The divorce was triggered by repeated experiences of domestic violence, accompanied by strict

economic control from her husband, including prohibiting her from working despite the family's insufficient financial condition. The violence reached an extreme point when P2 was expelled from the house in front of the children under threat with a sharp weapon. After the divorce, P2 worked as a domestic helper to meet the family's living needs, while her former husband made no contribution to the children's education, caregiving, or basic needs.

Participant 3 (P3) was a 58-year-old man with a 14-year-old daughter. The divorce occurred in 2020, coinciding with the Covid-19 pandemic, and was caused by his wife's infidelity. The child was placed in P3's care because the mother had no income and was considered unable to adequately fulfill her caregiving role. In the early post-divorce phase, the child showed emotional responses in the form of profound sadness and frequent crying, while P3 acknowledged his limited understanding in responding to his daughter's emotional needs.

Participant 4 (P4) was a 17-year-old male adolescent who was currently enrolled in Grade 12 at a public senior high school in the North Cikarang area. P4 was the child of Participant 2 (P2) and the youngest of six siblings.

Participant 5 (P5) was a 14-year-old female adolescent and the child of Participant 3 (P3). At the time of the study, she was enrolled in Grade 8 at a private Madrasah Tsanawiyah (equivalent to junior high school). P5's willingness to participate in the study was obtained after she sought her father's permission and opinion, indicating the presence of attachment and emotional dependence in her decision-making process. Meanwhile, the child of Participant 1 (P1) could not be interviewed due to limited access. At the time of the study, she was no longer living with her mother, had married at the age of 17, had dropped out of school, and already had one child. These conditions made it

impossible for the researcher to collect data directly from her.

Participant 6 (P6) was a psychologist who routinely handled consultation cases related to divorce.

### Overview of Themes

Based on the findings, divorce in the experiences of the parent participants in this study did not emerge as a single, sudden event, but rather as the culmination of prolonged relational wounds. Marital relationships were described as gradually eroding due to domestic violence, emotional neglect, infidelity (involving one of the parents), and the absence of spiritual and moral responsibility on the part of the partner. Divorce became the final course of action, not because of a lack of patience, but because the limits of psychological and existential endurance had been exceeded. Systematically, the six main themes identified through manual coding, along with their corresponding meaning formulations, are presented in the following table.

Table 1. Themes and Meaning Formulations

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Meaning Formulations</i>
Responsiveness	Hugging the child during episodes of emotional distress; listening without judgment; speaking gently; crying together with the child; understanding the child's emotional wounds; accepting the child's negative emotions; refraining from responding with violence.
Demandingness	Written rules displayed on the wall; scheduled times for prayer and school activities; restrictions on mobile phone use; consequence-based sanctions (e.g., school fees not being paid); confiscation or destruction of the phone as a form of behavioral control; monitoring the child's peer associations.

Autonomy Support	Encouraging the child to work; emphasizing the importance of not depending on others; giving the child trust in making decisions; allowing the child to learn from consequences; modeling maternal independence.
Parental Consistency	Repeated advice grounded in the same values; maintaining a non-derogatory attitude toward the father; stable emotional responses; rules that remain consistent; long-term patience.
Family Emotional Condition	A home atmosphere marked by struggle; religious narratives and meaning in life; emotional openness; conflict without physical violence; the home as a place of return.
Parenting Based on Sabr (Patience), Tawakkal (Trust in God), and Rahmah (Compassion)	Active patience and spiritually grounded compassion; sources of emotional regulation and adolescent psychological resilience; meaning in life; gentle advice and faith-based role modeling; reliance on Allah.

**Theme 1: Responsiveness**

Emotional responsiveness emerged as a highly salient dimension of parenting in the experiences of divorced parents, particularly mothers, in accompanying adolescents facing psychological distress following divorce. In Participant 1 (P1), emotional responsiveness was particularly evident when dealing with a child who experienced severe depression and self-harming behavior. P1 described her child’s recurrent episodes of psychological distress, marked by cutting behavior and suicide attempts. In such circumstances, her primary response was not anger or punishment, but rather physical and emotional presence through embracing the child: *“When the episode happens, I just hold her. I do what I can. I advise her, and I pray as well. Thank God, the child understands.”* (P1, Question 6)

A similar pattern, expressed through direct communication without blame, was found in another participant.

