

Family resilience in long-distance marriages (phenomenological study of open communication in military families)



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Abstract The deployment of Indonesian National Army (TNI) soldiers in various regions often causes their families to undergo long-distance marriages (LDMs). This condition requires family resilience to maintain household harmony amidst separation and psychological pressure. This study aims to explore how open communication, especially honesty, and the effectiveness of the dual role of soldiers' wives contribute to the resilience of military families in LDM situations. This study uses a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the subjective experiences of wives in Malang city. A total of 20 military pairs were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation and then analyzed by extracting key themes related to honesty, LDM adaptation, social support, emotional stability, and dual role effectiveness. The study's results indicate that open communication, grounded in honesty, serves as an emotional bridge, maintaining closeness between couples and fostering mutual trust. The dual role of the wife, which is carried out effectively, encompasses childcare, household management, and domestic decision-making and can contribute to strengthening family stability. Additionally, social support from extended families, communities, and military institutions plays a crucial role in reducing emotional distress and enhancing family resilience. The emotional stability of wives is also a foundation of resilience, as demonstrated through coping strategies such as spirituality, journaling, and social involvement. In conclusion, the resilience of military families in LDM is formed through the synergy among honesty, emotional adaptation, social support, emotional stability, and the effectiveness of dual roles. This research contributes theoretically to the expansion of the understanding of military family resilience. It can be practically applied as a basis for developing open communication-based support programs and family counseling services and strengthening the military wives' community in Indonesia.

Keywords: resilience, long distance marriage, communication, military

1. Introduction

The Indonesian National Army (TNI), as stipulated in Article 1, Paragraph (2) of Law Number 34 of 2004, is a state tool in the field of defense that is tasked with state policies and political decisions. In carrying out its duties, the TNI frequently deploys soldiers in various regions, both domestically and internationally. These placements include military operations, border guards, and international peace missions. As a result, many soldier families have had to live domestic lives under long distance marriage (LDM) conditions, which demand high family resilience to maintain domestic harmony despite being separated by distance (Bóia et al., 2018). Concerns about the safety and well-being of a serving spouse can cause anxiety and deep psychological distress, which ultimately affects the emotional health of family members (Santos et al., 2020). Therefore, it is essential to understand the dynamics of military family life to develop effective support strategies for their resilience and well-being.

Family life is a crucial foundation in the social structure of society and plays a vital role in fostering emotional well-being for each of its members. From the perspective of family resilience theory, as put forward by Walsh (2006), the family is a dynamic system that can adapt to pressures and challenges, including geographical separation. Loneliness and depressive symptoms are often experienced by couples throughout the entire placement stage, which adds to the overall psychological burden (Mullet et al., 2022). However, the level of adaptability of each family varies depending on communication strategies, social support, and internal commitments. In the context of the military family, the dynamics of home life have their own characteristics, characterized by high mobility, psychological stress, and geographical separation due to service assignments (Lewis, 2021). The phenomenon of long-distance marriage (LDM) is not unfamiliar to soldiers' families and has become a consequence of the military profession, which demands high loyalty and discipline. Woodall et al. (2020) highlighted the



importance of providing support to military spouses who are under pressure and who play a dual role in further improving the quality of marriage. Despite being physically separated, many military families are still able to maintain domestic harmony through open communication, strong emotional commitment, and unique adaptive strategies (Manser & Ogilvie, 2022a). This demonstrates that with emotional support, adaptability, and effective communication, military families have great potential to build resilience in the face of the structural and psychological challenges they encounter.

Although various studies have addressed the challenges of remote marriage (LDR) in general, studies that specifically explore how open communication shapes family resilience in the context of military life are still very limited. Military family life presents its own unique complexities, including time constraints, inconsistent access to communication, and high psychological burdens associated with the risks of duty (Blankenship et al., 2024). Not all couples can build open and honest communication in LDM, especially when faced with ongoing emotional pressure. Digital barriers and intermittent communication can even worsen a couple's emotional well-being if they are not balanced with the quality of empathic and open communication (Skomorovsky et al., 2022). In addition, the dual roles that soldiers' wives play during LDM often do not receive adequate structural support and have not been studied in depth from their subjective point of view. Therefore, it is essential to delve into the first-hand experiences of military families to understand how open communication and the role of wives contribute to family resilience in such challenging situations.

