



Raising Righteous Children: A Qualitative Inquiry into Prophetic Parenting Principles in Contemporary Muslim Families

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examines how contemporary Muslim families apply Prophetic parenting principles to raise righteous children in the face of modern challenges. Against the backdrop of global concerns about moral decline and the erosion of religious values among young people, this research examines how Islamic child rearing traditions adapt to contemporary contexts. The study addresses three key objectives: (1) identifying core Prophetic parenting principles practiced today, (2) analyzing challenges in digital era implementation, and (3) developing an adaptive framework for Muslim families. Using a phenomenological design, researchers conducted in depth interviews with 20 Muslim parents from diverse backgrounds, selected through purposive sampling. Data analysis employed thematic analysis with NVivo 12 software, ensuring rigorous coding and interpretation. Findings reveal three central practices: role modeling Prophetic character (85% of participants), narrative based moral education using Quranic stories (75%), and balanced disciplinary approaches emphasizing mercy (65%). Key challenges include managing digital influences (90%) and reconciling traditional methods with modern parenting needs. The study demonstrates how parents creatively reinterpret Sunnah principles while maintaining theological authenticity, offering practical strategies like technology integrated Islamic parenting tools. These findings contribute to Islamic family studies by bridging classical scholarship with contemporary child development research, while providing actionable insights for parents, educators, and policymakers. The research implications suggest developing community based parenting programs and revising Islamic education curricula to address modern challenges while preserving core values.

Keywords: Prophetic parenting, Islamic child rearing, qualitative research, Muslim families, contemporary parenting

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INTRODUCTION

Parenting in the modern era faces unprecedented challenges due to rapid globalization, technological advancements, and shifting societal values (Bornstein, 2019). The erosion of moral foundations and the increasing influence of secular ideologies have raised concerns among religious communities, particularly Muslim families striving to nurture righteous children amidst competing cultural forces (Al Hashmi, 2020). According to UNESCO (2021), 63% of parents worldwide worry about

their children's moral development, with Muslim majority countries expressing heightened anxiety over the decline of religious values in youth. This global issue underscores the need for parenting approaches that integrate timeless spiritual principles with contemporary realities.

Recent data highlights the struggle Muslim families face in balancing religious upbringing with modern pressures. A Pew Research Center (2022) study found that 78% of Muslim parents consider religious upbringing a top priority, yet only 42% feel confident in applying Islamic teachings effectively in daily parenting. Additionally, research from the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM, 2021) revealed that 56% of Muslim adolescents in Southeast Asia struggle to reconcile religious teachings with modern lifestyles, leading to identity conflicts. These statistics highlight a critical gap between parental aspirations and practical implementation, underscoring the need for a deeper exploration of effective faith based parenting models.

Despite the emphasis on Islamic parenting, many Muslim families lack structured guidance on applying Prophetic (Sunnah based) principles in modern contexts (Abdul Rahman et al., 2020). Traditional parenting models often focus on discipline without holistic spiritual nurturing, while contemporary approaches tend to neglect religious foundations (Omar, 2019). This dichotomy calls for an in depth examination of how Prophetic parenting principles derived from the Quran and Hadith can be adapted to address today's challenges while fostering moral and spiritual resilience in children.

Existing studies have explored Islamic parenting from various angles. Hussin (2018) analyzed Quranic verses on child rearing, emphasizing mercy and communication, while Mohd Noor (2021) investigated parental challenges in digital age parenting. However, few studies have systematically examined Prophetic parenting as a comprehensive framework (Al Krenawi, 2020). Scopus indexed research by Ismail (2019) highlighted the lack of empirical studies linking Sunnah-based parenting to child outcomes, indicating a significant gap in the literature.

While Islamic parenting literature is abundant, most studies focus on theoretical discussions rather than the practical, lived experiences of Muslim families (Badri, 2020). There is also limited qualitative research on how Prophetic principles are interpreted and applied in diverse cultural contexts (Hassan, 2021). This study addresses these gaps by exploring real world applications of Prophetic parenting in contemporary settings.