Participant 2 (P2) stated that children need a space to talk without fear of being judged. Accordingly, she tried to create opportunities to sit together, talk, and discuss things in a relaxed atmosphere: *“So, not with emotion. I never respond with emotion. I ask them to sit down. ‘What happened? Why were you late, child? Why didn’t you tell me?’ I do not respond with anger. I ask them to sit and then we talk.”* (P2, Question 25).

A similar view was expressed by P3, who stated that calm communication made it easier for children to receive advice: *“When my child is emotional, I ask them to sit down and I speak softly. If we also become emotional, the child only becomes more defiant.”* (P3, Question 16). The child’s perspective (P4) further reinforced this finding. P4 stated that her mother’s nonjudgmental and accepting attitude, even when she made mistakes, made her feel loved and emotionally safe: *“She does not judge me.”* (P4, Question 2). Participant 6 (P6), a psychologist, confirmed that such patterns of emotional responsiveness function as a protective factor in adolescents’ post-divorce development.

**Theme 2: Demandingness**

The findings of this study indicate that regulation and limit-setting (demandingness) constitute an important aspect of post-divorce parenting, particularly among mothers as the primary caregivers. One of the most prominent forms of regulation was the creation of written household rules. Participant 1 (P1) explained that the rules were intentionally written down and posted on the walls of the house so that the children could easily remember and follow them. *“We use rules. When they were still in school, there was time to study, then sleep, not keep playing on the phone, wake up at dawn, then go to school. It was written on paper and put on the wall. Everything was constantly reminded.”* (P1, Question 10)

Writing down rules and displaying them on the wall functioned not only as a control mechanism but also as a symbol of consistency and structural clarity within the family. Another participant (P2) also emphasized the importance of a regular daily schedule so that children would not lose direction after their parents' divorce: *"In my case, by 9 p.m. my child must already be home. Usually, after Maghrib prayer, the child attends Qur'anic recitation. Then after Isya prayer, they should be at home studying. If there is homework, they must do it. By 9 p.m., they should remain at home."* (P2, Question 27)

One sanction reported by participants was refusing to pay school fees when children repeatedly violated the rules. P1 described this as an effort to create a deterrent effect and instill responsibility (P1, Question 10). Participant 6 (P6), further emphasized that clear and consistent regulation and limits function as a source of security for adolescents after divorce. However, the psychologist also stressed that inconsistency in rules or overly harsh sanctions may trigger confusion and anxiety in children.

### **Theme 3: Autonomy Support**

The findings indicate that autonomy support constitutes an important dimension of post-divorce parenting that significantly contributes to adolescents' developmental processes. One prominent form of autonomy support was the encouragement given to children to work and not depend entirely on their parents. Participant 1 (P1) explained that the family's economic limitations after divorce led her to involve her child in efforts to meet daily needs, while also using this as a means of teaching responsibility: *"In this world, as human beings, people sometimes judge us by our economic condition. If we do not have wealth, sometimes people avoid us because they are afraid, we might ask for*

*help or something. So, I told my son, work properly, save your money, put it aside. You are a man. Someday you will marry someone's daughter, and you will need money. So basically, I kept advising him like that."* (P1, Question 22)

In addition to modeling hard work, parents also explicitly instilled the value of not depending on anyone else. This principle appeared repeatedly in participants' narratives as a reflection of the mothers' life experiences in having to survive on their own, while also guiding their children to strive for income generation after divorce. P2 stated: *"...the child is still being guided and continuously monitored by me."* (P2, Question 19). This value of independence was not conveyed only verbally but was also reinforced through parental modeling. The mother became a concrete example of independence, taking on whatever work was necessary to provide for the family, and this example made her children feel proud. P2 described her experience: *"Yes, she said that once someone called her 'a maid's child.' But she said, 'What matters is that it is halal.' In fact, she felt proud. Without Mama, we would not have been able to go to school. So, she did not feel inferior, not at all."* (P2, Question 47)

This approach shows that autonomy support does not mean relinquishing parental responsibility but rather shifting the parental role from controller to companion. Parents remain present, but do not take over entirely. P6 (the psychologist) reinforced this finding by emphasizing that support for adolescent autonomy after divorce is essential for the development of self-esteem and emotional regulation.

