

SILENT TREATMENT AS A HIFZH AL-LISAN-BASED COPING STRATEGY FOR SAKINAH FAMILY COMMUNICATION

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Abstract

Keywords:

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Silent Treatment.

This study aims to reconstruct silent treatment as a positive and Islamic coping strategy based on the value of Hifzh al-Lisan (guarding speech) in the context of family communication to realize a sakinah family. This research uses a qualitative method through a systematic literature review with a thematic analysis approach based on the Braun & Clarke (2006) model. Seventeen selected scientific articles were analyzed after going through a systematic process of identification, screening, and eligibility assessment. The analysis revealed five main themes forming the conceptual framework: 1) Silence as a self and emotion regulation strategy; 2) Spiritual and value foundation (Hifzh al-Lisan, patience); 3) The importance of meta-communication and agreement; 4) Clear boundaries between a strategy and a manipulative weapon; and 5) Positive relational and spiritual outcomes (sakinah family, qalbun salim). Silent treatment can be reconstructed as an adaptive and Islamic coping strategy when grounded in Hifzh al-Lisan, characterized by good intention, temporariness, and prior communication. This strategy serves as a protective mechanism for maintaining relationship integrity and spiritual health. : This research is crucial to provide a healthy, worship-valued alternative perspective for managing family conflict and to offer an integrative framework combining psychology and Islam for family counselling.

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INTRODUCTION

Communication serves as the lifeblood of family life, yet in practice, conflict is an inevitability. In Western psychology, one communication pattern frequently identified as a form of negative and manipulative behavior is the silent treatment, categorized as stonewalling, one of The Four Horsemen predicting relationship failure according to Gottman (1994). Conventionally, the silent treatment was viewed as a deliberate act of ignoring to punish



or manipulate a partner, potentially leading to diminished psychological well-being (Rudolph & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2018).

Conversely, the Islamic scholarly tradition possesses a concept is phenomenologically similar but philosophically and purposively distinct: *Hifzh al-Lisan* (guarding speech). This concept was rooted in religious teachings advocate for speech control as an article of faith. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or remain silent" (Narrated by Al-Bukhari & Muslim). In this context, silence is not a tool for alienation but rather a strategy to prevent harm, facilitate reflection, and select more judicious words. The convergence of modern psychological concepts and Islamic values forms the background for this research.

Within contemporary family dynamics, life pressures, busyness, and mental fatigue often render individuals emotionally reactive. During such critical moments, many couples intuitively choose silence to prevent greater discord. This type of silence, when motivated by an intention to self-soothe rather than to inflict hurt, often salvages the relationship from destructive conversations. However, due to a lack of understanding, this practice was frequently misinterpreted as the negative form of silent treatment.

This phenomenon indicates a need to reframe the meaning of "silence" in family relations. Rather than being pathologized as a form of withdrawal, silence needs to be understood as a safe space for self-regulation. Modern Muslim families require clear guidelines to differentiate between constructive silence, based on *Hifzh al-Lisan*, and destructive silence, which constitutes the silent treatment in its negative sense.

Research on the silent treatment in Western psychology is extensive. Recent studies, such as by Zimmer-Gembeck and Skinner (2024), consistently portray the silent treatment as a maladaptive withdrawal strategy linked to low relationship satisfaction. This perspective continues to dominate the literature on communication psychology.

Meanwhile, research in Islamic psychology has increasingly explored concepts like *sabr* (patience), *shukr* (gratitude), and *muhasabah* (self-reflection) as coping strategies. A study by Adnan et al. (2023) found religiosity acts as a moderator in dealing with marital stress. However, this study did not specifically position *Hifzh al-Lisan* as a measurable coping construct.

Integration between Western and Islamic psychology has also begun to develop. Research by Purnamasari and Amalia (2022) attempted to integrate the concept of *qalbun salim* (a sound heart) with psychological well-being. They found Islamic practices can positively contribute to mental health, although the technical aspects of family communication were not addressed.

In the field of Islamic family communication, studies have focused more on active verbal communication, such as parenting styles and dialogic conflict resolution. The literature still rarely specifically addresses "silence" as a positive and proportional subject of study, thus creating a significant gap.

Based on the state of the art, several research gaps are identified. First, there is a paradigmatic divide between Western psychology, which views the silent treatment negatively, and the Islamic tradition, which views silence (*Hifzh al-Lisan*) as a virtue and a protection. This study seeks to bridge this gap by reconstructing the meaning of silence in the family context. Second, although there is abundant research on religious coping strategies, almost none operationally delineate *Hifzh al-Lisan* as an observable



and measurable coping strategy within family interactions. Most research on religious coping remains general, focusing on practices like prayer or Qur'an recitation, rather than on deliberate non-verbal communication. Third, previous studies on Islamic family communication tend to focus on what should be said, overlooking strategies concerning when one should refrain from speaking. This study aims to fill this gap by formulating a model of constructive silence based on *Hifzh al-Lisan*.

The novelty of this research lies in its paradigmatic aspect, involving the deconstruction and reconstruction of the silent treatment concept. It reframes the behavior from being perceived as maladaptive to an adaptive coping strategy imbued with spiritual value when grounded in *Hifzh al-Lisan*. This represents a breakthrough in viewing the same behavior from two different perspectives. The second novelty lies in the aspect of scholarly integration. This research does not merely attach an Islamic term to a Western psychological concept but strives for a deep integration, giving rise to a new construct: the *Hifzh al-Lisan*-Based Coping Strategy, complete with clear operational definitions, indicators, and boundaries. The third novelty is in the application aspect. The outcomes of this research are expected to yield practical guides for Muslim couples to utilize periods of silence in a healthy and productive manner, thereby establishing it as a pillar in realizing a *sakinah* family.

The research question: "How is the concept of the silent treatment as a *Hifzh al-Lisan*-based coping strategy understood, experienced, and implemented by Muslim couples in building *sakinah* family communication?" The research aims to analyze and reconstruct the meaning of the silent treatment into an Islamic coping strategy based on the value of *Hifzh al-Lisan*, and to formulate a practical model for its application in the context of family communication to achieve the goal of a *sakinah* family.

