MENTAL HEALTH OF CHILDREN FROM BROKEN HOMES IN TOXIC ENVIRONMENTS: AN ANALYSIS FROM THE QUR’ANIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT
This study examines the mental well-being of children from divorced or separated families in harmful environments, through the perspective of the Qur’an. It focuses on a student from the Islamic State University of North Sumatra (UINSU) facing mental health challenges due to parental divorce. According to the 2018 Basic Health Research, 9.8% of Indonesians suffer from emotional and mental issues, up from 2013. Factors like divorce, familial discord, and lack of emotional support worsen children’s psychological well-being, especially in toxic environments. Using qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews and observations, data were collected from UINSU students aged 18 to 25 from broken homes. Findings indicate that children of divorced parents are more prone to mental health issues. However, applying Qur’anic teachings can help individuals achieve inner peace. Parents must educate and adequately support their children in a tranquil, empathetic environment for optimal development. The research emphasizes the importance of spirituality in enhancing mental well-being and the need for a supportive environment, highlighting the critical role of parental and community involvement in children’s cognitive development.

Keywords: Mental Health, Broken Home, Toxic Environment

ABSTRAK

Kata Kunci: Kesehatan Mental, Broken Home, Lingkungan Beracun
INTRODUCTION

Mental health is a change in an individual’s mental functioning that causes disturbances in their mind, leading to self-inflicted suffering that can hinder their ability to perform social roles (Ginting, Gusty, & Yulisetiani, 2022). Mental health issues arise from an individual’s inability to cope with problems and the numerous demands they face from themselves and those around them. These issues result in decreased productivity and can affect physical health, potentially leading to severe consequences, including death (Salji, Fauziah, Putri, & Zuhri, 2022).

According to the 2018 Basic Health Research (Riskesdas) conducted by the Ministry of Health, approximately 9.8% or around 26 million of the 267 million people in Indonesia live with “emotional mental disorders” or mental health conditions. A more detailed breakdown shows that the prevalence of severe mental disorders among the Indonesian population is about 7 per thousand, with the highest numbers found in Bali, Yogyakarta, NTB, and Aceh. Emotional mental disorders characterized by symptoms of depression and anxiety affect 9.8% of individuals aged 15 and above, with the highest prevalence in Central Sulawesi, Gorontalo, NTT, and Maluku (Indonesia, 2019). These figures represent an increase from the 2013 Basic Health Research (Riskesdas), which indicated that the prevalence of emotional mental disorders with symptoms of depression and anxiety was 6% for individuals aged 15 and above, or around 16 million people. The prevalence of severe mental disorders, such as schizophrenia, was 1.7 per thousand, meaning that 1-2 people out of every 1000 in Indonesia suffer from severe mental illness. Central Sulawesi had the highest prevalence at 11.6%, while Lampung had the lowest at 1.2% (Ministry of Health, 2013).

The family is the smallest unit in society, playing a fundamental role and holding a basic position for every individual. Within the family, children typically engage in various intimate interactions with their father and mother, forming the foundation for behavior, character, moral values, and education (Tayo, 2018). Zakiah Daradjat posits that parents are the primary and initial educators of their children, as the first education children receive comes from their parents. Therefore, the initial form of education occurs within family life (Sulistyoko, 2018). From these two principles, it is evident how significant the responsibility of parents is towards their children. More explicitly, Allah SWT underscores the obligation of educating children in Surah At-Tahrim, verse 6, which states:

مْ نَارًا وَّقُوْدُهَا هْلِيْكَ مْ وَا نْفُسَكَ مَنُوْا قُوْْٓا ا ذِيْنَ ا يُّهَا الَّيٰٓا حِجَارَةُ عَلّةٌ غِلٌ شِدَادٌ لِّهَا الَّيٰٓا يَا النَّاسُ وَالَّيْدِيْمُ مَا يُؤْمَرُوْنَ مَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُوْنَ اللّٰهَ مَآْ ا

“O believers! Safeguard yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is people and stones, over which are appointed angels, stern and severe, who do not disobey Allah in what He commands them but do what they are commanded.” (Qur’an, At-Tahrim, 66:6) (Departemen Agama RI, 2006).

Quraish Shihab explains in his exegesis of Surah At-Tahrim, verse 6, that both proselytization and education should originate from the home. Although the verse
addresses men (fathers) explicitly, it does not exclusively apply to them. The verse is directed at both men and women (mothers and fathers). This signifies that both parents are responsible for their children and each other, just as each individual is accountable for their own actions (Quraish, 2017). Consequently, a family atmosphere and a peaceful environment are crucial for the proper development of a child.