This study is important because the resilience of military families undergoing long-distance marriages is highly dependent on communication skills and emotional adaptation, two aspects that have not been explored much from the perspective of soldier wives. A study by Godier-McBard et al. (2020) reported that "resilience in military spouses is shaped not only by external support but also by how they internally process and communicate their emotional responses during deployment." Although digital communication has now become the main bridge for LDM couples, the study Carter et al. (2020) indicated that "low-quality or disrupted communication during deployment is associated with increased emotional strain and reduced relationship satisfaction." Therefore, this study offers a phenomenological approach that focuses on the meaning of open communication, especially honesty in conveying information, and the effectiveness of dual roles, as experienced directly by soldiers' wives. This study aims to understand how the open communication strategies and adaptive roles of wives contribute to family resilience in the context of long-distance marriage.

This study aims to explore in depth how open communication, particularly in the form of honesty in conveying information and the dual role played by soldiers' wives, contributes to emotional stability and family resilience in the context of long-distance marriage. Research conducted by Blow et al. (2022) suggests that the resilience of a soldier's spouse is significantly influenced by the individual's ability to manage internal pressure and foster open communication during the assignment. In this context, honesty is an important key to forming mutual trust and maintaining emotional closeness (Blycker, 2023). On the other hand, the dual roles that soldiers' wives play include childcare, household management, and independent domestic decision-making, which require emotional resilience. Through a phenomenological approach, this study aims to understand the meaning, challenges, and strategies that military families employ to maintain household harmony despite being separated by distance and time. This finding aligns with the results of Shorer et al. (2024), who revealed that the quality of emotional communication has a direct effect on the relationship satisfaction and psychological stability of military spouses during the assignment period.

2. Materials and methods

The approach employed in this study is qualitative, drawing on a phenomenological perspective. The phenomenological approach aims to explore the subjective experiences experienced by individuals or groups in a particular context, as well as to find the essence of those experiences (Matz, 2024). This phenomenology allows researchers to understand how military families interpret and respond to challenges in long-distance marriages as well as how open communication affects their family's resilience. To obtain in-depth data on the experience of military families in remote marriages, some of the data collection techniques used are as follows: a. in-depth interviews with married couples in military families who are undergoing a distance marriage; b. observation by observing face-to-face communication and communication through electronic media (telephone or video call) to observe how open communication occurs despite being separated from each other; and c. documentation such as journals or diaries owned by the respondent. Participant selection was carried out via purposive sampling techniques. The selected participants were 20 married couples in military families living in Malang city, East Java Province. The criteria for selecting participants are individuals who have firsthand experience with long-distance marriage and who maintain open communication with their partner. This research was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of social research.

3. Results

3.1. Honesty

All the informants reported that honesty is the primary foundation for maintaining harmony in long-distance marriages within military families. Honesty is understood not only as the disclosure of information but also as the willingness to share

feelings, thoughts, and real conditions of life, both enjoyable and challenging. In military family life, characterized by assignments and geographical distance, couples prioritize honesty as a form of emotional commitment that strengthens their psychological attachment. Through honest communication, they can minimize misunderstandings and anxiety and create a sense of security and trust in the midst of limited physical interaction.

"I told everything, from children, finances, to my feelings. We agree that nothing is covered up," (Informant 5)

For military family couples, honestly conveying good or bad news is seen as a form of appreciation for the couple and as a way to strengthen their relationship, even if it makes them feel worried. They understand that hiding information can lead to suspicion, mistrust, and potential for long-term conflict.

"I also had to give bad news, but I looked for the right time, so that my husband would not think about it while on duty," (Informant 10)

Honesty does not mean conveying everything hastily without consideration. However, it requires wisdom and empathy so that the message conveyed remains constructive and does not exacerbate the psychological situation of the partner in charge. The informants noted that honesty conveyed at the right time, in the proper manner, and in the correct language is one of the most important forms of emotional support in navigating the pressures of military duty and maintaining harmonious relationships.

Furthermore, honesty is a tool for building mutual trust, creating a healthy dialog space, and strengthening the resilience of couples when facing challenges. These findings reinforce the theory Knobloch et al. (2022), this finding indicates that honesty in communication during the assignment period not only strengthens emotional relationships but also becomes an important capital in the process of reintegrating couples after the assignment period ends. Honesty is a solid foundation for addressing the dynamics of military family life, especially in the LDM situation, where trust and open communication are inseparable elements in maintaining family harmony.

3.2. LDM Adaptation

Adaptation to the conditions of long-distance marriage (LDM) was the initial challenge faced by almost all the informants. In the early stages of the assignment, many individuals feel emotionally overwhelmed and struggle to manage the rhythm of home life without their husbands present. However, over time, they developed adaptation mechanisms that suited their respective situations.