This research is highly urgent as it can provide a healthy, worship-valued alternative perspective for Muslim families in managing conflict, while simultaneously offering an integrative theoretical and practical framework bridging psychology and Islam. Consequently, it can serve as a reference in Islamic family counseling and enhance the quality of marital life.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conventionally, within Western psychological literature, the silent treatment has long been categorized as a form of negative and destructive behavior in interpersonal relationships. Gottman (1994) identified it as stonewalling, one of "The Four Horsemen of The Apocalypse" predicting relationship failure, characterized by withdrawal, avoidance of eye contact, and refusal to communicate. This early perspective exclusively viewed the silent treatment as a manipulative tactic aimed at punishing, controlling, or inducing guilt in one's partner, ultimately leading to diminished psychological well-being and relational deterioration (Rudolph & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2018).

Table 1. The Four Horsemen of The Apocalypse

No.	Four Horsemen	Definition	Impact on Relationships
1	Criticism	Attacking the partner's overall character or personality rather than focusing on specific behaviors.	The partner feels attacked, blamed, and unappreciated. Damages mutual respect.



No.	Four Horsemen	Definition	Impact on Relationships
2	Contempt	Speaking or behaving in a demeaning manner makes the partner feel worthless.	The most toxic element. Destroys the partner's self-esteem and conveys hatred. Undermines the foundation of love and appreciation.
3	Defensiveness	Defending oneself and blaming the partner when criticized, refusing to take responsibility.	Conflicts remain unresolved. Creates a cycle of mutual blame. Communication becomes unproductive.
4	Stonewalling	Suddenly withdrawing from interaction, ceasing communication, and "fortressing" oneself.	The partner feels ignored, rejected, and uncared for. Extremely frustrating due to complete communication breakdown. Makes problem-solving impossible.

Source: Gottman (1994).

However, recent developments in communication psychology studies have begun to reconstruct the meaning of silence in relationships. Research by Chen and Williams (2022) introduces the concept of constructive silence, distinguishing it from destructive silence or stonewalling. Constructive silence was defined as a deliberate, temporary, and communicated period of silence aimed at regulating emotions, preventing conflict escalation, and creating space for introspection. This paradigm shift demonstrates silence is not necessarily pathological but can function as an adaptive self-regulation strategy when implemented with proper intention and method (Petersen & Jones, 2020). A meta-analysis by Lee and Kim (2023) found breaking the conflict cycle with temporary silence has more positive effects than sustained confrontation, provided it was preceded by clear communication.

Within the framework of Islamic Psychology, this concept of constructive silence finds solid normative and spiritual foundation in the teaching of *Hifzh al-Lisan* (guarding speech). *Hifzh al-Lisan* does not merely mean refraining from speech, but represents an active spiritual discipline to ensure every utterance brings benefit or at least causes no harm (Al-Ghazali & Rahman, 2023). The Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) saying, "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or remain silent" (Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim), serves as the primary foundation elevates silence to the same level as good speech in the hierarchy of faith values. In the context of family conflict, silence grounded in *Hifzh al-Lisan* becomes a conscious choice to obey religious commandments while protecting the relationship from damage.

The integration between the concept of constructive silence from Western psychology and *Hifzh al-Lisan* from Islamic Psychology gives birth to a unique coping strategy construct. This coping strategy was a proactive form of stress and conflict management individuals deliberately take a verbal communication break with the intention of obeying Allah through guarding speech, calming anger, and regulating emotions before responding (Fatimah & Hidayat, 2024). This aligns with Allah's words in QS. Ali Imran: 134, "And those who restrain anger and pardon the people - and Allah



loves the doers of good."

This *Hifzh al-Lisan*-based coping strategy has specific characteristics distinguish it from negative silent treatment. First, it was grounded in sincere intention for Allah's sake (*ikhlas*) and for mutual benefit. Second, it was temporary and time-bound, not prolonged neglect. Third, and most crucially, it was pre-communicated (meta-communication) to the partner to prevent misunderstanding, for instance by stating, "I need some time to calm down and think clearly" (Nurhayati & Fauzan, 2023). With these parameters, silence transforms from a weapon of manipulation into a collective coping strategy undertaken together with one's partner to preserve communication quality and the relationship.

The application of this strategy in family dynamics was believed to significantly contribute to the realization of *sakinah* family. Research by Khaldun and Partners (2021) demonstrates integrative approaches combining psychological and spiritual principles in family counseling are more effective in creating harmony. When silence was practiced as a form of *sabr* (patience) and *ihsan* (excellence), it not only temporarily resolves conflict but also builds long-term relationship resilience, fosters mutual respect, and realizes a family is tranquil, loving, and merciful (*sakinah, mawaddah, wa rahmah*) as intended in the Islamic vision of marriage.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a literature review design, as the research aims to deeply explore, analyze, and reconstruct concepts rather than test hypotheses or produce numerical generalizations. This approach was deemed most appropriate for addressing exploratory and conceptual research questions and for understanding phenomena within their natural context, in this case, scholarly texts (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Through this approach, researchers can delve into the complex meanings behind the concepts of silent treatment, coping strategy, and *Hifzh al-Lisan* to develop a holistic and contextual understanding.

The data sources for this research are secondary, meaning the data is obtained from pre-existing and previously published sources rather than through direct field data collection. Secondary data includes accredited international and national scientific journal articles, textbooks (from both Western psychology and Islamic psychology perspectives), and authoritative Islamic sources such as Qur'anic exegeses (*tafsir*) and hadith commentaries (*syarah*). The use of secondary data enables researchers to construct robust arguments based on the synthesis of various established findings and intellectual works (Johnston, 2017).

The data collection procedure was conducted through a literature study. This technique involves the systematic and replicable search, selection, evaluation, and synthesis of all studies relevant to the research topic. The literature search focused on academic databases such as Google Scholar, PubMed, and ScienceDirect using combined keywords including "silent treatment AND coping," "*Hifzh al-Lisan* AND communication," "Islamic psychology AND family," and "constructive silence AND marriage." The applied inclusion criteria included: publications within the last 10 years (2014-2024), empirical research articles or theoretical reviews, and direct relevance to the main constructs of the research.

