

Implementation of Communication and *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* in Increasing Economic Independence to Prevent Stunting

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the contribution of communication and the principles of Islamic law (maqāṣid al-sharī'ah) in efforts to increase community economic independence, identify factors that influence multisectoral communication in stunting prevention, and explore the relationship between economic independence and stunting prevention. The locus of this research is Mandailing Natal Regency and Padangsidimpuan City, two areas in North Sumatra with high stunting rates. Maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, which emphasizes the protection of religion, life, mind, descendants, and property, can provide a new approach to reducing stunting through increasing economic independence. A qualitative approach was used in this study, using the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) method to explore the views of the community and stakeholders. Increased economic independence contributes significantly to improving the nutritional status and health of children. Economic independence allows better access to nutritious food and health services, and increases parental knowledge about nutrition. Economic empowerment programs that focus on women can improve their social and economic status, which has a positive impact on childcare. Furthermore, greater economic independence improves families' ability to pay for health services and invest in children's education. The results of the study indicate that the synergy between communication activities and emphasizing the values of Islamic law (maqāṣid al-sharī'ah) in efforts to increase economic independence can contribute to reducing stunting rates. The application of communication principles and the maqāṣid al-sharī'ah (Islamic principles) in economic empowerment programs focuses not only on stunting reduction but also on improving overall community welfare. Therefore, this research is expected to provide new insights into the importance of a holistic approach to stunting prevention that involves various sectors and sharia values.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kontribusi komunikasi dan *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* dalam usaha meningkatkan kemandirian ekonomi masyarakat, mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi komunikasi multisektor dalam pencegahan stunting, serta menggali hubungan antara kemandirian ekonomi dan pencegahan stunting. Locus penelitian ini adalah Kabupaten Mandailing Natal dan Kota Padangsidimpuan, dua wilayah di Sumatera Utara dengan angka stunting yang masih tinggi. *Maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, yang menekankan perlindungan terhadap agama, jiwa, akal, keturunan, dan harta, dapat memberikan pendekatan baru dalam mengurangi stunting melalui peningkatan kemandirian ekonomi. Pendekatan kualitatif digunakan dalam penelitian ini, dengan metode Focus Group Discussion (FGD) untuk menggali pandangan masyarakat dan pemangku kepentingan. Peningkatan kemandirian ekonomi berkontribusi signifikan terhadap perbaikan status gizi dan kesehatan anak. Kemandirian ekonomi memungkinkan akses yang lebih baik terhadap pangan bergizi dan layanan kesehatan, serta meningkatkan pengetahuan orang tua tentang nutrisi. Program pemberdayaan ekonomi yang berfokus pada perempuan dapat meningkatkan status sosial dan ekonomi mereka, yang berdampak positif pada pengasuhan anak. Selain itu, kemandirian ekonomi yang lebih baik meningkatkan kemampuan keluarga

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untuk membayar layanan kesehatan dan berinvestasi dalam pendidikan anak. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sinergi antara kegiatan komunikasi dan penekanan nilai *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* dalam usaha meningkatkan kemandirian ekonomi dapat berkontribusi pada penurunan angka stunting. Penerapan prinsip-prinsip komunikasi dan *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* dalam program pemberdayaan ekonomi tidak hanya fokus pada pengurangan stunting, tetapi juga meningkatkan kesejahteraan masyarakat secara keseluruhan. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan wawasan baru mengenai pentingnya pendekatan holistik dalam pencegahan stunting yang melibatkan berbagai sektor dan nilai-nilai syariah.

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A. INTRODUCTION

Stunting is a serious public health problem, especially in developing countries, including Indonesia. According to UNICEF data, the prevalence of stunting in Indonesia has reached an alarming rate, which can impact the quality of human resources in the future. The stunting rate in Indonesian children reached 21.6 percent in 2022. The number of toddlers at risk of stunting in Indonesia is still around 4.7 million, with hopes of reducing to 14 percent by 2024.¹ With a stunting prevalence rate of 9.1%, North Sumatra is one of the provinces in Indonesia that is below the national average of 21.5%.² Of all regencies and cities in North Sumatra Province, the prevalence of stunting toddlers in Mandailing Natal in 2022 reached 34.2%.³ The Mandailing Natal Regency Government has implemented various efforts to reduce stunting rates, including approaches for at-risk families, interventions before and during pregnancy, and multi-sectoral collaboration.