### **Theme 4: Parental Consistency**

The findings demonstrate that parental consistency is another important aspect of post-divorce parenting that plays a major role in creating a sense of security and psychological stability for

adolescents. One of the most prominent forms of consistency was the repeated delivery of advice grounded in the same values. Participant 1 (P1) emphasized that she never became tired of conveying moral messages to her child, even though the child's response was not always immediately visible. *"Sometimes, the only way is that I must be very patient. I advise him slowly. Thank God, at first, he really could not accept advice, but over time he began to understand."* (P1, Question 5)

P1 realized that changes in children's behavior require time; therefore, advice was positioned as a process rather than an instant demand. Parental consistency was also reflected in parents deliberate efforts not to speak negatively about the father in front of the children. All participants emphasized that although they had painful experiences in marriage, they tried to preserve the narrative about the father in ways that would not damage the child's psychological condition. P1 stated firmly: *"But honestly, I am not the kind of person who ever speaks badly about or corners the children's father."* (P1, Question 7). P6 (the psychologist) reinforced this finding by stating that parental consistency is a key factor in reducing anxiety and confusion among adolescents after divorce.

#### **Theme 5: Family Emotional Condition**

The findings indicate that the family's emotional condition constitutes the relational context that encompasses all post-divorce parenting practices and their implications for adolescent development. One of the main characteristics identified in the family's emotional condition was a home atmosphere marked by narratives of struggle. Participants described the home not as a place free from problems, but rather as a space in which all family members became aware of and confronted the realities of post-divorce life together. Participant 2 (P2) stated: *"We work and rent a house. Thank God, we both work.*

*So, the monthly salary remains intact. Our meals come from the daily income."* (P2, Question 3)

P2 further explained that awareness of hardship strengthened the family's emotional bonds despite material deprivation: *"Before I started working, food was always scarce. Sometimes we could eat only once a day; after eating in the morning, we would already worry again about the evening meal. There were times, repeatedly, before we had jobs, when just one scoop of rice for all five of us had to be made into porridge so that I could also get a share. I was willing not to eat, if my children could eat."* (P2, Question 14)

Participants described that within the home, children were given space to express sadness, anger, or disappointment without fear of being judged. P4, as a child participant, stated simply: *"Not judgmental."* (P4, Question 2). Likewise, P5, also speaking as a child, said: *"Every day, I feel that way, I feel loved by my father."* (P5, Question 22). This positive emotional support and openness fostered healthy emotional communication and prevented the accumulation of negative emotions. Participant 6 (P6), a psychologist, affirmed that a warm, open, and religiously meaningful family emotional condition functions as a protective factor in the development of adolescents after divorce.

#### **Theme 6: Parenting Based on Sabr (Patience), Tawakkal (Trust in God), and Rahmah (Compassion)**

The findings revealed that post-divorce parenting among the participating mothers was grounded in the values of active patience, spiritual compassion, and surrender to Allah (*tawakkal*). Participant 1 (P1) described how patience became the foundation for dealing with her child's emotional dynamics and the pressures of post-divorce life. She stated that she tried to regulate her emotions and not direct her anger toward her children, even while

experiencing physical and mental exhaustion: “*When I sit quietly and remember that they are still in school, and I can only give them a small amount of pocket money, I feel ashamed.*” (P1, Question 37)

Participant 2 (P2) described her experience as follows: “*Alhamdulillah, there is no hardship now, no serious shortage. Since I started working, alhamdulillah, there has been enough food, and my children’s school expenses are also covered.*” (P2, Question 1). The dimension of *rahmah*, or compassion, was also strongly evident in the participants’ parenting practices. This is illustrated in the experience of Participant 2 (P2), who chose dialogue and emotional closeness in accompanying her child (P2, Question 25). In addition, *rahmah* was also reflected in mothers’ efforts to maintain a positive narrative about the father, even though the marital relationship had ended. “*But honestly, I never spoke badly about or cornered their father.*” (P1, Question 7)

The value of *tawakkal* emerged as a spiritual strength that sustained the mothers’ resilience in carrying out the role of a single parent. The participants were aware of the limitations of social and economic support and therefore positioned Allah as their primary source of reliance in parenting (P1, Question 20).