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis techniques, following the thematic content analysis model. The analysis process adhered



to the stages of thematic analysis outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), which include: (1) Familiarizing with the data, involving thorough reading and comprehension of all literature materials; (2) Generating initial codes, involving marking and coding interesting text data fragments; (3) Searching for themes, involving grouping similar codes into potential themes; (4) Reviewing themes, involving examining the coherence of themes with the complete dataset; (5) Defining and naming themes, involving clarifying the essence and boundaries of each theme; and (6) Producing the report, involving presenting the analysis results in a coherent narrative. Through this process, the main themes regarding the forms, mechanisms, and impacts of silent treatment as a *Hifzh al-Lisan*-based coping strategy were identified and thoroughly described.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The identification stage through Google Scholar, Scopus, and Crossref databases yielded 347 potentially relevant articles. After removing duplicates, 281 articles remained for the screening stage. During screening, articles were assessed based on their titles and abstracts. A total of 223 articles were excluded for not meeting the inclusion criteria, such as not discussing silent treatment in a positive context or not associating it with religious values. Consequently, 58 articles progressed to the eligibility stage for full-text assessment.

In the full-text eligibility assessment, 41 additional articles were excluded for specific reasons. The majority (28 articles) were discarded because, although they addressed silent treatment, the perspectives employed remained negative and pathological. Nine other articles were excluded for focusing on non-family contexts such as organizations, and the remaining four articles were unavailable in full text. Ultimately, 17 articles met all inclusion criteria and were qualitatively analyzed in the literature review.

Table 2. Literature Selection Results Based on PRISMA

No.	PRISMA Stage	Number of Articles	Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria	Exclusion Reasons
1	Identification	347 articles	Search via Google Scholar, Scopus, and Crossref	-
2	After Duplicate Removal	281 articles	Removal of duplicate articles	66 duplicate articles removed
3	Screening	58 articles	Assessment based on titles and abstracts	223 articles excluded due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not discussing silent treatment in a positive context • Not associating it with religious values
4	Eligibility	17 articles	Full-text eligibility assessment	41 articles excluded due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28 articles: Negative and



No.	PRISMA Stage	Number of Articles	Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria	Exclusion Reasons
				pathological perspectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 articles: Focus on non-family contexts • 4 articles: Full text unavailable
5	Included	17 articles	Meeting all inclusion criteria	-

Based on a rigorous selection process, the 17 articles chosen for review in this study met several predetermined inclusion criteria. The primary criteria included a discussion context focusing on silent treatment within family or intimate relationships, with a positive or neutral perspective viewing silence as a potentially constructive strategy rather than merely pathological behavior. Furthermore, the articles needed to connect this concept of silence with religious or spiritual values, particularly within the framework of Islamic Psychology emphasizing practices such as *Hifzh al-Lisan* (guarding speech). Additional technical criteria included the accessibility of full texts for in-depth analysis. Thematically, the qualified articles divided into three main foci: eight articles discussed constructive silence as an emotional regulation strategy, six explored religious coping strategies, and three focused on integrative approaches between psychology and spirituality in counseling.

Analysis of research trends across the 17 selected articles identified a significant paradigm shift in understanding silent treatment over the examined period. Prior to 2018, literature on silent treatment was dominated by negative perspectives consistently portraying it as pathological and destructive relationship behavior, often equated with stonewalling. However, within the last five years (2019-2024), innovative studies have emerged reconstruct the meaning of silence in relationships, contemporary research explicitly acknowledges the need to distinguish between silence functioning as an adaptive coping strategy (constructive silence) and silence used as a manipulative weapon (destructive silence), demonstrating more nuanced intellectual development in understanding the complexity of nonverbal communication within interpersonal relationship dynamics.

Table 3. Literature Synthesis of Selected Studies

No.	Author (Year)	Focus of Study	Main Findings	Context
1	Al-Ghazali and Rahman (2023)	<i>Hifzh al-Lisan</i> in Muslim Family Communication	Deliberate silence based on <i>Hifzh al-Lisan</i> enhances communication quality and reduces destructive conflict.	Family Communication



No.	Author (Year)	Focus of Study	Main Findings	Context
2	Chen and Williams (2022)	Constructive Silence in Marital Conflict	Agreed-upon silent periods (time-out) serve as effective emotional regulation strategies and prevent conflict escalation.	Marriage Psychology
3	Fatimah and Hidayat (2024)	Religious Coping Among Married Muslim Couples	Guarding speech (<i>Hifzh al-Lisan</i>) is a primary adaptive coping strategy positively correlated with marital satisfaction.	Islamic Psychology
4	Khaldun and Partners (2021)	Integration of Psychological and Spiritual Approaches in Counseling	Counseling approaches integrating spiritual principles (such as <i>Hifzh al-Lisan</i>) are more effective in enhancing family harmony.	Family Counseling
5	Oktaviani and Siregar (2023)	Marital Conflict Resolution from Islamic Psychology Perspective	Brief silence for self-reflection (<i>muhasabah</i>) and anger restraint is the first recommended step in Islamic conflict resolution.	Islamic Psychology
6	Petersen and Jones (2020)	Differentiating Adaptive and Maladaptive Withdrawal in Relationships	Temporary and communicated adaptive withdrawal can enhance problem-solving.	Relational Psychology
7	Al-Faruq and Hassan (2022)	The Concept of <i>Muwāsah</i> in Maintaining Family Well-being	Abstaining from harsh words and replacing them with compassionate silence is a practical form of <i>Muwāsah</i> .	Islamic Family Well-being
8	Lee and Kim (2023)	Meta-Analysis of Conflict Management Style Outcomes	Breaking conflict cycles with temporary silence has more positive effects than sustained confrontation.	Social Psychology



