The Concept of Family in Islamic Philosophy of Education: An Analysis of the Role of Mothers as First Educators

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Abstract.
This article aims to analyze the concept of family in Islamic educational philosophy, with a special emphasis on the role of the mother as the primary educator. In the Islamic view, the family is considered the smallest and most fundamental social unit for a child, which has an important role in shaping their character and morality. As a central figure in the family, the mother plays a crucial role in instilling religious, ethical, and social values from an early age.

This study adopts a literature study approach to examine various philosophical and theological concepts related to education in the context of the Islamic family. Interactions in the family environment play a major role in instilling basic education for children, where the mother acts as their first madrasah. The findings of the study indicate that the role of the mother is not only limited to the aspect of physical maintenance, but also includes in-depth spiritual and intellectual education. Parents are expected to have adequate knowledge and education, so that children get adequate learning opportunities, and the education provided by parents can have a positive impact on the development of children's learning achievements.

This article also raises the modern challenges faced by Muslim families in carrying out their educational functions, and offers practical solutions based on Islamic principles. This study provides theoretical contributions by enriching the study of Islamic educational philosophy through an emphasis on the strategic role of mothers in children's character education. Practically, this article presents solutions based on Islamic values to face the challenges of education in today's Muslim families, so that it can be a reference for parents, educators, and policy makers in building a generation of Muslims with noble character. It is hoped that this article can provide a deeper understanding of the importance of the role of mothers in forming a generation of Muslims with noble character and contributing positively to society.

Keywords: Philosophy of Islamic Education, Family, Family Education, Mother's Role, First Educator.

1. BACKGROUND

In the treasures of Islamic thought, education has a very important and fundamental position. Islam views education as a holistic process that is much more than just the transfer of knowledge. The goal is to form human *beings* who have faith, knowledge, and noble character. In this case, the family, as the smallest social unit, is recognized as the main foundation in the educational process. The family serves as the first and foremost environment in which religious, moral, and social values are instilled in children from an early age.

The philosophy of Islamic education provides a deep conceptual framework regarding the implementation of education. It covers various aspects, not only curriculum and methodology, but also emphasizes the important role of educators, the educational

environment, as well as the alignment of educational goals with Islamic values. In this context, the family holds a strategic position, especially in shaping the character of children in the early days of life. Among all family members, mothers have a very important role as the first and foremost educator for their children. The success of children's education is highly dependent on the role of mothers in instilling basic values before children enter the formal education environment.

This article aims to analyze the concept of the family in Islamic educational philosophy, with a special focus on the role of mothers as early educators. Through this study, it is hoped that a more comprehensive understanding of the importance of the role of the family, especially the role of mothers in forming a quality and noble young generation can be obtained. Thus, education in Islam does not only focus on intellectual development, but also on character and spiritual development based on divine values.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, the approach used is qualitative by applying the library research method. The aim is to analyze the concept of the family as well as the role of the mother in the perspective of Islamic educational philosophy. Data was collected from two main sources, namely primary sources that include the Qur'an, the Hadith of the Prophet, as well as the classical works of Muslim thinkers. In addition, data are also taken from secondary sources consisting of contemporary literature, scientific journals, and related research results.

Data analysis is carried out with three main approaches: first, a hermeneutic approach that aims to interpret religious texts by paying attention to their historical and social context; second, a critical approach to examining the thought of Muslim philosophers; and third, a comparative approach to compare various views on family education in Islam. To ensure the validity of the data, the researcher used source triangulation techniques and conducted an in-depth review of the relevant primary literature.

This research process is carried out systematically which includes the stages of data collection, analysis, and drawing conclusions. It is hoped that the results of this research can contribute to in-depth thinking about the strategic role of mothers as the first educators in shaping a generation of Muslims with noble character, in accordance with the perspective of Islamic educational philosophy.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Family in the Philosophy of Islamic Education

The family plays a central role in the Islamic Philosophy of Education as the first institution that shapes basic human values. The family is not just a biological institution, but a holistic educational space that integrates spiritual, emotional, and intellectual aspects (Abdullah, 2021). This concept emphasizes that family education must be based on *ta'dīb* (cultivation of adab), where parents play the role of *murabbi* (educators) who exemplify the balance between the knowledge of the world and the hereafter (Tafsir, 2019). The family is the "first school" that shapes the *nature of* children, so the failure of education at this level will have a systemic impact on society (Nata, 2018).