"At first, I was shocked and confused about what to do, but after a while I got used to it. The important thing is to have my own routine so that I do not feel empty" (Informant 7).

Most of the informants also emphasized the importance of maintaining regular communication with their spouse and creating a stable home atmosphere for children as a form of positive adaptation. Some of them use spirituality and social activities as a way to divert loneliness and manage emotional distress.

"Every day I video call at night, continue to participate actively in studies. It truly helps so that you do not feel alone," (Informant 2)

The adaptation strategies employed by soldiers' wives demonstrate psychological flexibility and the ability to create new meaning in situations of separation and absence. This aligns with the findings. Pullman & Wang (2022) This suggests that the success of military family adaptation is determined by the ability to establish new routines, set clear expectations, and maintain strong emotional connections. Adaptation is not just about survival but also about building resilience in the face of changing roles and the emotional dynamics that accompany them.

3.3. Social and Institutional Support

Social support from extended families, communities, and organisations such as Persit is an important element in maintaining family resilience during the LDM period. The informant stated that the presence of a supportive social environment helps alleviate the psychological burden and fosters a sense of solidarity among fellow soldiers' wives.

"If there is a Persit activity, it feels like getting energy. We can tell stories and strengthen each other," (Informant 6).

However, support from military institutions is still considered uneven by some informants. Some units have regular family development programs, but not all pay optimal attention to the condition of soldiers' families.

"In my place of duty, there used to be family debriefing, but after moving, there was no more. Therefore, it feels very different," (Informant 4).

These findings suggest that social and structural support play crucial roles in enhancing the resilience of military families. Inconsistent access to institutional services can create a resilience gap among soldiers' families, as affirmed by Lee (2024), who noted that a stable and equitable support system directly contributes to the emotional and adaptive resilience of military families during the assignment period. Therefore, policy interventions that are not only responsive to the needs of soldiers' families but also ensure the sustainability and equitable distribution of mentoring programs as an integral part of the family-based national resilience system are needed.

3.4. Emotional Stability as a Foundation for Resilience

Most informants showed the ability to manage emotional stress during their husband's assignment. Anxiety, longing, and concern for the safety of one's partner are common emotional challenges. To address this pressure, informants develop various coping mechanisms, such as strengthening spirituality, writing a daily journal, and maintaining a worship routine with children.

"If I miss or worry, I write it in a diary. Sometimes I also pray with the children; it is very soothing," (Informant 3).

In addition, some informants realized the importance of maintaining emotional stability in communication with their husbands. They choose not to overload the psychological burden so as not to interfere with their partner's focus on fulfilling their duties.

"Usually, I hold it first when I am sad. Later, when it calms down, just tell it slowly. Let the husband stay calm there," (Informant 8)

This attitude reflects self-control and awareness of the strategic role as a moral supporter of the partner. These findings reinforce this view. Rawat et al. (2022) The ability to regulate emotions in stressful contexts, such as military life, is at the heart of psychological resilience. Conscious emotional management not only helps maintain the harmony of relationships but also serves as a protective tool for the mental stability of all family members.

3.5. Effectiveness of Dual Roles

During the LDM period, soldiers' wives played a dual role, serving as both mothers and temporary heads of household. They are responsible for childcare, financial management, and domestic decision-making without direct assistance from their husbands. This burden requires not only practical skills but also emotional toughness in maintaining family stability.

"I have to be everything: mom, dad, teacher, housekeeper. However, I learned a lot from it, so I became more independent and stronger" (Informant 1).

To maintain the emotional balance of the children, the wives also adjust the parenting style so that the child still feels close to the father figure, even though they are physically far apart. This is achieved through stories about fathers, mentioning their name in prayer, and establishing regular online communication schedules.

"When the children start asking their fathers, I invite them to video call together. At least they know that their father still cares," (Informant 9).

Independence and maturity in managing the household are the main strengths of informants in maintaining family functions during the LDM period. These findings align with existing research. van der Meulen et al. (2020) This suggests that women's success in carrying out dual roles in military families is highly dependent on their psychological resilience and managerial capacity in dealing with situations of spousal absence. Dual roles are not only an additional burden but also a space for the formation of new identities that are more resilient and reflective (Figure 1).



Figure 1 Aspects of military family resilience under long distance marriage (LDM) conditions.