Unfortunately, not all families can create a healthy home environment for their members, a situation often referred to as a “broken home.”

According to Willis (2015), a broken home is a fractured family where the lack of familial attention or diminished parental affection towards the child is due to various factors, one of which is divorce, resulting in the child living with only one parent (Cholifah, Nurhayati, & Fitriana, 2023). Another factor is a family where the parents are not divorced but lack harmony, frequently leading to conflicts with significant repercussions. Therefore, it is possible for a family with both parents present to be considered a broken home when there is no love, kindness, or warmth within the family. Such family conditions are highly vulnerable for children, especially if they have not yet developed stable emotional maturity to manage their feelings, coupled with an environment indifferent to their mental state, commonly referred to as a toxic environment (Buana, 2023).

A toxic environment is one that can lead individuals towards harmful behaviors, affecting their mental health. Children from broken homes who find themselves in a toxic environment will struggle to adapt to changes and face life’s challenges. A toxic environment often influences individuals to commit acts of injustice and harm to themselves and others. Those trapped in such an environment may feel stuck and make mistakes without realizing the consequences. Therefore, it is crucial to distance ourselves from toxic environments.

According to Fuad (2016), when examining mental health issues, the spiritual aspect is often neglected by experts and researchers, with a predominant focus on biological and social aspects. This neglect of the spiritual dimension leads to an incomplete understanding, particularly in Indonesia, where the majority are Muslims. From an Islamic perspective, understanding humans holistically requires more than just considering biological aspects or the social and cultural context influencing them. A comprehensive understanding necessitates the integration of all factors shaping personality, including the spiritual aspect (Fuad, 2016). As Allah Almighty says:

"How can you turn to disbelief when the verses of Allah are recited to you and His Messenger (Prophet Muhammad) is among you? Whoever holds firmly to the faith of Allah has indeed been guided to the straight path.” (Surah Ali-Imran:101)(Departemen Agama RI, 2006).

In Al Misbah’s exegesis, it is explained, “How strange! How could you become disbelievers at any time or in any situation
when Allah’s verses are continuously recited to you, always fresh with His guidance, and His Messenger who always provides you with direction or now his sunnah is among you? Whoever earnestly holds fast, that is, relates all matters to Allah’s religion, has indeed been guided to the wide and straight path, which is firm faith with no deviation after it.” His word: “While Allah’s verses are recited to you, and His Messenger is among you?” implies that you can hold firmly to the truth through understanding and internalizing the holy book, or if that is not possible, then through the Prophet who is among you. The conclusion of this verse suggests that there will come a time when the Prophet will leave them. However, deviation will not touch them as long as they hold fast to the holy book, the Qur’an, and the religious guidance explained by the Prophet, thus it can be a guarantee for those who have been left by the Prophet (Shihab, 2002).

Previous research on the literature review of mental health studies concerning individuals from broken homes indicates that the impact of parental divorce significantly affects individuals, particularly children. This leads to various consequences, especially deviant behavior patterns, which can be harmful and detrimental to themselves and those around them (Suhartini, Siahaan, Kinanti, Amelia, & Alrefi, 2024). Another study highlights the influence of the environment on the character development of children from broken homes at the Faculty of Social Sciences, UNISIA, indicating that the environment also affects their daily behavior (Perkembangan Karakter Pada Anak Broken Home Di UNUSIA Fakultas Ilmu Sosial | COMSERVA, 2023). Amhar et al.’s research on mental health in adolescents from broken homes shows that, on average, the mental health levels of males are higher than those of females. However, the average level of social support among female adolescents is higher than that of male adolescents. This suggests that the psychological impact on males and females differs in managing mental health (Amhar et al., 2023).

The Islamic psychotherapy method for individuals with mental health issues explains that some children have low motivation to learn due to inadequate parenting or discipline practices by their parents. Conversely, in other cases, Islamic parenting has a positive impact on children’s motivation to learn. It is not a definitive measure that Islamic parenting is the sole solution for addressing children’s mental health issues. The implementation of reality therapy also seems to have a beneficial effect on children’s mental health, by providing them with an understanding and awareness that their current environment might be less conducive. This understanding helps children to reconcile more easily with themselves and their surroundings. (Fradinata, Netrawati, & Karneli, 2023)

Other studies align with this research, such as the impact of parental divorce on children’s emotional development (Uphatusalicha, 2008), analysis of toxic parenting on the mental stability of contemporary children (Izzatiya, 2023), the impact of parental divorce on children’s emotions (a case study on two children with divorced parents at SDN Gembong I, Tangerang) (Haryanie, Filiani, & Hanim,
2017), the role of the tri-center of education on the mental health of children in Andonosari village (Cindy Meliyana Sari & Indrawati, 2024), the impact of parental divorce on psychosocial development and academic achievement (Mone, 2019), the impact of toxic relationships on mental health (Kanda & Kivania, 2024), and the psychological analysis of the friendship “Ṣaḥabah” in the Qur’an (Lestari, 2022).