In the modern era, the challenges of Muslim families are increasingly complex. The sakinah family must be built on *the basis of maqāṣid syarī'ah*, including the protection of

religion, intellect, and heredity (Fadli & Husni, 2023). Parents must now master technological literacy while maintaining Islamic scientific authority so that it can be a filter for secular-liberal values (Hidayat, 2021). This view is strengthened by the (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia 2022) which calls for the importance of the family as a bastion of faith and sharia in facing the current of globalization. Thus, the Islamic Philosophy of Education places the family as the main foundation in forming a civilization based on divine values.

The Role of Mothers as First Educators

Mothers play a crucial role as the first educator for children, especially at an early age, where the interaction between mother and child is the main foundation in the development of children's character and cognitive abilities (Nurhayati, 2018). Recent research (Dewi & Fajriah, 2023) shows that emotional attachment between mothers and children aged 1-3 years significantly affects children's language development and emotional regulation. In the digital era, the challenges of children's education are increasingly complex, so the role of mothers is increasingly vital in filtering the negative influence of technology while instilling positive values such as honesty and responsibility (Sari & Utami, 2020). A recent study found that millennial mothers develop a "digital parenting" strategy by utilizing parental control applications and active mentoring when children use gadgets (Saputra, 2024). In the context of religious education, mothers function as the first madrasah, where exemplary in worship and noble morals are the most effective learning for children (Hidayat, 2019). Research (Kasim, 2022) at family pesantren revealed that mothers who actively teach Qur'anic verses since pregnancy have an impact on children's memorization abilities at the age of 4-6 years.

In addition, cognitive stimulation through educational activities such as reading books and playing puzzles is highly dependent on the active role of mothers to improve children's critical thinking skills (Wulandari, 2021). Empirical data shows that children who are routinely read stories by their mothers at least 3 times a week have 40% higher literacy skills than those who do not (Rahmawati et al., 2018). Even in single-parent families, despite facing double burdens, mothers are still the main educators who shape children's independence and resilience (Pratiwi, 2022). The latest observation (Lestari, 2024) on the widow community in East Java found an adaptation of parenting based on local wisdom through children's toys and traditional fairy tales. Thus, both in moral, religious, cognitive, and social aspects, mothers have a fundamental role in ensuring that children grow up with positive values and adequate abilities in the midst of changing times.

Implementation of the Role of Mothers in the Family

The role of mothers in the Indonesian family is complex and dynamic, encompassing the domestic, educational, economic, social, and cultural realms. As primary *caregivers*, mothers play a central role in childcare, starting from fulfilling basic needs to forming character and moral values (Puspitawati, 2014). Research (Nurhayati, 2015) shows that maternal involvement in early childhood education, especially in instilling religious, ethical, and social skills values, has a significant impact on children's cognitive and emotional development.

On the other hand, mothers also function as *household managers* who are responsible for managing family finances, nutrition, and health, even in the midst of increasing women's participation in the labor market (KPPPA, 2016). Data (Central Statistics Agency, 2020) reveals that 82% of mothers in Indonesia remain the main decision-makers in household spending and children's education, even though they also contribute financially. This phenomenon *of double burden* is increasingly evident in urban families, where mothers are required to balance traditional roles in the domestic realm with formal work demands (Sari, 2017). The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated this condition, with 67% of mothers reporting increased stress due to dual responsibilities, including accompanying their children's online learning while taking care of homework (UNICEF Indonesia, 2022).

In addition, mothers also play a role as *cultural transmitters*, especially in societies that

are thick with traditional values such as Javanese, where mothers are in charge of preserving the customs of manners, mutual cooperation, and respect for parents through daily practices (Fitriani, 2023). In the digital era, the role of mothers is increasingly developing into *digital gatekeepers* who are in charge of filtering information and ensuring the healthy use of technology for children (Hidayat, 2019). The latest study also highlights the role of mothers in family resilience during economic crises, where financial management strategies carried out by mothers such as *side businesses* or creative savings are the main buffers for household stability (Wulandari, 2021).

