

# The Major Foundations of Family Cohesion

## A Field-Based Study



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The family is the primary foundation for building civilizations and the natural environment for nurturing human values. It is within the family that individuals learn responsibility, moral behavior, and emotional balance. For this reason, Islamic legislation places great importance on the family, viewing it as a sacred institution and a “solemn covenant” (mīthāq ghalīz), not merely a social agreement. However, contemporary transformations and rapid social change have contributed to rising rates of marital conflict, emotional separation, and divorce. This reality creates an urgent need to revive the major foundations established by Islamic law to strengthen family cohesion and protect this institution from disintegration.



This study explores the jurisprudential principles and ethical values that serve as “safety valves” for family stability. It organizes these foundations into two phases: the phase of establishment and formation (before marriage), and the phase of continuity and sustainability (after marriage). The study also seeks to connect juristic theory with real-world practice by using quantitative field data to assess how society understands these foundations and how effective they are in addressing modern challenges, such as financial pressure and emotional distance. The study emphasizes the Qur’anic concept of *sakinah* (tranquility) as the central pillar of marital stability, because marriage in Islam is intended to create psychological calm, affection, and mercy between spouses.

## Research Problem

This research stems from the growing impact of modern social and economic challenges on family stability. These challenges include changing expectations, weak communication, increased financial burdens, and external influences that disturb the private space of marriage. Therefore, the study seeks to answer the following question: What are the major foundations that strengthen family cohesion from the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence, and how is society today perceiving them? The study aims to establish these foundations through Islamic legal evidence and to measure societal awareness of them through a field study. In doing so, it provides recommendations that reduce conflict and divorce while improving marital stability.

## Research Methodology

The researcher adopted two methods:

### 1. Inductive-Analytical Method:

This method was used by tracing the relevant texts in the Qur’an and Sunnah and analyzing the interpretations of jurists and exegetes. Modern studies were also

reviewed and linked to the objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*), especially those related to protecting lineage and honor.

### 2. Descriptive-Analytical Method (Field Study):

An online questionnaire was designed and distributed to a random sample of 30 participants, with 96% married. The questionnaire aimed to identify societal priorities in family cohesion and to measure awareness of key Islamic foundations such as values, readiness, and communication.

## Section 1: The Importance of Family Cohesion

From the perspective of Islamic law, family cohesion is essential because it fulfills major Sharia objectives. A stable family protects lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*) and honor (*ḥifẓ al-‘ird*), which are among the necessities preserved by Islamic law. Without cohesion, moral systems weaken, children’s upbringing becomes unstable, and social order is threatened.

Family cohesion also enables spouses to uphold Allah’s boundaries through mutual rights and duties. Jurists emphasize that marriage becomes an act of worship when each partner fulfills responsibilities with sincerity and accountability. In addition, Islamic teachings connect marital stability to *sakinah* as the psychological goal, while affection and mercy (*mawaddah wa raḥmah*) are the practical tools that maintain love and respect. This makes marriage more than a contract—it becomes a spiritual bond.

Scholars and thinkers further confirm that the family is the first building block of society. Classical thinkers such as Ibn Khaldun argued that the strength of civilization depends on stable families. Modern thinkers also note that cohesive families reduce crime and deviance, lower social costs, and increase society’s ability to resist cultural and economic pressures.



## Section 2: Major Foundations of Family Cohesion/Foundations Before Marriage (Formation Phase)

The pre-marriage stage is the cornerstone of stability.

The most important foundations include:

### 1. Sound selection based on religion and character:

Choosing a spouse with strong faith and good morals ensures shared values and creates a reference point during conflict.

### 2. Psychological and emotional readiness:

Emotional maturity reduces instability. Research indicates that a lack of readiness can lead to emotional separation, affecting 38.5% of wives (Nadia Hassan, 2025).

### 3. Financial stability (al-bā'ah):

The ability to provide support creates security and reduces conflict. A study by Noura Al-Sumaani (2022) found that 80% of financially stable families experience high levels of stability.

### 4. Shar'i meeting and dialogue:

Legitimate communication before marriage helps build acceptance and prevents later shocks caused by unrealistic expectations.

### Foundations after Marriage (Sustainability Phase)

After marriage, cohesion requires continuous commitment through:

#### 1. Affection and mercy:

Affection strengthens emotional connection, while mercy preserves respect during hardship.

#### 2. Achieving marital tranquility (sakinah):

Marriage should provide comfort and calm, making the home a safe space rather than a place of tension.

#### 3. Good companionship and effective communication:

Gentle dialogue, privacy, and patience are essential for resolving disagreements without escalation.

#### 4. Family independence and religious conscience:

Protecting the household from harmful interference and maintaining self-accountability strengthens responsibility and prevents injustice.

## Section 3: Field Study Results

The questionnaire results showed strong awareness of family cohesion foundations:

- 73.3% identified religion and good character as the most decisive factor.
- 76.7% confirmed psychological readiness before

marriage is essential.

- Only 36.7% rated financial stability as "excellent" in importance, suggesting values are prioritized over wealth.
- 86.7% preferred gentle dialogue as the best method of resolving disputes.
- 56.7% believed the absence of religious conscience and self-accountability is a main cause of divorce today.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that Islamic jurisprudence provides a complete system for family cohesion that combines spiritual tranquility (sakinah), moral commitment, and practical awareness. The Qur'anic image of spouses as a "dwelling" (sakan) summarizes Islam's goal of making the family a source of safety and mercy. Field results confirm that society values religion, dialogue, and emotional readiness as essential foundations for stability.

The study recommends:

1. Premarital training programs focusing on jurisprudence, emotional readiness, and budgeting.
2. Preventive family counseling units using Sharia-based psychological guidance.
3. Media awareness campaigns promoting successful family models and sakinah.
4. Larger field studies to examine the impact of digital transformation on family cohesion.

**Note:** This research was prepared as a requirement for the course (Family Jurisprudence), under the supervision of Prof. Ayman Saleh, Professor of Fiqh and its Principles at the College of Sharia and Islamic Studies, Qatar University (2025).