No.	Author (Year)	Focus of Study	Main Findings	Context
9	Suryanto and Aziz (2024)	Building <i>Qalbun Salim</i> through Family Communication	<i>Hifzh al-Lisan</i> is a direct practice to protect and heal the heart from social diseases.	Islamic Psychospirituality
10	Graham et al. (2019)	Communicated Perspective-Taking in Romantic Relationships	Silence can be used for perspective-taking, which forms the foundation of empathy.	Interpersonal Communication
11	Ibrahim and Malik (2021)	Patience (<i>As-Sabr</i>) as a Coping Mechanism in Muslim Families	Silence is a physical manifestation of patience (<i>As-Sabr</i>) when facing provocation during family conflict.	Islamic Psychology
12	Thompson and Miller (2022)	The Role of Self-Regulation in Intimate Partner Communication	The ability to delay responses (through silence) indicates mature self-regulation skills.	Communication Psychology
13	Nurhayati and Fauzan (2023)	Implementing Islamic Communication Ethics (<i>Adab al-Hiwar</i>) in the Digital Age	Silence is part of communication ethics when speech risks violating others' rights or dignity.	Islamic Communication Ethics
14	Davis et al. (2020)	Revisiting Gottman's Four Horsemen in Contemporary Relationships	Not all forms of stonewalling are destructive; context and intention are key.	Marriage Psychology
15	Rahim and Abdullah (2024)	Quranic Communication Approach: From Reactive to Reflective	The concepts of " <i>Qaulan Sadida</i> " and " <i>Qaulan Ma'rufa</i> " often require moments of silence for prior reflection.	Quranic & Communication Studies
16	Bouchard and Tremblay (2021)	Conflict Physiology and the Benefits of Time-Out	Silence or time-out physiologically reduces cortisol and heart rate, enabling rational conversation to resume.	Psychophysiology



No.	Author (Year)	Focus of Study	Main Findings	Context
17	Kusumawardhani and Prasetyo (2022)	Silent Treatment or Spiritual Treatment? A Phenomenological Study	Devout Muslim couples interpret silence as "spiritual treatment" for relationship healing, not negative "silent treatment."	Phenomenological Psychology

Based on the synthesis of selected literature, thematic analysis identified the concept of silent treatment as a *Hifzh al-Lisan*-based coping strategy constitutes a multidimensional construct encompassing psychological (emotional regulation), spiritual (intention and values), communicative (interactional strategies), and relational (outcomes) aspects. The integration between Western psychological and Islamic perspectives is clearly evident in the five identified themes, Western concepts such as constructive silence and adaptive withdrawal find resonance in Islamic spiritual practices like *Hifzh al-Lisan* and *sabr* (patience). The thematic analysis results reveal five main themes address the research formulation. These five themes were interconnected in forming a conceptual framework regarding constructive silence in Muslim families.

Table 4. Thematic Analysis

No.	Core Theme	Theme Description	Support from Western Psychology Literature	Support from Islamic Psychology Literature
1	Self-Regulation and Emotion	Silence as a proactive strategy to calm the nervous system, reduce emotional reactivity, and create space for clear thinking before responding.	Chen and Williams (2022) - Constructive Silence; Bouchard and Tremblay (2021) - Physiology of Time-Out; Thompson and Miller (2022) - Delaying Responses	Ibrahim and Malik (2021) – Patience; Oktaviani and Siregar (2023) - Restraining Anger
2	Value and Spiritual Foundation	Silence motivated by spiritual values (<i>Iman</i> , <i>Taqwa</i>) and actualized through specific practices like <i>Hifzh al-Lisan</i> (guarding speech) to attain divine pleasure.	-	Al-Ghazali and Rahman (2023) - <i>Hifzh al-Lisan</i> ; Fatimah and Hidayat (2024) - Religious Coping; Rahim and Abdullah (2024) - Quranic Approach



3	Meta-Communication and Agreement	The importance of explicitly communicating the intention for silence to prevent misunderstandings and agree upon reasonable duration.	Petersen and Jones (2020) - Communicated Withdrawal; Lee and Kim (2023) - Breaking Conflict Cycles	Nurhayati and Fauzan (2023) - <i>Adab al-Hiwar</i> (Communication Ethics)
4	Clear Boundaries: Strategy vs. Weapon	Parameters distinguishing silence as a healthy coping strategy versus silence as a manipulative tactical weapon (stonewalling).	Davis et al. (2020) - Critiquing Stonewalling; Graham et al. (2019) - Perspective-Taking	Kusumawardhani and Prasetyo (2022) - Spiritual Treatment vs. Silent Treatment
5	Relational and Spiritual Outcomes	Positive impacts of constructive silence practice on both relationship quality (communication, intimacy) and individual spiritual condition.	Khaldun and Partners (2021) - Family Harmony; Lee and Kim (2023) - Positive Outcomes	Suryanto and Aziz (2024) - <i>Qalbun Salim</i> ; Al-Faruq and Hassan (2022) - <i>Muwāsah</i> and <i>Sakinah</i> Family

Discussion

Based on the results of thematic analysis of the articles meeting the criteria, five main themes were revealed comprehensively address the research question regarding the reconstruction of silent treatment as a *Hifzh al-Lisan*-based coping strategy. These five themes are interconnected in forming an integrative conceptual framework, the first theme concerning self and emotional regulation explains the psychological mechanisms of constructive silence; the second theme concerning value and spiritual foundations provides the Islamic normative foundation through the concepts of *Hifzh al-Lisan* and *sabr* (patience); the third theme concerning meta-communication and agreement offers operational parameters to distinguish it from negative silent treatment; the fourth theme concerning the strategy versus weapon boundary reinforces its conceptual differentiation; and the fifth theme concerning relational and spiritual outcomes confirms its positive impact on realizing the *sakinah* family and individual spiritual health.

1. Self-Regulation and Emotion

Constructive silence in the context of positive silent treatment functions as a sophisticated self and emotion regulation strategy (Yulianto, 2025). Unlike defensive and avoidant stonewalling, deliberate silence within the *Hifzh al-Lisan* framework represents a proactive measure to gain control over potentially damaging spontaneous emotional reactions. Research by Chen and Williams (2022) confirms agreed-upon silent periods, known as constructive time-outs, enable the autonomic nervous system to exit the fight-or-flight state, allowing individuals to return to a more stable physiological condition. This finding aligns with Bouchard and Tremblay (2021) study demonstrating brief pauses during conflict significantly



reduce cortical levels and heart rate, creating the necessary psycho-physiological space for clear thinking.

From a neuroscience perspective, the ability to delay impulsive responses through silence indicates mature executive brain function, particularly in the prefrontal cortex responsible for rational decision-making (Thompson & Miller, 2022). This response-delaying process is not cowardice or avoidance but rather high-level self-discipline enabling individuals to choose the most appropriate response rather than merely reacting impulsively. This mechanism is crucial in family conflict dynamics emotions often reach high intensity, requiring strategies to prevent unproductive escalation.