From the literature presented above, it is evident that the influence of the environment significantly impacts children’s mental health, and the family’s parenting system shows varying significance, whether it is Islamic or non-Islamic parenting. Therefore, this research is essential to examine the integration of Qur’anic teachings in maintaining mental health and to offer solutions for handling and preserving children’s mental health. This study aims to delve deeper into Islamic perspectives on the mental health of children from broken homes and ways to mitigate its negative effects, with the hope of providing valuable contributions to a better understanding and implementation of mental health practices.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative research approach using in-depth interviews. In his book “Qualitative Research Methods” (2007), J. Meleong describes qualitative research as an effort to understand phenomena experienced by research subjects, such as behaviors, perceptions, motivations, actions, and others, in a holistic manner. This is achieved through verbal and written descriptions, within the specific context of nature, and by applying various scientific methods. The qualitative method was chosen due to the research’s focus on comprehending and delving into the personal experiences of children from broken homes in toxic environments and the impact on their mental health. The subjects of this study are students of UINSU who are indicated to suffer from mental health issues due to coming from broken families.

The data collection techniques used are observation and interviews. The primary data sources for this research are children indicated to suffer from mental health issues due to broken homes. Secondary data consist of literature relevant to the discussion raised by the author, including books, interpretations of Al-Misbah, Al-Azhar, Ibn Katsir, as well as supporting journals and articles. The data analysis technique employed in this study is qualitative analysis using an interactive analysis method. This technique requires continuous interaction between the researcher and the subjects until the research is thoroughly completed.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Mental Health in the Qur’an**

According to Daradjat, mental health is the harmony in life manifested through the functions of the soul, the ability to face challenges, and the capability to experience happiness and positively perceive oneself (Vidya Fakhriyani, 2005). He further emphasizes that mental health is a condition where an individual is free from neurotic symptoms and psychotic disorders.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not merely the
absence of disease or infirmity. Health encompasses not only physical well-being but also psychological well-being and the attainment of social welfare. Furthermore, WHO defines mental health as a state of well-being in which individuals realize their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and contribute to their community (Vidya Fakhriyani, 2005).

Mental health is a crucial aspect of human life that is often overlooked. The Qur’an, as a guide for Muslims, emphasizes the importance of maintaining a balance between physical and mental health (Aboul-Enein, 2016). Numerous verses in the Qur’an provide guidance on maintaining mental health through spiritual and moral teachings. A deep understanding of the Qur’anic teachings can help individuals cope with life’s pressures and attain inner peace (Guntur, 2021).

One of the key concepts related to mental health in the Qur’an is the tranquility of the heart. In Surah Ar-Ra’d (13):28, Allah states, “Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.” This verse underscores that the remembrance of Allah (ẓikrullah) is the key to achieving heart’s tranquility. This inner peace is vital for mental health as it can alleviate anxiety and stress (AKBAR, n.d.).

The Qur’an also teaches the importance of tawakkul, or trusting in Allah, when facing life’s trials. In Surah Al-Imran (3):159, Allah says, “And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely (upon Him).” This attitude of tawakkul helps individuals release heavy mental burdens and entrust the final outcome to Allah, which in turn reduces fear and anxiety, thereby strengthening mental health (Pickett, 2015).

In addition to tawakkul, the Qur’an emphasizes the importance of gratitude as a means to maintain mental health. In Surah Ibrahim (14):7, Allah declares, “If you are grateful, I will surely increase you (in favor); but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.” Gratitude helps individuals focus on the positive aspects of life, which can enhance feelings of happiness and contentment, while reducing stress and depression (Rubini & Setyawan, 2019).

Acts of worship such as prayer (salah), fasting (sawm), and reading the Qur’an have significant positive impacts on mental health. Salah, for instance, is not only a spiritual obligation but also a form of meditation that provides mental tranquility. In Surah Al-Baqarah (2):45, Allah advises, “And seek help through patience and prayer, and indeed, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive (to Allah).” Engaging in worship with devotion helps reduce mental stress and enhances feelings of peace (Kassebaum, 2016).