The Foster Parents for Stunting (BAAS) program was planned for 2022 to directly address stunting cases, although results have not been optimal.⁴ To reduce stunting in Mandailing Natal Regency, the government involves various sectors, including health, education, and agriculture. Implemented programs, such as premarital marriage guidance by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, have shown a positive contribution to reducing stunting rates in the region. Meanwhile, in Padangsidimpuan City, data from 2024 showed that 992 toddlers experienced stunting across six districts. Efforts to reduce stunting prevalence continue to be encouraged, with various programs being implemented to reduce stunting rates in Padangsidimpuan City.

In this context, In this context, this study aims to describe the experiences of specific regions—Mandailing Natal Regency and Padangsidimpuan City—in implementing communication based on the principles of sharia (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*) as a strategy to increase economic independence while simultaneously reducing stunting rates. Thus, this

¹ Oslida Martony, "Stunting Di Indonesia: Tantangan Dan Solusi Di Era Modern," *Journal of Telenursing (JOTING)* 183, no. 2 (2023): 153–64; Khayu Rohmi et al., "Perumusan Masalah Penyebab Stunting Di Indonesia," *Majalah Ilmiah Dinamika Administrasi* 22, no. 1 (2024).

² Diskominfo Sumatera Utara, "Kejar Prevalensi Stunting 14,5% Tahun 2024, Pemprov Sumut," <https://diskominfo.sumutprov.go.id/index.php/page/ragam/kejar-prevalensi-stunting-145-tahun-2024--pemprov-sumut-pertajam-anggaran-dan-data>, 2024.

³ Aryunita, Doriani Harahap, and Khairina Pratama, "Hubungan Status Gizi Balita Dengan Kejadian Stunting Di Desa Hutabargot Lombang Kabupaten Mandailing Natal," *Jurnal Kesehatan Masyarakat Darmas (JKMD)* 2, no. 1 (2023): 31–34.

⁴ Diskominfo Madina, "Buka Rembuk Stunting 2023, Atika Tekankan Tiga Poin" (Diskominfo Madina, 2023).

study is not only descriptive and empirical in nature regarding local success but also offers conceptual solutions that can be replicated or adapted on a broader scale, both nationally and globally.

An approach through communication and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, which focuses on universal goals and values in Islam, can provide a new perspective in stunting prevention efforts through economic independence. Through persuasive communication, it can emphasize the acceptance of a message that has been formulated in such a way, as well as *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* which emphasizes the need to maintain the five basic aspects of human life: religion, life, reason, lineage, and wealth (*hifzd ad-dhin, hifzd an-nafs, hifzd al-aqal and hifzd an-nasl, and hifzd mal*). In this case, economic independence plays a vital role in supporting community health and welfare, which in turn can reduce stunting rates. Therefore, this study aims to explore the synergy between the effectiveness of communication and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* in increasing economic independence in the context of stunting prevention.

Communication is the process of conveying a message from a communicator to a recipient through artful means. Message delivery activities can utilize media such as print, audio, and audiovisual media, or be conducted in person. This activity is carried out to achieve an impact, which is the goal of the communication. The desired goals vary widely, and can include changes in attitudes, knowledge, or specific changes according to the content of the message conveyed by the communicator.

The theory of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* was developed to understand the goals and values of Islamic law. According to Imam Al-Ghazali,⁵ *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* aims to achieve goodness and prevent harm. In the context of this research, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* can serve as a foundation for promoting economic independence as an effort to prevent stunting. Islam, as a multidimensional religion, not only regulates aspects of belief and worship but also provides guidance for humanity in worldly affairs to achieve happiness in the afterlife. *Maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* encompasses five essential components: preservation of religion, life, intellect, posterity, and property.⁶ Islam teaches that the faith of pious people must govern their lives to prevent negative impacts, such as increasing stunting rates, which contradict the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (Islamic principles), particularly in the protection of life, mind, and offspring.⁷

In the context of protecting life, Islam emphasizes the importance of maintaining individual health and well-being. Furthermore, the protection of the mind within the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* requires Muslims to invest in education and knowledge. Finally, protecting offspring in Islam requires Muslims to consider the future of future generations. Protecting offspring in Islam is not merely a moral responsibility but also a profound obligation for every Muslim. In this context, Islam teaches the importance of considering the future of future generations holistically. For example, through good education, parents are expected to provide their children with knowledge and noble morals. This encompasses not only academic aspects but also spiritual and social values that will shape their character.