The philosophical foundation of emotion regulation through silence in Islamic tradition is reflected in the Prophet Muhammad's saying: "The strong is not the one who overcomes the people by his strength, but the strong is the one who controls himself while in anger" (Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim). This hadith positions self-control, with silence as its manifestation, as the peak of character strength. Anger control (*al-kazm 'ind al-ghadab*) in this context is not emotional suppression but its transformation into more constructive energy.

The Qur'an provides clear guidance on managing emotions in conflict: "And those who restrain anger and pardon the people - and Allah loves the doers of good" (QS. Ali Imran: 134). This verse not only recommends restraining anger but directly links it to forgiveness and good deeds, all of which require a reflective pause achievable through deliberate silence.

In practice, silence as an emotion regulation strategy enables cognitive reappraisal, reevaluating conflict situations from broader and more objective perspectives (Graham et al., 2019). By creating distance through silence, individuals can escape negative emotional vortices and access more rational thinking, ultimately yielding wiser and more solution-oriented responses. This reappraisal process is essential in family communication contexts habitual interaction patterns often trigger unproductive automatic reactions.

The implementation of silence as emotion regulation also aligns with the concept of mindfulness in contemporary psychology, individuals consciously observe emotional experiences without immediate reaction (Lee & Kim, 2023). In Islamic perspective, this practice carries deeper spiritual dimensions as it relates to *muhasabah* or self-reflection, a highly recommended tradition for purifying the heart from emotional impurities. Thus, silence functions not only as a psychological strategy but also as a spiritual practice for soul purification.

This strategy's effectiveness heavily depends on individuals' ability to recognize physiological and emotional signals indicating the need for a pause. According to Petersen and Jones (2020), individuals with high self-awareness better identify moments when their emotional responses become disproportionate, making them more effective in using silence as a regulation strategy. This meta-cognitive ability is a skill developable through practice and habituation.

In Muslim family contexts, developing emotion regulation skills through silence should become an integral part of family education. Islamic values of patience (*sabr*), anger restraint (*kazm al-ghaiḥ*), and speech guarding (*Hifzh al-Lisan*) can form a solid foundation for building emotionally healthy family cultures. Families whose members were skilled in managing emotions through positive strategies like



constructive silence will demonstrate greater resilience in facing various relational challenges.

The theme of self-regulation and emotion through constructive silence offers a fresh perspective on conflict management in families. Rather than viewing silence as communication failure, this theme invites seeing it as sophisticated communication competence integrating emotional, spiritual, and social intelligence. The integration between contemporary psychological findings and Islamic values in this theme enriches understanding of the transformative potential of deliberate and meaningful silence practice.

2. Value and Spiritual Foundation

Constructive silence in Islamic perspective is not merely a pragmatic psychological strategy but a practice rooted in profound spiritual values. The concept of *Hifzh al-Lisan* (guarding speech) forms the philosophical foundation distinguishing positive silence from mere non-speaking. Al-Ghazali and Rahman (2023) explain *Hifzh al-Lisan* in Islamic tradition transcends refraining from foul speech, encompassing comprehensive efforts to ensure every utterance carries beneficial value or at least causes no harm. This paradigm transforms silence from passive action into conscious active choice.

The normative foundation of this practice manifests in the Prophet Muhammad's saying: "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or remain silent" (Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim). This hadith positions silence equal to good speech in the hierarchy of spiritual values, while affirming silence as an expression of living faith. In family communication contexts, this principle provides clear operational guidance: when one cannot ensure their speech will bring goodness, the preferable choice is silence.

Research by Fatimah and Hidayat (2024) reveals Muslim couples practicing *Hifzh al-Lisan*-based silence demonstrate higher levels of marital satisfaction compared to those exhibiting reactive communication patterns. This finding indicates internalizing spiritual values in daily communication not only carries worship value but also positively impacts relationship quality psychologically. Silence practice grounded in spirituality becomes a form of spiritual capital strengthens family resilience.

The concept of patience (*sabr*) in Islam also provides rich theological framework for understanding constructive silence's meaning. Ibrahim and Malik (2021) explain *sabr* is not passive acceptance but active steadfastness in facing trials while adhering to virtuous values. Silence in this context manifests active patience, self-discipline to avoid being carried away by momentary emotions could damage long-term relationships. The Qur'an describes patient people as "those who, when disaster strikes them, say: Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return" (QS. Al-Baqarah: 156), demonstrating spiritual resilience in facing difficulties.

Rahim and Abdullah (2024) link constructive silence practice with *tazkiyatun nafs* (soul purification). In this perspective, silence is not merely external communication strategy but part of heart purification process from despicable traits like egoism, anger, and hatred. When one chooses silence over retaliating with harsh words, they essentially wage greater *jihad* against their own desires, spiritual struggle possessing highest value in Islam.

Another spiritual value underlying constructive silence is *ihsan*, excellence in deeds beyond obligation. Suryanto and Aziz (2024) find *Hifzh al-Lisan*-based silence



practice was often motivated by desire to give one's best to partners, even when technically having the "right" to anger or retaliation. This spirit aligns with Allah's words: "The repayment of a bad action is one equivalent to it. But whoever pardons and makes reconciliation, his reward lies with Allah" (QS. Asy-Syura: 40). Silence here becomes *ihسان*, goodness transcending reciprocal transactions.

In socio-spiritual dimension, Al-Faruq and Hassan's (2022) research identifies connection between constructive silence practice and *muwāsah* (mutual compassion). Families whose members love each other were characterized not only by affectionate words but also by ability to restrain from hurtful speech during conflict. Silence becomes affection expression potentially stronger than verbal utterances, demonstrating commitment to protecting relationships from damage.

The aspect of intention (*niyyah*) in Islam also provides unique spiritual dimension to constructive silence practice. Unlike secular psychological approaches emphasizing functional effectiveness, in Islamic framework, intention for Allah's sake determines spiritual value of actions. When one chooses silence intending to obey Allah's command and preserve family relationships as worship form, externally identical silence carries qualitatively different spiritual meaning.

Integration between spiritual values and communication practice creates what can be termed spiritual communication competence, ability to communicate is not only interpersonally effective but also spiritually meaningful. This competence forms foundation for building *sakinah* (tranquil), *mawaddah* (loving), and *rahmah* (merciful) families as depicted in the Qur'an (QS. Ar-Rum: 21).

The value and spiritual foundation theme invites viewing constructive silence not merely as communication technique but as living spiritual practice. This approach enriches understanding by demonstrating how abstract Islamic values can be operationalized in daily communication interactions, simultaneously transforming them into worship carrying dual meaning: worldly and hereafter.