Overall, the Qur’an offers comprehensive guidance on maintaining mental health through various spiritual and moral teachings. Remembrance of Allah, trusting in Him, being grateful, and engaging in devout worship are some of the ways taught in the Qur’an to achieve and maintain good mental health. By practicing these teachings, individuals can find inner peace, reduce stress, and improve overall quality of
life. The Qur'an’s guidance on mental health affirms that psychological well-being is an integral part of the life of a devout Muslim (Kang, 2020).

**Broken Home from the Perspective of the Qur'an**

A Broken Home refers to a family situation where there is a lack of unity, often caused by factors such as divorce or the death of a spouse in an already disharmonious relationship. This condition frequently results in their children becoming victims (Imron & Bagus, 2019). According to Sofyan S. Willis (2015: 66), the aspects of a broken home include: 1) a fragmented family due to the death or separation of one parent; 2) parents who, although not separated, are too preoccupied with their daily lives, thereby neglecting their children. The causes of a broken home can stem from both internal and external sources. However, external factors can generally be managed if the internal issues are adequately addressed. The causes of a broken home include lack of communication, egocentrism, economic problems, busyness, lack of understanding, and the involvement of a third party (Cholifah et al., 2023). In Islam, the family is the basic unit of society that must be maintained in unity (Lee, 2020). The Qur'an provides guidance on the importance of preserving family harmony and managing conflicts wisely. One relevant verse is QS. At-Tahrim (66):6, which states, “O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire.”

This verse emphasizes the responsibility of each individual to safeguard their family, both physically and spiritually. A united and harmonious family is one way to ensure that children grow up in a healthy and supportive environment. In the context of a broken home, it is important to create an atmosphere of love and good communication even if the parents are no longer together. This aligns with the Islamic principle of the importance of justice and kind treatment towards children (Pierce, 2020).

The Qur'an also teaches the importance of patience and trust in Allah when facing trials, including family issues. In QS. Al-Baqarah (2):153, Allah states, “O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient.” This verse encourages individuals to remain steadfast and surrender to Allah during difficulties, including in broken home situations. By being patient, one can maintain the emotional and mental stability crucial for the well-being of children (Moreno, 2020).

Furthermore, Islam emphasizes the importance of fulfilling children’s rights, including love, attention, and education. QS. Al-Isra (17):23 mentions, “And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment.” This verse highlights the duty to treat parents well and, conversely, the responsibility of parents to give attention and affection to their children. In cases of broken homes, both parents still have the responsibility to ensure the welfare of their children, even if they are no longer living together (Andreassen, 2016).

Forgiveness and avoiding prolonged conflicts are also taught in Islam. In QS. Al-Hujurat (49):10, Allah states, “The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may
receive mercy.” This verse encourages reconciliation and peace in relationships, including in separated families (Rengamani, 2017). Divorced parents need to maintain a peaceful relationship for the sake of their children.

Overall, the Qur’an provides guidance on handling broken home situations with wisdom and compassion. Maintaining family harmony, being patient in trials, fulfilling children’s rights, and avoiding prolonged conflicts are some of the principles taught in Islam (Fcenstra, 2019). By following these guidelines, individuals can mitigate the negative impact of broken homes and ensure that children continue to grow up in a supportive and loving environment.

Children’s Mental Health from Broken Homes in Toxic Environments: A Qur’anic Perspective Analysis

According to Zakiah Daradjat, the environment includes climate, geography, habitation, customs, knowledge, education, and nature, encompassing both human-made and natural objects. This environment influences the extent to which educational impacts can permeate (Muhammad, 2021). Meanwhile, “toxic” refers to individuals who tend to cause difficulties and negatively impact those around them, both physically and emotionally (Balqist, Muhamad Ramdan, & Nurmala, 2023).

Children are the most affected victims when their parents decide to divorce. They may fear losing one or both parents and worry about the loss of the affection they once experienced while living together. Often, these children also feel guilty, believing they are the cause of the separation (Mone, 2019).

Research conducted by the author reveals that broken homes significantly negatively impact a child’s mental and emotional health (Sigoro, Alexander, & Al-Ghifari, 2022). Furthermore, a child’s response to various situations will also be influenced by the effects of a broken home. However, each child has their own way of coping with situations such as family conflicts.

On May 24, 2024, the researcher interviewed a child identified as KP (age 12) to gather information and data about broken homes. KP experienced poor mental health due to the lack of harmony in his family. Initially, he was hesitant to share his family situation, but the researcher endeavored to build rapport until KP felt comfortable discussing his experiences. KP revealed that his parents have strong and egotistical personalities. Parental conflicts had been present since his early childhood, stemming from economic factors and the presence of a third party. KP recounted that his parents used to fight every day until they grew tired of it and chose to remain silent. From the end of 2021 until now, his parents have lived in the same house but have never communicated. Even on Eid, they refused to reconcile and opted for silence. KP explained that these conflicts have severely impacted him, making him more emotional and less confident.