⁵ Abu Hamid Muhammad bin Muhammad Al-Ghazali, *Al-Mustashfa Fi 'Ilm Al-Usul*, Cet. 1 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1993).

⁶ L R K Luqman, "Menakar Rekonstruksi Maqashid Syariah," *Politea: Jurnal Politik Islam* 5, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.20414/politea.v5i1.5042>.

⁷ L Ifadah and A N Afnan, "Pencegahan Stunting Dalam Perspektif Maqashid Asy-Syariah: Studi Kasus Di Bansari Kabupaten Temanggung," *El-Qenon: Journal of Islamic Law* 1, no. 1 (2024): 30–38.

Economic theory, according to Bambang S, particularly in the context of economic development, emphasizes the importance of economic independence to improve societal welfare. Economic independence can be achieved through local economic empowerment, skills development, and access to resources.⁸ This aligns with the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, which encourages communities to be self-sufficient and prosperous. This research highlights the importance of business groups in increasing economic independence to reduce stunting. Interventions such as business capital, training, and group mentoring contribute significantly to healthy food management and access to resources, which are essential for achieving stunting reduction goals in Indonesia.⁹

Business capital, for example, enables community groups to purchase more nutritious and high-quality food. Through training, individuals can learn the importance of balanced nutrition and proper food preparation, enabling them to prepare meals that are not only delicious but also nutritious. Group mentoring also creates a supportive environment where group members can share experiences and strategies to overcome the challenges they face. In this context, interaction between members is crucial. For example, a member who has struggled to achieve a goal can share techniques that have worked for them, such as effective time management or self-motivation methods. This not only enriches the other members' knowledge but also builds solidarity and trust among them.

According to Diana R, the theory of stunting encompasses various factors that influence child growth, including nutrition, health, and the social environment.¹⁰ Previous research has shown that multi-sector interventions can be effective in reducing stunting. In this context, economic independence can contribute to improving nutrition and public health.¹¹ Stunting is a condition of growth failure in toddlers due to chronic malnutrition, resulting in shorter stature than age-standardized.¹² This negatively impacts physical and mental development, increasing the risk of cognitive impairment and health problems in adulthood.¹³ Stunting has significant negative impacts that can be analyzed from a *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* perspective. In the short term, stunting increases infant disability and mortality rates and impairs psychomotor development. In the long term, its effects include low IQ, which hinders children's access to quality education and employment, reducing their quality of life.

Stunting reduction can be achieved through multi-sectoral communication, involving various channels to convey behavior change messages. This effort aims to raise public awareness about stunting prevention, encompassing direct interaction, print media,

⁸ S. J Pardede et al., "Strategi Pemberdayaan UMKM Untuk Meningkatkan Pertumbuhan Ekonomi Guna Kemandirian Ekonomi Bangsa Indonesia," *NUSANTARA: Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial* 11, no. 4 (2024): 1526–38.

⁹ E P Wulandari, K Saiban, and M Munir, "Implementasi Maqashid Syariah Dalam Pemberdayaan Ekonomi Masyarakat," *Invest Journal of Sharia & Economic Law* 2, no. 1 (2022): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.21154/invest.v2i1.3661>.

¹⁰ Diana Rahayu, *Pengaruh Keluarga Terhadap Stunting Anak* (Jakarta: Gramarindo, 2022).

¹¹ Bayu indra Laksana et al., "Kolaborasi Antara Masyarakat Dan Pemerintah Desa Dalam Upaya Pengendalian Stunting," *Jurnal Masyarakat Madani* 9, no. 2 (2024): 135–60; Bakti Handayani and Bambang Arianto, "Strategi Pencegahan Stunting Berbasis Tata Kelola Dana Desa," *Jurnal DIALOGIKA : Manajemen Dan Administrasi* 3, no. 2 (2022): 59–72, <https://doi.org/10.31949/dialogika.v3i2.7544>.

¹² S Husada and K Rahmadhita, "Permasalahan Stunting Dan Pencegahannya Stunting Problems and Prevention," *Jurnal Ilmu Kesehatan* 11, no. 1 (2020): 225–229, <https://doi.org/10.35816/jiskh.v10i2.253>.