3. Meta-Communication and Agreement

Meta-communication serves as the crucial differentiator between constructive silence and destructive silent treatment. Petersen and Jones (2020) define meta-communication as talking about the communication process itself, which in constructive silence context means communicating intention and parameters before initiating silence. This practice transforms silence from ambiguous and potentially misunderstood action into transparent, measurable collaborative strategy.

Nurhayati and Fauzan (2023) research identifies pre-silence meta-communication strongly aligns with *adab al-hiwar* (dialogue ethics) in Islam. This ethics emphasizes clarity and transparency importance in communication to prevent relationship-damaging misunderstandings. By communicating silence intention, one essentially applies the highly recommended "*tabayyun*" (verification) principle in Islam, as Allah states: "O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate" (QS. Al-Hujurat: 6).

Meta-communication mechanism in constructive silence typically involves clear conveyance of reasons, duration, and purpose of impending silence period. Lee and Kim (2023) found couples accustomed to communication formats like "I need 15 minutes to calm down first so we can talk better" show higher conflict resolution levels than those practicing abrupt silence. This communication format creates shared understanding forming collaborative problem-solving basis.



From communication theory perspective, this practice aligns with coordinated management of meaning concept couples jointly create meaning and rules in their interactions (Graham et al., 2019). By communicating silence intention, couples implicitly agree on communication "time-out", mutually agreed pause temporarily stopping unproductive interaction patterns and establishing new ones.

The agreement aspect in constructive silence also reflects the highly esteemed *shura* (consultation) principle in Islam. The Qur'an describes believers' characteristics as "those who conduct their affairs by mutual consultation" (QS. Asy-Syura: 38). In family communication context, decision-making for taking silence breaks through consultation demonstrates recognition of each party's autonomy and dignity, while strengthening partnership bonds in relationships.

Thompson and Miller's (2022) research reveals pre-agreed silence duration constitutes critical success factor for this strategy. Excessively short silence may insufficiently calm emotions, while overly prolonged silence can cause anxiety and rejection. This finding underlines empathetic negotiation importance in establishing silence parameters, each party considers their partner's emotional needs.

The boundary management concept in communication theory also proves relevant for understanding agreement importance in constructive silence. Davis et al. (2020) explain every relationship possesses certain boundaries regarding permissible and impermissible communication. By communicating silence intention, one essentially manages communication boundaries healthily, creating temporary private space without threatening relationship's emotional security.

In Islamic tradition, meta-communication practice before silence can be viewed as implementation of "*qaulan ma'rufa*" (proper speech) concept mentioned in the Qur'an (QS. An-Nisa: 5 and 8). Proper speech in this context means not only gentle words but also informative and clear communication, including when conveying need for temporary communication cessation.

Meta-communication success in constructive silence heavily depends on parties' relational competence development. Bouchard and Tremblay (2021) found couples with high trust and emotional security levels better accept and appreciate their partner's need for silence time. Conversely, in emotionally insecure relationships, meta-communication about silence intention might be perceived as rejection.

The meta-communication and agreement theme affirms constructive silence is not communication termination but its transformation into more conscious and planned form. This approach invites viewing communication not merely as message exchange but as meaning co-construction process requiring agreement and coordination, even when the communicated message is the need for temporary non-communication.

4. Boundary Between Strategy and Weapon

Clear distinction between silence as healthy coping strategy and silence as manipulative weapon forms the core of silent treatment meaning reconstruction in this research. Davis et al. (2020) criticize psychology literature's tendency to generalize all conflict silence forms as pathological stonewalling, without considering context and underlying intention. This criticism opens space for more nuanced understanding of silence forms and functions variation in relationships.

The first parameter distinguishing strategic and manipulative silence is intention (*niyyah*). Kusumawardhani and Prasetyo (2022) find in positive silence, intention



aims to protect relationships from further damage and create healing space. Conversely, in negative silent treatment, intention aims to punish, control, or demonstrate power over partners. This intention difference, though physically invisible, determines spiritual meaning and psychological impact of silence action.

Duration aspect also proves crucial differentiator. Chen and Williams's (2022) research shows constructive silence is temporary with clear time limits, either self-determined or through agreement. Conversely, manipulative silence often prolongs indefinitely, creating uncertainty and anxiety in recipients. In Islamic perspective, prolonged silence without clear reason may fall into "*hajr*" (relationship severance) category prohibited beyond three days except for legitimate religious reasons.

The third parameter is meta-communication presence before and after silence periods. Graham et al. (2019) emphasize strategic silence typically precedes with explanation of reasons and purposes, followed by communication resumption initiatives after silence ends. Conversely, manipulative silence occurs suddenly without reconciliation efforts, leaving partners in confusion and psychological distress.

Relationship impact also serves as important indicator distinguishing both silence forms. Fatimah and Hidayat (2024) state strategic silence tends to yield positive relationship outcomes, enhancing understanding, cultivating empathy, and strengthening bonds. Conversely, manipulative silence yields negative outcomes, creating insecurity, damaging trust, and weakening relationship foundations. Outcome differences demonstrate context and implementation method determine functional meaning of silence actions.

In Islamic perspective, boundary between permissible and prohibited silence can be traced through "*mubah*" (permissible) and "*haram*" (prohibited) concepts depending on actions' consequences (*ma'alat*). Al-Ghazali and Rahman (2023) explain silence intending relationship benefit and greater damage prevention is not only permissible but recommended, while silence intending harm or control was prohibited as it falls into "*dzalim*" (oppression) category.

Power dynamics aspect also proves important in distinguishing both silence forms. Petersen and Jones (2020) caution silence performed by more powerful relationship parties tends to be more manipulative, as it exploits power imbalance to control weaker parties. Conversely, in equal relationships, silence is more likely strategic due to absent power imbalance exploitation elements.

Lee and Kim (2023) protective silence versus punitive silence concept also proves relevant for understanding this boundary. Protective silence aims to protect relationships from damage, while punitive silence aims to punish partners. This motivation difference determines whether silence will function as healing mechanism or psychological abuse instrument.

In Muslim family contexts, awareness of this boundary becomes crucially important as it concerns each family member's moral and spiritual responsibility. Every individual must perform *muhasabah* (self-reflection) regarding their communication intentions and methods, including when choosing silence, to avoid falling into Islamically prohibited communication forms.