4. Discussion

4.1. Honesty

Honesty in conveying information is a fundamental element of open communication in military families, especially when couples are in a long-distance marriage (Shalvi et al., 2025). This study revealed that communication between husbands and wives of soldiers serves not only as a means of exchanging news but also as an emotional bridge that maintains a sense of psychological connection, even when they are physically separate. Some informants stated that they chose to be honest, even with respect to small things, so as not to cause misunderstanding or suspicion. In digital communication, this openness is manifested through daily chat routines, the sharing of photos/videos of children's activities, and video call sessions that involve feelings, not just activity reports. Research by Zamir et al. (2020) also affirms that the quality of emotional communication plays a direct role in the psychological stability of military spouses during assignments and that authentic communication helps maintain emotional cohesion in relationships. Emotional communication can be improved through activities and interactions that foster a sense of camaraderie and awareness (Pu et al., 2024). In long-distance relationships that last for a long time, openness in conveying the child's condition, household finances, and personal condition becomes a form of emotional responsibility to the partner.

Furthermore, research by Knobloch et al. (2022b) revealed that open communication in military families was highly influential in the successful reintegration of spouses after the assignment period, as it formed a stable foundation of trust and mutual understanding. The study also demonstrated that open communication during assignments lays a solid foundation for trust and mutual understanding, thereby minimizing the risk of conflict and tension when couples return to live together (Knobloch et al., 2021). In this context, honesty is not solely interpreted as moral value but also as an adaptive communication strategy that serves to maintain relational cohesion and reduce the risk of conflict in stressful relationship conditions. Honest and open communication helps couples realistically understand each other's conditions, build mutual empathy, and reduce prejudices that have the potential to cause conflict. This finding aligns with the results of Markeliene et al. (2023), who suggested that the success of communication in military relationships depends not only on the frequency of conversations but also on the consistency of information openness and emotional engagement. Thus, honesty in communication is the primary foundation for creating and maintaining harmony in military families undergoing long-distance marriages.

4.2. LDM Adaptation

Adaptation in the context of long-distance marriage (LDM) became the initial foundation of military family resilience. The results of this study show that soldiers' wives face not only physical challenges in the form of distance separation but also emotional and functional challenges in maintaining their independent home life. The adaptation process does not occur instantly but instead unfolds through complex emotional stages: from surprise and anxiety to finally form a stable new rhythm of life.

Findings in the field indicate that most informants develop adaptive strategies, such as creating daily routines, strengthening their spirituality, and establishing social relationships, to overcome feelings of loneliness and worry about their partner. These strategies demonstrate an active coping mechanism that is based on an awareness of emotional roles and responsibilities. Routines such as video calls every night, writing a daily journal, or attending a recitation are not only a medium for diverting stress but also a way to maintain psychological stability within the family.

This adaptation process aligns with the concept of meaning-making in family resilience theory, where individuals construct new meanings for challenging situations they face (Walsh, 2006). In this case, separation due to official duties is interpreted not as a mere threat but as a consequence of life choices that must be lived with full awareness and understanding. This is reinforced by Long (2022), who emphasize that the success of military family adaptation is highly dependent on the ability to create new narratives and routines that support both emotional stability and psychological attachment.

In addition to personal adaptation, the social context also plays an important role. Informants who receive social support from their extended family or the military wife's community tend to exhibit more positive adaptation. This aligns with the findings. (Shang et al., 2022) These findings confirm that social support is positively correlated with women's emotional resilience in the face of multiple role pressures. Similarly, (Proescher et al., 2022) reported that protective factors strongly influence the quality of the psychological health of military spouses in the form of consistent social support. Thus, adaptation in LDM is not only a process of survival but also a transformative process that shapes the psychological and social resilience of soldiers' wives. The ability to navigate emotional stress, establish new routines, and create meaning from separation is key to maintaining household stability during a husband's tenure, as affirmed by (Zerach, 2024). Military family adaptation is determined by the ability to establish new routines and maintain emotional connections with one another.

4.3. Social and Institution Support

Social and institutional support play crucial roles in shaping the resilience of military families during long-distance marriage (LDM). The results of this study show that soldiers' wives who have access to social support, whether from extended

families, communities of fellow soldiers' wives, or organizations such as Persit, show better levels of emotional resilience than those who undergo LDM more individually. Supportive social interaction becomes a safe space to channel pressure, share experiences, and obtain emotional validation from people who are in similar situations.