¹³ E N Hutabarat, "Permasalahan Stunting Dan Pencegahannya," *Journal of Health and Medical Science* 2, no. 1 (2023).

broadcast media, and digital platforms.¹⁴ This effort aims to raise public awareness about stunting prevention through a comprehensive range of approaches. Direct interactions, such as seminars and workshops, allow the public to discuss and ask questions directly with nutritionists. Furthermore, print media, such as brochures and pamphlets, provide easily accessible and understandable information. Radio and television broadcasts also play a crucial role in reaching a wider audience, while digital platforms, such as social media and websites, offer interactive content that can engage the younger generation. By integrating all these methods, it is hoped that the public will better understand the importance of balanced nutrition and a healthy lifestyle in preventing stunting.

Increased awareness will encourage concrete actions to maintain child and family health, thereby significantly reducing stunting. Increased awareness of the importance of child and family health will encourage more targeted concrete actions in stunting prevention efforts. For example, educational campaigns involving the community can increase understanding of balanced nutrition and healthy eating patterns. By providing clear and easy-to-understand information, parents will be more motivated to choose nutritious foods for their children. Furthermore, community involvement through health programs, such as regular checkups and counseling, can create an environment that supports optimal child growth.

Several previous studies have highlighted the issues of stunting, economic empowerment, and the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (Islamic principles), albeit with varying focuses. Wulandari, Saiban, and Munir found that implementing *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* can promote community welfare through economic empowerment, but have not specifically linked them to stunting prevention.¹⁵ Ifadah and Afnan examined stunting prevention from the perspective of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* in Temanggung, but their study was more normative, without detailing communication mechanisms or economic strategies.¹⁶ Rahayu emphasized the influence of families in meeting children's nutritional needs,¹⁷ while Casanovas et al. highlighted the importance of multisectoral interventions to support healthy growth, although neither addressed the integration of Islamic values.¹⁸ Similarly, Husada and Rahmadhita emphasized the technical health dimension without addressing the role of communication and religious values.¹⁹

These studies reveal significant gaps. First, most studies on stunting emphasize health and nutrition aspects, while the integration of persuasive communication and the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (Islamic principles) in building community economic independence is still rarely explored. Second, research linking *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* to stunting is generally conceptually normative and not based on empirical data in areas with a high stunting prevalence. Third, although economic empowerment is touted as an important strategy, no research has

¹⁴ M Del Carmen Casanovas et al., "Multi-Sectoral Interventions for Healthy Growth," *Maternal and Child Nutrition* 9, no. ue S2 (2013): 46–57, <https://doi.org/10.1111/mcn.12082>.

¹⁵ E. P Wulandari, K Saiban, and M Munir, "Implementasi Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'ah Dalam Pemberdayaan Ekonomi Masyarakat," *Jurnal Investasi Syariah & Hukum Ekonomi* 2, no. 1 (2024): 1–15, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21154/invest.v2i1.3661>.

¹⁶ Ifadah and Afnan, "Pencegahan Stunting Dalam Perspektif Maqashid Asy-Syariah: Studi Kasus Di Bansari Kabupaten Temanggung."

¹⁷ Rahayu, *Pengaruh Keluarga Terhadap Stunting Anak*.

¹⁸ C Casanovas et al., "Intervensi Multi-Sektoral Untuk Pertumbuhan Yang Sehat," *Maternal and Child Nutrition* 9, no. 2 (2013): 46–57, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/mcn.12082>.

¹⁹ Husada and Rahmadhita, "Permasalahan Stunting Dan Pencegahannya Stunting Problems and Prevention."

explicitly demonstrated how Islamic value-based communication can strengthen economic independence efforts and provide a practical solution to reducing stunting rates.

The novelty of this research lies in the integration of persuasive communication with *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* within the framework of stunting prevention through strengthening economic independence. This research offers a holistic approach that views stunting not only as a health issue but as a multidimensional issue involving economic, social, and religious values. Using case studies of Mandailing Natal and Padangsidempuan—two regions with relatively high stunting rates—this research not only presents local empirical evidence but also offers a conceptual model that can be replicated nationally and globally.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the implementation of communication principles and the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (objectives of Islamic law) in increasing community economic independence, identify the role of multisectoral communication in stunting prevention, and explore the relationship between economic independence and reduced stunting prevalence. Furthermore, this study aims to offer a conceptual model based on communication and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* that can serve as a reference for sustainable stunting prevention strategies.

B. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach to demonstrate the social phenomena that contribute to the decline in stunting rates in the designated areas. This method is highly relevant for this theme because it addresses social phenomena and the changes occurring within a society. Research using this method demonstrates naturalistic phenomena, demonstrating social findings and phenomena based on the dynamic nature of individual relationships.²⁰ This means that the same research conducted with the same subjects at different times may yield different results. Data collection methods include interviews and observations. Focus group discussions (FGD) are also used to gather community and stakeholder perspectives regarding the synergy between communication activities and the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* principles in efforts to increase economic independence and prevent stunting. The FGD participants consisted of officials from the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Mandailing Natal Regency, including: The Head of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, who provided insights into the implementation of the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (Islamic principles) in economic independence. A representative from the National Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN) of Mandailing Natal Regency explained the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration in stunting prevention. The discussion also involved health workers, religious leaders, local community leaders, and groups of housewives who are the primary targets of the nutrition education and family economic empowerment programs. The presence of participants from diverse backgrounds provided a comprehensive picture of how persuasive communication and the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* can be practically integrated in efforts to increase community economic independence while reducing the prevalence of stunting. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, which were then analyzed thematically. Data will be collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, which will then be analyzed thematically.

²⁰ Nurlaela Wati, *Metodologi Penelitian*, 1 st Editi (Mujahidin Press, 2021).

The research locations are Mandailing Natal Regency and Padangsidempuan City. This research was conducted in two regions, namely KJabupaten Mandailing Natal and Padang Sidempuan city, which according to the latest data from SGI is the area that has the highest number for stunting prevalence, especially in North Sumatra, so this data strengthens the selection of research areas, when viewed these two areas with cultural backgrounds and geographical locations are very unique for the numbers that have been determined, because Padang Sidempuan is a city with increasing economic growth, while Mandailing Natal district is an area that has a strong background of religious understanding, meaning that awareness in fulfilling body rights is something that should not happen, especially with the data showing the high prevalence of stunting.

To ensure data validity, this study employed triangulation of sources and methods.²¹ Triangulation was conducted by comparing data from in-depth interviews, field observations, and focus group discussions (FGDs) involving various stakeholders, including Ministry of Religious Affairs officials, BKKBN representatives, health workers, community leaders, and housewives. Validation was also strengthened through member checking, which involved requesting reconfirmation from key informants regarding the researcher's interpretations to avoid bias and ensure consistency of meaning. Furthermore, the researchers conducted peer debriefing with fellow researchers and public health practitioners to verify the consistency of the findings with the reality on the ground.

The collected data was then analyzed using thematic analysis with an inductive approach.²² The analysis process involved several stages: transcription of interview and FGD data, initial coding to identify important themes, categorizing findings according to the research focus, and deriving patterns of relationships between categories. This analysis aimed to discover how communication and the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (objectives of the sharia) can be synergized to increase community economic independence and prevent stunting. The thematic analysis approach allows researchers to capture the complexity of social phenomena in greater depth and produce findings that are relevant to the local context and transferable to other regions.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Community Economic Conditions and Stunting in Mandailing Natal

Prevalence data shows that the stunting rate in Mandailing Natal Regency in 2022 reached 34.2%, far above the national average of 21.6% and the North Sumatra Province average of 9.1%. This figure confirms that Mandailing Natal is one of the regions with a high level of vulnerability to chronic malnutrition. This condition is closely related to the community's economic structure, which largely relies on traditional agricultural sectors, such as rice, corn, and rubber plantations, with relatively low productivity. Limited access to modern agricultural technology, business capital, and crop management skills means many families earn only minimal incomes. This low purchasing power directly impacts families' ability to provide balanced, nutritious meals for their children.

Furthermore, the distribution of nutritious food in rural areas of Mandailing Natal is also uneven. People tend to consume staple foods high in carbohydrates but low in animal protein and vitamins. This consumption pattern, combined with a lack of nutritional knowledge,

²¹ W V Nurfajriani et al., "Triangulasi Data Dalam Analisis Data Kualitatif," *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan* 10, no. 17 (2024): 826–833, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13929272>.

²² Nanda Saputra, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*, 2017.

exacerbates the risk of stunting. Access to healthcare services remains challenging, particularly in remote areas, due to limited healthcare workers and inadequate road infrastructure. This situation makes routine health checks for toddlers and nutritional interventions difficult for some communities.

In contrast to Mandailing Natal, conditions in Padangsidempuan City are relatively better economically. Growth in the trade, services, and education sectors has driven increased incomes, although 2024 data shows that there are still 992 toddlers with stunting. This phenomenon demonstrates that economic factors are indeed significant, but not in isolation. Other factors such as consumption behavior, parenting patterns, and nutritional awareness also play a significant role.