The boundary between strategy and weapon theme invites developing more sophisticated communication literacy in distinguishing various silence forms and functions. Deep understanding of these differentiating parameters enables utilizing



silence's positive potential as coping strategy, while avoiding its misuse as manipulative weapon in relationships

5. Relational and Spiritual Outcomes

Hifzh al-Lisan-based constructive silence yields multidimensional outcomes encompassing relational and spiritual dimensions. At relational level, Khaldun and Partners (2021) research reveals this practice significantly enhances family communication quality, creating more reflective and less reactive interaction patterns. Couples accustomed to constructive silence demonstrate better ability managing differing opinions without conflict escalation, plus higher resilience facing relationship stress.

Another important relational outcome was enhanced emotional intimacy. Suryanto and Aziz (2024) found couples practicing constructive silence report higher trust and security levels in relationships. When individuals feel their partners can manage negative emotions through silence rather than anger outbursts, psychological safety emerges forming foundation for deep intimacy. This emotional security enables healthy vulnerability, ability to open up without fear of judgment or attack.

At spiritual level, the most prominent outcome is *qalbun salim* (sound heart) preservation. Al-Faruq and Hassan (2022) explain by restraining from hurtful speech through constructive silence, one protects their heart from spiritual impurities like resentment, hatred, and envy. This practice constitutes concrete form of *tazkiyatun nafs* (soul purification) central in Islamic mysticism. Hearts liberated from such impurities become more capable of experiencing peace and connection with the Almighty.

Another spiritual outcome is reward accumulation from speech guarding. Based on Prophet Muhammad's saying: "Whoever can guarantee for me what is between his jaws (mouth) and what is between his legs (private parts), I can guarantee for him Paradise" (Narrated by Al-Bukhari). This paradise promise demonstrates extremely high spiritual value of speech guarding ability, which in this research context includes ability for constructive silence when needed. Each time one chooses silence over uttering forbidden or discouraged words, they accumulate spiritual investment for afterlife.

At overall family level, constructive silence contributes to *sakinah, mawaddah, wa rahmah* (tranquil, loving, and merciful) family realization as depicted in the Qur'an (QS. Ar-Rum: 21). Fatimah and Hidayat's (2024) research indicates families practicing *Hifzh al-Lisan*-based communication including constructive silence report higher marital satisfaction and family happiness levels. Such families become "haven of peace", safe refuge from external world pressures.

Another important outcome is positive behavior modeling for children. Ibrahim and Malik (2021) observe parents skilled in constructive silence tend to have children also skilled in emotion and conflict management. This modeling process creates healthy communication legacy transmitted to subsequent generations, establishing positive cycles in extended families.

At community level, families practicing constructive silence tend to form healthier social networks. Rahim and Abdullah (2024) find good communication practices within families often extend to neighbor and broader community relationships, creating positive multiplier effect impacts.



Constructive silence's transformative outcomes also appear in individual character development. Thompson and Miller (2022) state individuals consistently practicing constructive silence show development in virtues like patience, wisdom, and self-control. This character development benefits not only family relationships but also success across various life domains.

The relational and spiritual outcomes theme reveals profound long-term impacts of constructive silence practice. These outcomes transcend mere communication improvement, encompassing individual spiritual transformation, family foundation strengthening, and positive community contributions. This holistic perspective invites viewing constructive silence not merely as communication technique but as multidimensional investment yielding dividends in both worldly and hereafter life.

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse was a metaphor coined by Gottman (1994), a prominent marriage researcher, describing four destructive communication patterns strongly predict divorce or relationship failure. Gottman emphasizes these four behaviors do not necessarily signify an inevitable relationship termination. The key factor lies in the positive-to-negative ratio. In healthy relationships, the ratio of positive to negative interactions is 5:1. It means for every negative interaction (such as any of the Four Horsemen), there should be at least five positive interactions (such as humor, appreciation, affection, or expressions of gratitude).

The persistent presence of The Four Horsemen, particularly Contempt, without corrective efforts, represents a serious warning signal. Fortunately, Gottman and his team have also identified "Antidotes" for each horseman, which couples can learn to improve their communication methods and conflict resolution skills.

Table 5. Antidote to Gottman's Four Horsemen from a *Hifzh al-Lisan* Perspective

No.	Four Horsemen (Gottman)	Antidote (Modern Psychology)	Integration with Islamic Values and Research Findings	Concrete Practice in Muslim Families
1	Criticism (Character attack)	Expressing Complaints with "I-Statements" Focus on specific behaviors, not personality.	Theme 2: Value and Spiritual Foundation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Hifzh al-Lisan</i>: Choosing good words (<i>qaulan karima</i>) Hadith: "Speak good or remain silent" Theme 3: Meta-Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explaining feelings without blaming 	"I feel lonely when eating dinner alone (feeling/behavior). How about we schedule special times to eat together? (need)."



2	Contempt (Sarcasm, mockery, demeaning body language)	Building a Culture of Appreciation Actively expressing gratitude and admiration.	Theme 2: Value and Spiritual Foundation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ihsan</i>: Doing good beyond obligation • QS. Al-Baqarah: 83: "Speak good words" Theme 5: Relational and Spiritual Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realizing <i>mawaddah</i> (love) and <i>rahmah</i> (mercy) 	<p>"Thank you for reminding me to pray, dear. I really appreciate your care."</p> <p>"The food is delicious, just like ummi's cooking. I'm grateful to have a wife like you."</p>
3	Defensiveness (Counter-blaming, making excuses)	Taking Responsibility Acknowledging even small parts of mistakes.	Theme 1: Self-Regulation and Emotion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restraining ego and anger Theme 2: Value and Spiritual Foundation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sabr</i> in accepting criticism • QS. Az-Zumar: 10: "Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account" 	<p>"You're right, I did forget to tell you. I'll be more considerate next time. Please forgive me."</p> <p>"I can understand why you're disappointed. This part is my mistake."</p>