However, behind this multidimensional role, challenges such as gender gaps in the division of parenting duties, social pressures, and lack of policy support are still obstacles for many mothers in Indonesia (Rahayu, 2018).

Analysis of the Role of Mothers in the Formation of Children's Character

The formation of a child's character is a complex process and involves many factors, in which the role of the mother is very central and strategic. In Indonesian families, mothers not only play the role of the main caregiver, but also as the first educator who forms the foundation of the child's personality. Various recent studies in Indonesia (2014-2024) consistently show that the contribution of mothers in the formation of children's character is multidimensional. This includes aspects such as parenting, exemplary, mentoring, and the transmission of cultural and religious values.

The parenting style applied by mothers has been shown to have a significant correlation with the formation of positive character in children. Democratic parenting characterized by two-way communication, responsible freedom, and consistent application of discipline contributes to the development of independent, creative, and responsible character in elementary school-age children (Nurmalitasari, 2019). These findings (Wahyudi, 2020) show that children who are raised with a democratic pattern tend to have better problem-solving and social adaptation skills compared to children who are raised in an authoritarian or permissive manner. However, the effectiveness of this democratic parenting style is highly dependent on the consistency and example provided by mothers in daily life (Sari, 2021).

The example of mothers appears as a crucial factor in the process of internalizing character values in children. In a three-year longitudinal study, it was found that children tended to imitate 80% of the behaviors and values shown by their mothers in daily interactions (Hidayati & Fajriyah, 2021). This is especially evident in the formation of honest, disciplined, and empathetic character. This interesting research reveals that mother's role model is not only verbal but more reflected in real actions, such as how mothers face problems, interact with neighbors, or fulfill small promises to children (Kurniawan, 2022). These findings are in line with cognitive social theory that emphasizes the importance of the role of modeling in the social learning process.

In the context of Indonesian culture that is thick with religious values, the role of mothers in the transmission of religious values plays a vital role. It is stated that comprehensive research in five provinces in Indonesia shows that mothers are the main actors in instilling religious values through various activities such as prayer habits, reading the scriptures, and daily worship practices (Rahmawati et al., 2018). This same thing emphasizes that mother's assistance in religious activities not only forms religious character but also develops children's spiritual intelligence (Ulfah, 2023). Interestingly, this study shows that the intensity of religious assistance provided by mothers turns out to have a greater influence compared to the factors of formal religious education obtained in schools.

The development of digital technology has added a new dimension to the role of mothers as a shaper of children's character. The latest study found that millennial mothers in urban Indonesia are now also playing the role of "digital gatekeepers" who are responsible for shaping children's characters in interacting with the digital world (Sari & Novianti, 2020). This

research (Pratiwi, 2022) found that mothers who are actively involved in supervising and accompanying the use of gadgets have succeeded in instilling a critical and responsible character in social media. A statement that emphasizes the importance of maternal digital literacy as a determining factor for the success of character education in the digital era.

The dynamics of social and economic change also affect the role of mothers in the formation of children's characters. Longitudinal research states that 200 working mothers in Jakarta show that the quality of interaction (quality time) is more decisive than the quantity of time in shaping children's character (Fitriani, 2023). Mothers who are able to create meaningful moments even in a limited time can still build positive character in children. However, this study also reminds the importance of systemic support from extended families and social environments to maximize the role of working mothers in character education (Fitriani, 2021).

In the context of local culture, several studies have revealed the peculiarities of the role of mothers in various ethnicities in Indonesia. In ethnographic research on the parenting style of the Javanese people, a distinctive concept of "mothering" was found, where patience, perseverance, and tenderness are the main values transmitted from mother to child (Kurniawati, 2017). Meanwhile, the Minangkabau people reveal the dual role of mothers as "character educators" as well as "guardians of matrilineal values" in the family (Andini, 2021). These findings suggest that while there are similarities in the role of mothers as character builders, we should also pay attention to the cultural peculiarities that exist.