Thus, the situation in Mandailing Natal reflects the close relationship between economic vulnerability, nutritional access, and stunting prevalence. Meanwhile, Padangsidempuan demonstrates that economic growth alone does not automatically reduce stunting rates without accompanying nutrition education and changes in consumption patterns. Therefore, interventions are needed not only to increase family incomes, but also sustainable community empowerment strategies, including strengthening nutritional literacy, food diversification, and providing more equitable access to healthcare services.

2. The Communication Concept of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* as an Effort to Achieve Economic Independence and Prevent Stunting

Maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, as a framework of universal Islamic values, emphasizes the importance of protecting five fundamental aspects: religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), life (*ḥifẓ al-naḥs*), reason (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), offspring (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and wealth (*ḥifẓ al-māl*). In the context of stunting prevention, the two most relevant dimensions are *ḥifẓ al-naḥs* (protecting the life) and *ḥifẓ al-nasl* (protecting offspring). Protecting the life encompasses efforts to ensure the fulfillment of basic needs for a healthy life, including balanced nutrition, access to healthcare, and a suitable environment for children. Protecting offspring emphasizes the responsibility of parents and society to ensure the optimal growth and development of the next generation. Thus, fulfilling children's nutritional needs is not merely a biological need, but also a sharia obligation to safeguard the trust of life and the continuity of generations.²³

The concept of communication based on the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* serves as a crucial instrument in realizing these values on a practical level. This communication encompasses more than just conveying technical information about nutrition or health, but also emphasizes persuasive, educational, and spiritual dimensions. Messages formulated within the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* framework contain strong moral and religious legitimacy, making them more readily accepted by religious communities such as those in Mandailing Natal and Padangsidempuan. For example, nutrition education is not merely presented as a medical obligation but is also linked to religious commands to maintain mental and progeny health.

Furthermore, communication based on the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* also takes into account the local socio-cultural context. The messages developed must be in line with language, symbols, and values relevant to the community's daily lives. In this way, communication is not top-

²³ Ayatullah Arjun et al., "Pemetaan Peran Penyuluh Agama Dalam Pencegahan Stunting Di Kabupaten Luwu (Tinjauan Maqashid Al-Syariah)," *Jurnal Agama, Sosial, Dan Budaya* 7, no. 4 (2024): 23–36; Hany Setyowati, "Hubungan Pola Asuh Dan Pengetahuan Ibu Tentang Stunting Dengan Kejadian Stunting Pada Anak Usia 12-24 Bulan Di Pandeglang, Banten Dan Tinjauan Menurut Pandangan Islam," *Cerdika: Jurnal Ilmiah Indonesia* 2, no. 11 (2022): 938–51.

down, but rather dialogic and participatory. Communication strategies such as religious lectures, mosque-based health education, and digital media based on Islamic content can be effective tools to encourage behavioral change in society.

Furthermore, the application of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* communication within the framework of economic independence is also relevant. *Hifẓ al-māl* (protecting wealth) encourages people to manage economic resources wisely, develop productive businesses, and increase family income. When these values are conveyed through persuasive, religious and contextual communication, people not only understand the importance of economic independence but are also spiritually motivated to implement it as part of their worship and moral responsibility. Thus, the concept of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* communication serves as a link between normative Islamic teachings and the concrete practices of economic empowerment and stunting prevention in the community.

3. Implementation of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* Communication as an Effort to Achieve Economic Independence and Prevent Stunting

The implementation of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* in economic independence identifies how the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* can be applied in economic empowerment programs aimed at reducing stunting. From the results of the FGD conducted on August 12, 2025, one of the speakers from the Head of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Mandailing Natal Regency, Mr. H. Maranaek Hasibuan, M.A., stated that the implementation of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* in economic independence to reduce stunting by conducting training and education for the community, especially housewives, regarding the importance of nutrition and food diversity. Building an adequate financing system for small businesses and obtaining the necessary capital. Conducting awareness campaigns to emphasize the importance of nutrition in the first 1000 days of a child's life. Encouraging active participation in the community in designing and implementing programs, so that they are in accordance with local needs and within the corridor of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. By applying the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* in economic empowerment programs, we not only focus on reducing stunting rates but also improve overall well-being, alleviate poverty, and help communities invest in a better future for their children.