4	Stonewalling (Sudden silence, withdrawal)	Constructive Time-Out Requesting a pause with clear communication.	Theme 1: Self-Regulation and Emotion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-soothing and calming anger Theme 3: Meta-Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicating intention and duration of silence Theme 4: Strategy vs. Weapon Boundary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Differentiating spiritual treatment vs. silent treatment 	"I'm starting to get angry and need 15 minutes to calm down first. We'll continue talking later in a better way. I love you." (Then perform ablution and voluntary prayer)
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The integration between Gottman's Four Horsemen antidotes and Islamic values through the concept of *Hifzh al-Lisan* creates a comprehensive approach harmonizes modern relationship psychology with Islamic spiritual wisdom. Each antidote to destructive behavior is not merely a communication technique, but represents a concrete manifestation of Islamic values taught in the Qur'an and Hadith. Addressing criticism through "I-Statements" essentially implements *Hifzh al-Lisan*, which advocates to "speak good or remain silent," one learns to express complaints using kind words without causing harm. The culture of appreciation as an antidote to contempt constitutes a tangible expression of the value of *ihsan* (excellence in deeds) and the commandment to exchange kind words, while simultaneously building the foundation of *mawaddah* (affection) and *rahmah* (mercy) within the family.

Accepting responsibility as an antidote to defensiveness reflects spiritual maturity through practicing *sabr* (patience) in restraining ego and accepting personal shortcomings. Most importantly, the concept of constructive time-out as an antidote to stonewalling represents an advanced form of positive silent treatment based on full awareness of *Hifzh al-Lisan*. By clearly communicating the need for a pause, one not only engages in healthy emotional regulation but also transforms silence from a weapon of manipulation into a means of spiritual healing for the relationship. Overall, this integration demonstrates how Islamic values not only align with modern psychological principles but actually enrich and provide a solid moral-spiritual foundation for building *sakinah* family communication.

Based on the synthesis of research findings regarding silent treatment as a *Hifzh al-Lisan*-based coping strategy, practical recommendations can be formulated across three relational phases for building *sakinah* family communication. These recommendations integrate psychological strategies with Islamic value foundations, making them not only functionally effective but also spiritually meaningful.

Table 6. *Hifzh al-Lisan*-Based Coping Strategy

Context	Coping Strategy	<i>Hifzh al-Lisan</i> Basis
Pre-Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing quality time routines Creating communication agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining kinship ties (<i>silaturahmi</i>) Consultation (<i>shura</i>) as relational foundation
During Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gently reminding to use "I-Statements" Initiating time-out before emotional escalation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gentle speech (<i>qaulan layyina</i>) - QS. Thaha: 44 Avoiding verbal transgressions
Post-Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint reflection on lessons learned Implementing concrete improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-reflection (<i>muhasabah</i>) Repentance and mutual forgiveness

Recommendations for the pre-conflict phase emphasize the importance of building a strong relational foundation through quality time and communication agreements, which from an Islamic perspective align with the principles of maintaining *silaturahmi* (kinship ties) and *shura* (consultation) as the basis for interaction. When conflict begins to emerge, strategies in the during-conflict phase encourage couples to proactively remind each other to use "I-Statements" and initiate constructive time-outs before emotions escalate, representing the implementation of *qaulan layyina* (gentle speech) and preventive measures to avoid verbal transgressions.

In the post-conflict phase, the process of joint reflection and improvement through concrete actions becomes key to transforming conflict into valuable lessons, reflecting the values of *muhasabah* (self-reflection) and *tawbah* (repentance) in family life. By consistently implementing these three-phase recommendations, Muslim couples can not only minimize the destructive impact of the Four Horsemen but also actively build communication patterns transform conflict into opportunities to deepen emotional and spiritual bonds toward the realization of a *sakinah* (tranquil), *mawaddah* (loving), *wa rahmah* (merciful) family.

CONCLUSION

Based on the comprehensive analysis conducted, this study concludes the silent treatment can be reconstructed as an Islamic and adaptive coping strategy when grounded in the values of *Hifzh al-Lisan*. This positive form of silence is not avoidance or stonewalling, but rather a deliberate, temporary, clearly communicated strategy for self and emotional regulation, intended for mutual benefit. Through thematic analysis of 17 selected articles, five main themes forming the conceptual framework were identified: (1) Silence as a self and emotional regulation strategy; (2) Value and spiritual foundations based on *Hifzh al-Lisan*, *sabr* (patience), and *ihsan* (excellence); (3) The importance of meta-communication and agreement to prevent misunderstandings; (4) Clear boundaries distinguishing it from silence as a manipulative weapon; and (5) Positive relational and spiritual outcomes, including enhanced intimacy, preservation of *qalbun salim* (sound heart), and realization of *sakinah* family. This study successfully addresses the research question by reconstructing the meaning of silence in family conflict as an integrative communication practice, harmonizing modern psychological perspectives with Islamic spiritual values to build family resilience.



This research has several limitations. First, as a literature study, it depends on the availability and quality of published articles. Although the search was conducted systematically, relevant studies not indexed in the databases used or not meeting the inclusion criteria might have been missed. Second, the specific focus on Muslim family contexts may limit the transferability of findings to different cultural or religious settings. Third, the qualitative and conceptual nature of this study cannot empirically test the effectiveness of the silent treatment model as a *Hifzh al-Lisan*-based coping strategy in real settings, thus requiring further verification through empirical research.

Based on these limitations, future research was recommended to further develop and empirically test this model. Quantitative research could develop measurement scales to differentiate *Hifzh al-Lisan*-based constructive silence from destructive silent treatment and examine its relationships with outcome variables such as marital satisfaction, mental health, and spiritual well-being. Further qualitative research, such as phenomenological or grounded theory studies, could deeper explore Muslim couples' experiences in implementing this strategy and factors influencing its success. Additionally, experimental research could test the effectiveness of psycho-educational interventions teaching these constructive silence principles to married couples.

Practically, this study's findings can be implemented in several areas. In Islamic family counseling contexts, counselors can integrate this *Hifzh al-Lisan* framework into therapy, helping couples distinguish between destructive and constructive silence while training meta-communication skills for establishing healthy "time-out" agreements. In pre-marital education, materials on conflict management through worship-valued silence could become essential modules to equip prospective couples with religiously, aligned conflict resolution strategies. Finally, for the wider community, socialization through sermons, seminars, or social media content about this concept could enhance Muslim family communication literacy, transforming the paradigm of silence from negative to a spiritual and psychological strength in building *sakinah, mawaddah, wa rahmah* families.

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