## Discussion

### Responsiveness: A Psychological and Relational Foundation

Findings from Participant 1 (P1) indicate that responsiveness was concretely manifested through both physical and emotional presence, such as hugging the child when the child was experiencing a severe psychological crisis, including depression, self-harm, and suicidal ideation. In this context, hugging was not merely an act of affection; rather, it functioned as a form of emotional containment, that is, an

emotion-buffering mechanism that helped reduce the intensity of the child’s distress. This interpretation is consistent with attachment theory, which posits that sensitive responses to children’s distress signals form the foundation of secure attachment (Ainsworth et al., 2015).

The analysis identified both convergence with and critical dialogue toward theories related to this theme. In general, the findings confirm Baumrind’s parenting theory, particularly the advantages of authoritative parenting in the post-divorce context. High responsiveness accompanied by nonviolent boundaries appears to support adolescents’ emotional stability, as emphasized by (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). From the perspective of attachment theory, these findings reinforce the argument that parental emotional presence after divorce functions as a compensatory mechanism for the loss of one attachment figure.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of Merson (Merson et al., 2023), who argued that the quality of emotional relationships is more decisive for adolescent well-being than family structure itself. The findings regarding the importance of emotional validation are also in line with Rejaän (Rejaän et al., 2024) concerning the role of parental support in reducing internalizing problems. Moreover, in high-conflict contexts, these results support Stolnicu (Stolnicu et al., 2022) who conceptualized post-divorce co-parenting as a process of emotional healing rather than merely a technical arrangement. The perspective of the child participant (P4), who felt safe because they were not judged, strengthens the argument of Grape (Grape et al., 2024) that children are active agents who evaluate the emotional fairness of their parents. These findings confirm that post-divorce parental responsiveness constitutes a protective factor that mitigates adolescents’ psychological

symptoms through emotional support that strengthens their self-efficacy (Qian et al., 2024).

A distinctive contribution of this study lies in the integration of religious dimensions—*sabr*, *tawakkal*, and *rahmah*—as psychological resources. Although these dimensions are relatively underexplored in the international literature, they are consistent with contextual findings from Indonesia (Basalamah & Pebriani, 2024; Maharani & Daulay, 2023).

### **Demandingness: An Adaptive Mechanism**

From an interpretive perspective, the practice of writing rules on the walls of the house, scheduling daily activities such as school, worship, and study, and limiting gadget use reflects parents' need to create predictability and order in adolescents' lives. In the post-divorce context, such structure functions as a substitute for family stability that had previously been fragmented. This finding is consistent with Baumrind's view (Baumrind, 1991) that clear and consistent demandingness forms the foundation for children's self-discipline and behavioral regulation.

The enforcement of rules through consequences, including financial sanctions such as refusing to pay school fees, and even extreme actions such as destroying a mobile phone, demonstrates a broad spectrum of demandingness, ranging from rational control to repressive control. These practices cannot be understood reductively as mere violence; rather, they must be situated within the context of emotional pressure, parental anxiety about the child's future, and the limited psychological resources available after divorce. These findings reinforce Amato's (Amato, 2010) argument that single parents often face a dilemma between the need to maintain discipline and the emotional limitations resulting from parenting stress.

These findings are also consistent with contemporary empirical studies. Research by Merson (Merson et al., 2023) and Fang (Fang & Zartler, 2024) emphasizes that adolescents' emotional stability is shaped more by the quality of structure and emotional relationships than by residential arrangements. Meanwhile, (Rejaän et al., 2022, 2024) show that demandingness balanced with autonomy support reduces both internalizing and externalizing behavior problems.

Demandingness in post-divorce families is more appropriately understood as an adaptive mechanism when it is manifested through consistent structure and supportive monitoring, rather than repressive psychological control, because authoritative parenting is associated with lower levels of adolescents' internalizing and externalizing behaviors, whereas psychological control instead increases problematic adolescent behavior (Almeida & Santos, 2024; Liu & Tang, 2025).

### **Autonomy Support: An Empowering Parenting Pattern**

Children are encouraged to understand the realities of post-divorce life, including economic hardship, as part of the maturation process. In this context, independence is not merely financial, but also psychological, namely the capacity to manage stress, make decisions, and reflectively interpret life experiences. This pattern reflects a shift in the parental role from that of a controlling figure to that of a companion or guide on the side, in which parents remain emotionally present but do not fully take over the child's responsibilities. Theoretically, these findings are consistent with Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020), which emphasizes that the fulfillment of the need for autonomy is a prerequisite for intrinsic motivation and psychological well-being. Adolescents' participation in adolescents' educational and occupational decision-making provides

them with a sense of control and competence, as also emphasized by Grolnick and Ryan (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989).