Factors in multi-sector communication analyze how collaboration between the health, education, and economic sectors can increase the effectiveness of stunting prevention programs. Another resource person, Ms. Bintang Eka Damayanti S.Kep.M.K.M., a Population Planner from the National Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN) of Mandailing Natal Regency, stated during the FGD that collaboration between the health, education, and economic sectors is crucial to increasing the effectiveness of stunting prevention programs. Each sector has a unique, complementary role, and integrating these three sectors can create a more comprehensive approach to addressing stunting. The health sector is responsible for providing quality health services, including routine health checks for children, counseling on the importance of balanced nutrition, and interventions to treat nutritional problems, such as vitamin and mineral supplementation. The education sector includes the introduction of a curriculum that emphasizes the importance of nutrition and health from an early age, as well as training for educators to teach children about healthy eating habits.

The economic sector implements programs that provide incentives to families to ensure their children receive nutritious food and necessary health services. For example, providing

food assistance or health vouchers is crucial. With good synergy between these three sectors, investments in child health will be more effective, increasing awareness and access to education for children and parents, and creating an economic environment that supports family independence in meeting adequate nutrition needs. This approach focuses not only on treatment but also on prevention, with the long-term goal of maintaining a healthy and productive generation.

The relationship between economic independence and stunting examines how increased economic independence can contribute to improving children's nutritional and health status. The results of the focus group discussions (FGDs) revealed that increased economic independence has a significant impact on improving children's nutritional and health status. Economic independence can contribute to improved access to nutritious food, nutrition education, access to health services, a better environment, women's empowerment, and an improved quality of life. Increased economic independence is closely related to improvements in children's nutritional and health status. When families have greater economic strength, access to nutritious food and health services improves, parents' knowledge of nutrition and health improves, and a more positive social and economic environment is created, all these factors contribute to optimal child growth and development, while creating a healthier and more productive generation. Comprehensive measures for economic empowerment, particularly those focused on women and communities, will further amplify this positive impact.

The results of this study are expected to provide new insights into the importance of synergy between communication and the principles of sharia (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*) in increasing economic independence and preventing stunting. Communication principles emphasize effective communication methods to ensure the message is well-received and changes in attitudes and knowledge consistent with the message. This message of economic independence can be implemented for future efforts aimed at increasing economic independence. This positive impact can also be seen in the decline in stunting prevalence in the two research areas: Mandailing Natal Regency and Padang Sidempuan City.

The values of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, which aim to achieve the good and welfare of humanity, are highly relevant in designing and implementing economic empowerment programs, particularly in the context of stunting reduction. The implementation of *hifz al-nafs* (protecting the soul) is an economic empowerment program that should focus on providing nutritious food and access to adequate health services. For example, providing training for communities to grow nutritious vegetables and fruits, as well as providing access to healthy food at affordable prices, is crucial. Implementing *hifz al-'aql* (protecting the mind) is a key element in community empowerment. Programs that educate the community about the importance of nutrition and health for children, as well as how to prepare healthy foods, can increase their awareness and knowledge.

Training on financial management can also help parents plan their spending on children's health and nutrition. Implementing *hifz al-din* (protecting religion) is an economic empowerment program, and it is important to ensure that all implemented actions and policies align with the ethical values taught by religion. For example, collaborating with zakat institutions to provide assistance to poor families so they can meet their children's nutritional needs. Implementing *hifz al-'irdh* (protecting honor) is an economic empowerment program that must be designed to empower women, as they often play a crucial role in childcare and

meeting the family's nutritional needs. Providing employment opportunities and skills training for women can improve their social and economic status and reduce the risk of stunting in children. Implementing *hifz al-mal* (protecting wealth) is a program that encourages community investment in sustainable or small businesses to help increase their economic independence. For example, microfinance programs that support small businesses can increase household income, which in turn can be used to meet children's nutritional needs. Supporting local businesses also maintains economic stability and prevents poverty, which leads to health problems.

Collaboration between sectors facilitates better data collection and analysis on children's nutritional and health status. This can be done by establishing cross-sector teams that share responsibility for monitoring child development and the impact of implemented programs. The education sector can help distribute surveys and gather feedback from parents and children to evaluate program effectiveness. Public education on the importance of nutrition for child growth can be conducted through schools, communities, and the media. Implementing educational programs that include parents and the community can increase understanding of stunting issues. Meanwhile, the health sector can provide analysis on achieved health outcomes.