"If there is a Persit activity, it feels like getting energy. We can tell stories and strengthen each other," (Informant 6)

Social relations such as this not only serve as an emotional buffer but also reinforce collective identity as part of the military community. Informants feel more appreciated, heard, and not alone in facing psychological pressure due to partner assignments. These findings corroborate the results of the present study Wootton et al. (2025), indicating that social support is positively correlated with women's emotional resilience in the face of multiple role pressures, especially in the context of long-distance relationships.

However, although horizontal support between individuals appears strong, some informants report that vertical support from military institutions remains uneven. Some units actively provide psychosocial training or debriefing to soldiers' families, whereas others have minimal formal intervention.

"In my place of duty, there used to be family debriefing, but after moving, there was no more. Therefore, it feels very different" (Informant 4).

Differences in policies and concerns between units create gaps in access to family development programs. In fact, the role of military institutions is crucial in providing a consistent and sustainable assistance system for soldiers' families, especially those undergoing LDM in the long term. This is in line with the view Skomorovsky et al. (2025) that organized structural support can increase the adaptive capacity of soldier families in the face of assignment uncertainty.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the resilience of military families is not only determined by individual strength and informal social networks but also highly dependent on the active role of institutions in forming an equitable and responsive support ecosystem. Institutional interventions that are preventive, consistent, and tailored to the actual needs of military families will strengthen the foundation of resilience in the face of repeated LDM pressures.

4.4. Emotional Stability as a Foundation for Resilience

The ability of soldiers' wives to maintain emotional stability during the long distance marriage (LDM) period reflects an essential form of psychological resilience in the context of military family life. The results of this study indicate that emotional stability does not emerge suddenly but instead develops through a gradual process involving spiritual practices, self-management, and an awareness of their strategic role in maintaining emotional balance in children and families. This stability is the primary foundation for maintaining domestic harmony amid long-term separation. According to Kirkham et al. (2025), effective emotional regulation is essential for managing stress and increasing individual resilience, especially in a stressful environment context such as military life. On the other hand, the ability to recognize, understand, and express emotions adaptively is also associated with increased psychological resilience and healthy interpersonal relationships (Kim et al., 2024).

This finding aligns with the results of Giff et al. (2020), who confirmed that the psychological resilience of soldier spouses is significantly influenced by their ability to manage emotional distress and maintain positive expectations during assignments. When military spouses can constructively navigate stress, emotional relationships within the family can remain stable even when physically separated (Cabrer-García et al., 2021). In this context, mechanisms such as journaling, praying with children, and diverting attention to positive activities, including social involvement and personal hobbies, are forms of adaptive coping strategies that arise from an awareness of emotional roles and responsibilities within the military family. These strategies serve not only as stress relievers but also as reinforcements of the value of togetherness and a sense of control in situations full of uncertainty.

4.5. Effectiveness of Dual Roles

The dual role played by soldiers' wives in the context of long-distance marriage (LDM) is not only functional but also has a deep symbolic meaning. (Chong et al., 2021a). Mereka tidak sekadar menggantikan peran ayah dalam mengatur rumah tangga dan mendampingi anak, tetapi juga menjaga kesinambungan nilai, kebiasaan, dan identitas keluarga dalam situasi ketidakhadiran pasangan. Informan dalam penelitian ini menunjukkan kapasitas adaptif yang tinggi, di mana mereka mampu menyelaraskan berbagai peran secara simultan: sebagai ibu pengasuh, manajer keuangan, pengambil keputusan, dan fasilitator pendidikan anak. Hal ini menunjukkan kemampuan multitasking dan fleksibilitas peran yang tinggi. Sejalan dengan itu, Sullivan et al. (2022) also reported that women in military families often experience significantly increased roles when their spouses are deployed. This success in undertaking those roles is strongly related to factors of psychological resilience and life management skills. In the context of this study, the effectiveness of dual roles is actually a source of strengthening self-identity and emotional independence for soldiers' wives. They not only keep the household running but also support the family's overall psychosocial stability.

In practice, carrying out the dual role of mother, caregiver, household manager, and decision maker is not easy for soldiers' wives, especially in conditions of long-term separation. They often transition from being dependent on their husbands to becoming the embodiment of independence and discovering their own strength. This shift is essential because they prioritize

their roles as mothers and caregivers during their husband's tenure (Chong et al., 2021b). Many informants revealed that they often experience physical exhaustion and emotional distress, especially when facing emergencies or when making crucial decisions without their husbands as discussion partners. Feelings of doubt, loneliness, and fear make mistakes part of the psychological dynamics they face. This is in line with the findings of (Frank et al., 2022), which suggest that increased role burden in military families is associated with decreased psychological well-being when not supported by adequate support. Similarly, Blankenship et al. (2024b) asserted that the challenges of reintegration and the dual role of women in military families are closely related to vulnerability to stress and uncertainty in decision-making. Similarly, (Manser & Ogilvie, 2022b) mentioned that military spouses often experience greater psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, and loneliness. These feelings are exacerbated by frequent movement, prolonged separation, and constant concern about their partner's safety. Thus, feelings of doubt, loneliness, and fear of making mistakes are inherent in the psychological dynamics of soldiers' wives, as they carry out dual roles.