Several contemporary challenges in the role of mothers as character builders have also been revealed in various studies. Three main challenges were identified: (1) technological disruption that shifts the pattern of mother-child interaction, (2) economic pressures that reduce quality time, and (3) erosion of extended family values that were previously a support system (Prihatini, 2023). To address this, research suggests the need for a comprehensive parenting education program that is adaptive to changing times (Damayanti & Harahap, 2022).

Based on various research findings, it can be concluded that the role of mothers in shaping children's character in Indonesia is dynamic and multifaceted. Mothers not only play the role of the main caregiver, but also as moral educators, role models, cultural filters, and guides in the digital era. The effectiveness of this role is greatly influenced by internal factors, such as parenting and example, as well as external factors, such as social support and the challenges of the times. These latest findings provide a solid empirical foundation for the development of programs that strengthen the role of mothers in character education, so that they are more in line with the conditions of modern Indonesian society.

Challenges and Opportunities for Mothers as Educators in the Modern Era

In this modern era, the role of mothers as educators is faced with complex challenges and opportunities, especially along with the rapid development of digital technology. Mothers not only play the role of the main educator at home but must also be able to supervise the use of digital technology in children, where the biggest challenge is to reduce children's dependence on gadgets while using them for learning (Rahayu & Nurjanah, 2021). This is further complicated for working mothers, as they face a dilemma between career demands and children's educational responsibilities, even though technology-based work flexibility is a new opportunity (Sari & Utami, 2020).

Here (KPPPA RI, 2022) emphasizes that digital literacy for mothers is an urgent need so that they can effectively accompany their children in the midst of the rapid flow of information. However, many mothers in Indonesia still have difficulty filtering educational content that is in line with local religious and cultural values, indicating a digital competency gap (Wijayanti & Fauziah, 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic has also exacerbated the situation, where mothers are at the forefront of restoring children's motivation to learn post-Distance Learning (PJJ), but the dual burden between domestic affairs and learning assistance often causes emotional exhaustion (Puspitasari, 2023). On the other hand, millennial mothers tend to

be more adaptive to technology, although challenges arise when they have to balance screen time with their children's physical activities (Nurhidayah et al., 2020).

The values of politeness and religiosity taught by mothers often clash with the influence of social media, so a more intensive dialogical approach is needed (Lestari & Indrawati, 2021). Solutions are used by utilizing digital education platforms such as Ruang guru and Zenius, but the lack of supervision can risk exposing children to negative content (Susanto, 2018). Research data (Katadata, 2023) reveals that 65% of mothers in Indonesia feel not ready to become educators in the digital era, especially in rural areas with limited internet access, which shows digital inequality between urban and rural areas.

However, opportunities are also wide open, where digitally literate mothers tend to be more successful in teaching financial literacy to children through applications such as e-wallets and online investments. Thus, although challenges such as digital parenting, double burden, and digital literacy gap still haunt us, opportunities such as access to digital education platforms, hybrid work flexibility, and collaboration with schools through technology can be maximized if the government and the community provide support in the form of digital literacy training, family-friendly work policies, and equitable internet infrastructure (Dewi & Anggraeni, 2022).

4. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The family, especially the role of a mother, is the main foundation in the Islamic Philosophy of Education. The family environment is the first place where the child's character and values are formed. Mother serves as the first educator who instills morals, religious teaching, and cognitive skills through her example. In the midst of the development of the digital era, the challenges faced are increasingly complex, especially with the influence of technology and the double burden faced by working mothers. However, on the other hand, there are opportunities that open up through digital education platforms and flexibility in the world of work.

The success of mothers in carrying out their role as educators is highly dependent on comprehensive support. This includes strengthening digital literacy, family-friendly work policies, and close collaboration with educational institutions. With these steps, the Muslim family can continue to function as a fortress for Islamic values, while being able to respond wisely to the challenges of the times.

To optimize the role of mothers as the main educators, there needs to be a synergy between example in the family, appropriate government policy support, and responsible use of technology. This aims to give birth to a generation with noble character in the midst of the dynamics of the modern era.

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