In another instance, the researcher interviewed a UINSU student identified as S (age 22) who also came from a broken home. S stated that not all aspects of a broken home are negative. There are positive aspects as well, such as becoming more mature, developing the ability to discern between right and wrong, and building confidence and...
belief in personal growth despite the lack of family harmony. This interview indicates that the impact of a broken home varies depending on how children cope with the situation. The consequences of a broken home are contingent upon individual responses. Discussions with children from broken homes revealed the impact on their mental stability. Generally, broken homes are known to have detrimental effects on family members, particularly children. However, this research shows that there can also be positive outcomes for children in such situations.

In general, solutions to mental disorders are rooted in thoughts, feelings, behavior, and correct thinking patterns. However, there are no universal standards for proper ethics and behavior as everything depends on individual perspectives. This is where spirituality plays a crucial role. From an Islamic perspective, a Muslim needs to adhere to the principles set by religion. These principles serve as a benchmark for thinking and behaving well. By following these guidelines, a Muslim can maintain mental health through a framework for thought and action (Rahman, 2017).

Understanding and practicing the values taught by the Qur’an can significantly impact mental health. These values provide a behavioral guide, offering lessons that sometimes transcend human logic but have a tangible effect on mental well-being (Rusyid Affandi & Ruparin Diah, 2011). Worship activities such as prayer, fasting, and reading the Qur’an are positive practices that help in shaping a virtuous soul. Several studies indicate that religious practices do not negatively affect life. Regular worship establishes routines that are beneficial for mental health. For example, fasting involves adhering to guidelines such as refraining from eating, drinking, and intimate relations, while increasing beneficial activities. Unbeknownst to many, the consistency in these practices strengthens mental health (Ariadi, 2019).

Individuals facing problems will seek solutions to overcome challenges. This is where the difference lies for those with a deep understanding. Those who grasp religious values well will seek solutions not only through logic but also by relating them to religious teachings. When experiencing failure or unmet expectations, they gain deeper insights. Belief in Allah’s help allows them to realize that there is a greater power beyond their own efforts (Burhanuuddin, 1999). Engaging in other devotional activities such as prayer trains one to remain calm, focused, and conscious of being constantly watched. Prayer can strengthen the soul and lighten one’s burdens (Sundari & Efendi, 2021). As Allah SWT says:

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\text{“Indeed, those who believe and whose hearts find tranquility in the remembrance of Allah. Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find tranquility.”} \\
\text{(Surah Ar-Ra’d: 28)} \\
\text{(Departemen Agama RI, 2006).}
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According to Hamka in his commentary, faith induces a continual remembrance of Allah or ḫikr. Faith causes a person’s heart to have a focal point of memory, and this remembrance of Allah brings tranquility, thereby dispelling all forms of anxiety, confusion, despair, fear, worry, doubt, and sorrow. Tranquility of the heart is the
foundation of both spiritual and physical health. Doubt and anxiety are the roots of all ailments. Others can barely help someone who poisons their own heart with worry. If the heart is afflicted with disease and is not promptly treated with faith—faith that induces ḥaḍād, and ḥaḍād that induces ḥumā’inah (tranquility)—then disaster will ensue. A sick heart will grow sicker, and the pinnacle of all heart diseases is the denial of Allah’s blessings (Karim Amrullah, 1990).

According to the author’s analysis, this verse explains that if the heart seeks tranquility, one should remember Allah, wherever they are, whether in the morning, afternoon, or night. This is because Allah’s guidance to His creation is very close. This verse also informs us that only by remembering Allah through ḥaḍād does the heart become tranquil, and no matter how heavy the burdens carried, they will feel light. Therefore, acts of worship play a crucial role in maintaining mental health. Activities based on underlying values will foster obedience and trust in a higher power. Consequently, mental health will be preserved because it does not contradict nature, and life will become better as it is founded on positive values.

CONCLUSION

Mental health encompasses an individual’s emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It significantly influences how one thinks, feels, and acts when facing life’s challenges. Mental health disorders can impede an individual’s ability to fulfill social roles and adversely affect productivity and physical health. Contributing factors include an inability to cope with problems, pressure from oneself and others, and an unsupportive environment. This study underscores the importance of integrating spiritual aspects into the understanding of mental health, particularly within Muslim communities. By adhering to religious values, individuals can find peace and direction in their lives, even in challenging family situations such as broken homes. This demonstrates that mental well-being can be achieved through a holistic approach encompassing biological, social, and spiritual dimensions.

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