Within the framework of Baumrind's parenting theory (Baumrind, 1991), the autonomy-supportive practices identified in this study reflect an authoritative parenting style, in which emotional warmth is combined with realistic demands. These findings confirm that although family structure changes because of divorce, the quality of adaptive parenting can still be maintained and may even become a protective factor for adolescents' mental health (Amato, 2010).

Empirically, these findings support the studies of Rejaän (Rejaän et al., 2022, 2024), which showed that parental autonomy support is significantly associated with adolescents' sense of autonomy and sense of belonging after divorce. The findings are also in line with Merson (Merson et al., 2023) and Fang (Fang & Zartler, 2024), who emphasize that the quality of emotional relationships is more decisive for adolescent well-being than structural arrangements alone. Autonomy support in post-divorce families can be understood as an empowering parenting strategy because it strengthens adolescents' psychological need satisfaction and self-control, which in turn support intrinsic motivation and healthier development (Çelik, 2024).

#### **Parental Consistency: The Child's Psychological Anchor**

The findings show that parental consistency is manifested through the repeated delivery of advice grounded in the same values, the gentle and continuous communication of moral messages, and long-term patience in dealing with the behavioral dynamics of adolescence. From the perspective of Baumrind's parenting theory (Baumrind, 1991), parental consistency is a key element of the authoritative parenting style. The findings show that although family

structure changes due to divorce, parents can still maintain authoritative characteristics through a balance of warmth, clear rules, and consistency in implementation. This supports the findings of Darling and Steinberg (Darling & Steinberg, 1993) that the quality of parenting is more decisive for child well-being than family structure itself.

Within the framework of Attachment Theory, consistency in parents' emotional responses strengthens the sense of security, or secure base, that adolescents particularly need after divorce (Ainsworth et al., 2015). Inconsistent parental responses may generate anxiety and relational confusion, whereas consistency helps build stable internal working models of self and others. Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020) further emphasizes that parental consistency supports the fulfillment of basic psychological needs, particularly the needs for relatedness and competence. Consistent rules and stable dialogue allow adolescents to feel valued while also enabling them to regulate their behavior independently.

These findings are also consistent with the studies of Amato (Amato, 2010) and Simons and Conger (Simons & Conger, 2007), which showed that consistency in discipline and the quality of emotional relationships are major predictors of positive adolescent adjustment after divorce. P6's emphasis on the importance of maintaining the same core rules and minimizing interparental conflict also reinforces the findings of Stolnicu (Stolnicu et al., 2022) regarding the importance of stable and mutually respectful co-parenting. In addition, the results of this study support the findings of Rejaän (Rejaän et al., 2022, 2024) that parental consistency and autonomy support contribute significantly to adolescents' sense of belonging and sense of autonomy. However, this study extends those findings by adding a spiritual

dimension—*sabr*, *tawakkal*, and *rahmah*—as sources of parental resilience in maintaining consistent parenting, a dimension that has been relatively underexplored in Western scholarship. Parental consistency becomes a child's psychological anchor when rules and parenting messages are conveyed steadily within a warm relationship, as well-directed behavioral control is associated with better psychological adjustment, whereas coercive control instead undermines it (Bacikova-Sleskova et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2024).

#### **Family Emotional Condition: The Quality of the Relational Atmosphere**

The findings indicate that the participants' families lived within an atmosphere marked by a persistent narrative of struggle. The home was not portrayed as an idealized space free from problems, but rather as a shared arena in which family members confronted economic realities, parental role strain, and the loss of a spouse figure together. Another important element was emotional openness within the family. Children were given space to express sadness, anger, and disappointment without fear of being judged. This practice fostered healthy emotional communication and prevented emotional repression that could potentially develop into psychological problems. In situations of conflict, the family still experienced arguments and tension; however, such conflicts were managed without physical violence and with efforts toward emotional reconciliation. In this context, the home functioned as an emotionally sanctuary safe place for adolescents to return to and recover from external pressures.