Health workers can collaborate with schools to conduct nutrition and health education sessions. This creates a consistent and accessible narrative for the community. The economic sector can provide skills training for parents/mothers on financial management, resource management, and how to gain access to better nutrition on a limited budget. Develop programs that facilitate access to micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and nutritious food, so that rural communities can produce and consume healthy foods. Provide entrepreneurship training and access to capital for mothers at home so they can run small businesses based on healthy food. Provide support through policies that encourage local industries and provide training to improve the quality of their production. Initiate integrated and sustainable policies that involve all sectors in stunting prevention. This could include policies that support access to health education, nutritious food, and economic opportunities. Build collaborative movements involving policymakers, NGOs, and communities to raise awareness of the importance of stunting prevention as a multidimensional issue.

By increasing economic independence, families are able to increase their incomes. Higher incomes enable families to purchase more nutritious and diverse foods, which are essential for children's growth and development. Economic independence can encourage families to engage in entrepreneurship. By producing their own food, families have direct access to the nutritious food they need. When a family's economic situation improves, parents have more opportunities for education. Improved nutritional knowledge will help parents choose healthy and nutritious foods for their children. Economic empowerment programs often include training in nutritional management and nutritious cooking, which can improve parents' skills in providing healthy meals for their children.

Economic independence can increase families' ability to afford health services. This includes access to routine health checkups, immunizations, and necessary medical care for children. Greater economic independence can give women more control, including over decisions about reproductive health and health care during pregnancy and after childbirth, which directly impact children's health. As local economies improve, there will be more investment in education and public infrastructure, including sanitation and clean water. A

healthier environment is a crucial factor in improving children's health and nutrition. Improved infrastructure, especially in rural areas, improves access to markets and health facilities, allowing families to access healthy food and more efficient health services. The economic independence women gain contributes to improved family nutrition and health status, as women are often responsible for managing children's food and health.

Programs that support women's entrepreneurship can enhance their skills in providing good nutrition for their children. Families supported by economically independent women often tend to be healthier, as they can make better decisions about food consumption and children's health. Economic independence supports an overall improvement in living standards, which impacts parents' mental and emotional health. Good mental health enables parents to be more responsive and attentive to their children's health and nutritional needs. Economic independence provides families with the opportunity to invest in their children's education. Good education not only improves nutritional knowledge but also opens up future opportunities for better incomes. This research will also identify best practices from interventions that have been implemented in the field and the challenges they face.

The implications of this research's findings indicate that the integration of persuasive communication and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* is not only relevant in the context of stunting prevention in Mandailing Natal and Padangsidempuan, but also has strategic significance for public policy and community empowerment programs more broadly. First, from a policy perspective, the results of this study can serve as a basis for local governments to formulate more comprehensive stunting prevention strategies that incorporate religious, economic, and multisectoral communication aspects. Second, from a social practice perspective, a *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*-based approach can strengthen the legitimacy of the program within religious communities, thereby increasing citizen acceptance and participation. Third, from an academic perspective, this research enriches the literature on stunting prevention by presenting a new conceptual framework that integrates health, economic, and Islamic values. Thus, the findings of this study not only have implications for efforts to reduce stunting rates at the local level but can also serve as a conceptual model for developing stunting prevention strategies, particularly in communities with a strong religious character.

D. CONCLUSION

The conclusions of this study are expected to provide recommendations for stakeholders in designing more effective programs in stunting prevention, by utilizing the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and economic independence, including: the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* are relevant in economic empowerment programs to reduce stunting. Focusing on providing nutritious food, nutrition education, financial training, as well as women's empowerment and support for small businesses can improve community welfare and meet children's nutritional needs. Collaboration between sectors improves data collection and analysis on children's nutritional status. Through cross-sector teams, education programs and skills training for parents can improve understanding of nutrition. Integrative policies are needed to prevent stunting, involving all stakeholders in this effort. Economic independence increases family income, enables access to nutritious food and health services. It also encourages parental education on nutrition, improves health decisions, and supports investment in children's education. Economically independent women contribute to family health and nutrition, and improve overall quality of life.

This study has several limitations that should be noted. First, it focused only on two regions: Mandailing Natal Regency and Padangsidempuan City, so the results cannot be fully generalized to the national context. Second, the research method used was qualitative, with focus group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews, so the data obtained were primarily descriptive and interpretive, unable to provide quantitative measurements that could strengthen the validity of the generalizability of the findings. Third, the involvement of informants was still limited to certain stakeholders, so the views of the broader community, including the private sector and other local communities, were not fully captured. Recognizing these limitations, further research is expected to use a mixed methods approach, involve more regions, and expand stakeholder participation to achieve more representative and comprehensive results

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