Nevertheless, most informants show resilient adaptability. They form alternative support systems to balance emotional and practical burdens, ranging from involving extended families in childcare to building solidarity with fellow soldiers' wives through organisations such as Persit and utilizing digital social networks as spaces to share, ask questions, or seek emotional reinforcement. This social support has been shown to play a significant role in enhancing their resilience in the face of the dual role burden. These findings reinforce the results of a previous study Stead et al. (2025), suggesting that women's success in dual roles in the military environment is positively correlated with the level of social support they receive, both emotionally and practically. Similarly, according to Shin & Heo (2023), women who have good social support and interpersonal connections tend to show greater emotional resilience in the face of multiple role pressures. Therefore, dual roles not only demand individual readiness but also require support from a supportive social ecosystem.

These five aspects form an active and reflective military family resilience system, as affirmed in the theory of family resilience by Walsh (2006). This theory also states that resilience is formed through a combination of shared meaning, healthy communication patterns, and consistent emotional support. In this context, adaptation and dual roles reflect structural resilience, whereas emotional stability and social support reflect psychosocial resilience. Communication openness connects the relational and affective dimensions within the family. Thus, the relationships among adaptation, emotions, roles, communication, and support in the military family during LDM constitute an interdependent system. When one aspect is strengthened, another is also encouraged, creating resilience that not only keeps families afloat under pressure but also enables them to thrive emotionally, socially, and structurally.

5. Conclusions

This study reveals that family resilience in the context of long-distance marriage (LDM) in military families in Malang City is formed through dynamic interactions among five main aspects. Such resilience depends not only on the individual's ability to cope with physical isolation but also on relational qualities, social support, and adaptive capacity in stressful situations. First, honesty in military family communication serves as an emotional bridge that fosters closeness between partners, especially in long-distance relationships. Honesty, accompanied by openness and empathy, helps prevent misunderstandings, builds mutual trust, and maintains relational cohesion consistently and authentically. Second, adaptation to LDM conditions is a very decisive initial stage. Soldiers' wives, who can adjust to the rhythm of life, establish new routines, and manage anxiety, demonstrate a strong, resilient capacity to navigate the long-term separation phase.

Third, emotional stability is the psychological foundation that supports family functioning. Managing emotions through spiritual activities, journaling, and emotional engagement with children helps create inner peace while strengthening family bonding. Fourth, the effectiveness of the wife's dual role in fulfilling her functions as both a mother and the head of the household, while demonstrating high adaptive capacity. This role is not only practical but also symbolic in maintaining the continuity of family values and stability during the couple's absence. Fifth, social and institutional support has been proven to have a significant influence on the quality of family resilience. The existence of communities such as Persit, extended families, and coaching programs from military institutions is a source of emotional strengthening, validation of experiences, and shared learning spaces for soldiers' wives. Overall, the resilience of military families in LDM is not a passive ability to survive but rather the result of active, reflective, and strategic processes that are carried out consciously and sustainably. These five aspects are interconnected and form a family resilience system that enables them not only to survive in the face of limitations but also to develop and transform.

This research makes a theoretical contribution to expanding the understanding of military family resilience through a phenomenological lens, emphasizing the role of open communication and honesty as central elements in building emotional attachment. These findings can serve as a basis for military and government institutions to develop a partner communication training program based on empathy and honesty, b. family counseling services that are responsive to LDM dynamics, and c. strengthening the community of soldiers' wives as a social support ecosystem. Further research is suggested to examine the perspectives of husbands or children in the dynamics of LDM, providing a more holistic picture. A longitudinal approach should be applied to observe changes in resilience over time, and an open communication measurement instrument should be developed that is appropriate for military families in Indonesia.

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Ethical considerations

This study complied with social research ethics standards. All the participants provided written informed consent, confidentiality was guaranteed, and their identities were anonymized. Ethical approval was obtained under Decree No. B/27909/UN38.III.1/TU.00.02/2025.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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