Theoretically, the findings regarding family emotional condition support Attachment Theory, which emphasizes the importance of a secure base for children's emotional regulation (Ainsworth et al., 2015). A home positioned as an emotionally safe place

enables adolescents to develop a positive internal working model of themselves and others, even when family structure has changed. Within Baumrind's parenting framework, a warm family emotional climate reflects a high level of responsiveness. These findings indicate that although demandingness may fluctuate due to post-divorce stress, emotional warmth can still be maintained and may function as a protective factor (Baumrind, 1991). This reinforces the argument that the emotional quality of relationships is more decisive than family structure itself.

From the perspective of Self-Determination Theory, a supportive family emotional climate fulfills the basic need for relatedness, which serves as the foundation for the development of adolescent autonomy and competence (Ryan & Deci, 2020). These findings are consistent with the work of Grolnick and Ryan (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989), who found that parental emotional support enhances children's self-regulation under stressful conditions. The findings of this study are in line with those of Amato (Amato, 2010), who emphasized that the quality of the parent-child emotional relationship is more influential for children's adjustment than divorce status itself. These results also support the findings of Merson (Merson et al., 2023) and Fang (Fang & Zartler, 2024), which identify emotional stability and open communication as key predictors of adolescent well-being. A warm, expressive, and open family emotional climate constitutes an important protective factor for adolescents, as positive family communication is associated with lower levels of anxiety and depression, while family cohesion and expressiveness are linked to higher life satisfaction and lower suicidal ideation (Huang et al., 2023; Peláez-Fernández et al., 2024).

### **Sabr, Tawakkal, dan Rahmah: A Spiritual-Psychological Foundation**

The theme of Parenting Based on Sabr (patience), *Tawakkal* (trustful surrender to Allah), and Rahmah (compassion) reveals that the post-divorce parenting practices of the participating mothers were not merely oriented toward meeting their children's physical needs but were deeply rooted in Islamic psychospiritual values that had been internalized and embodied in everyday caregiving relationships. Interpretively, *sabr* in the participants' experiences was not understood as passive resignation or unhealthy emotional suppression, but rather as a form of active and reflective patience.

These findings are consistent with the perspective of Islamic Psychology, which conceptualizes *sabr* as an active and transformative psychospiritual strength (Qur'an, Al-Baqarah: 153). Rothman & Coyle (Rothman & Coyle, 2018) argues that *sabr* functions as an adaptive form of spiritually grounded emotional regulation, particularly in the face of chronic stress. The dimension of *rahmah*, or compassion, emerged as the foundation of an emotionally secure parent-child relationship. The parenting practices displayed by the participants—through dialogical approaches, empathic communication, and the avoidance of verbal and emotional violence—demonstrate that compassion was not understood sentimentally, but rather as a form of consistent emotional presence and unconditional acceptance.

These findings are in line with Rothman and Coyle (Rothman & Coyle, 2018), who conceptualize *rahmah* as a form of unconditional positive regard within the framework of Islamic Psychology. Furthermore, these findings are also consistent with the studies of Merson (Merson et al., 2023) and Fang (Fang & Zartler, 2024), which emphasize that adolescents' emotional stability following divorce is determined more by

the quality of emotional relationships and openness in communication than by structural factors alone.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

This study has several limitations. First, the study employed a personal unit of analysis. Second, the findings of this study should ideally be extended by examining the impact or outcomes of the parenting processes identified here from the child's perspective. Third, the analytical process and meaning making in this study relied heavily on the researcher's reflective capacity, theoretical perspective, and interpretive sensitivity in understanding participant narratives. Data collection was conducted through a single in-depth interview with each participant. This temporal dimension could be more effectively explored through longitudinal interviews or repeated observations.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS**

This study concludes that post-divorce parenting among parents of adolescents is a dynamic, adaptive, and multilayered caregiving process, in which the quality of the emotional relationship plays a more decisive role in adolescents' psychological well-being than changes in family structure itself. The core findings indicate that the six major themes—responsiveness, demandingness, autonomy support, parental consistency, family emotional condition, and parenting grounded in *sabr*, *tawakkal*, and *rahmah*—do not operate independently. Rather, they are integrated and mutually reinforcing dimensions that together constitute a holistic parenting system within the post-divorce context.

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