The moral and spiritual crises facing Muslim youth, such as rising delinquency, identity confusion, and declining religious adherence, demand urgent attention (Pew Research Center, 2023). Without evidence based Islamic parenting models, families risk adopting fragmented or ineffective approaches. This study provides timely insights to strengthen faith based parenting in an increasingly secular world.

Unlike previous works, this study employs a qualitative methodology to capture the nuanced experiences of parents in applying Prophetic principles. It also bridges classical Islamic scholarship with modern parenting science, offering a unique interdisciplinary perspective (Al Ghazali & Rahim, 2022).

This study aims to explore how contemporary Muslim families interpret and implement Prophetic parenting principles, identifying best practices and challenges. By analyzing parental narratives, it seeks to develop a grounded framework for nurturing righteous children.

The findings will enrich Islamic parenting literature, offering practical strategies for parents and educators. Additionally, the study contributes to cross cultural discussions on faith based child rearing, benefiting policymakers and religious leaders.

This research has implications for Islamic education, family counseling, and community programs. By validating the relevance of Prophetic parenting today, it empowers Muslim families to cultivate morally grounded, spiritually resilient children in a rapidly changing world.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a phenomenological design to explore the lived experiences of Muslim parents in applying Prophetic parenting principles. Qualitative methodology is chosen for its ability to capture rich, in depth insights into participants' perceptions, practices, and challenges (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The population consists of Muslim parents from diverse cultural backgrounds who actively engage in faith based child rearing. Purposive sampling is used to select 20 participants who meet the criteria of (1) self identifying as practicing Muslims, (2) intentionally applying Sunnah based parenting, and (3) having children aged 5–18 years. This sampling technique ensures that participants possess relevant experiential knowledge (Patton, 2015).

The 20 participants were selected from three major urban centers in Indonesia: Jakarta, Yogyakarta, and Surabaya. These cities represent a mix of modern and traditional Islamic communities, offering varied socioeconomic and cultural contexts relevant to the study's aims.

The primary research instrument is semi structured interviews, supplemented by document analysis of parenting journals or religious notes kept by participants. Interview questions are designed to explore themes such as the interpretation of Prophetic parenting, implementation strategies, and perceived outcomes. To ensure validity, triangulation is applied by cross referencing interview data with observations (where feasible) and peer debriefing among co researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Reliability is maintained through intercoder agreement in thematic analysis, where two researchers independently code transcripts and reconcile

discrepancies. Data collection adheres to ethical protocols, including obtaining informed consent and ensuring confidentiality. NVivo 12 software is used to systematically organize and code qualitative data.

Example interview questions included: (1) “How do you apply the Prophet’s example when disciplining your child?” (2) “Can you share a parenting moment when you struggled to follow a Prophetic principle?” These open ended prompts were used to evoke narrative depth and authentic reflections.

For data analysis, thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) is employed, involving (1) familiarization with transcripts, (2) initial coding, (3) theme development, and (4) interpretation of patterns. This method enables the identification of recurring principles, challenges, and adaptations in Prophetic parenting. The findings are contextualized within Islamic scholarship and contemporary parenting theories to derive practical and theoretical implications.

Table A. Demographic Profile of Participants

Demographic Aspect	Description
Education Level	9 Bachelor’s, 7 Master’s, 4 High School
Profession	Teachers (6), Entrepreneurs (4), Homemakers (5), Civil Servants (5)
Length of Marriage	Range: 7–25 years
Number of Children	1–4 children per family
Gender Distribution	12 mothers, 8 fathers

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study collected qualitative data from 20 Muslim parents through in depth interviews, revealing several key themes in contemporary Prophetic parenting practices. As shown in Table 1, the most prominent themes included modeling Prophetic character (85% of participants), teaching through Quranic and Hadith narratives (75%), balancing love and discipline (65%), and addressing challenges in the digital age (90%). These findings demonstrate how modern Muslim families are actively interpreting and applying traditional Islamic parenting principles in their daily lives.

Thematic analysis of interview transcripts revealed three core principles guiding Prophetic parenting approaches. First, the concept of *tarbiyah* through role modeling emerged strongly, with 85% of parents emphasizing the importance of embodying Islamic virtues in their behavior. This aligns with the well known Hadith from Sahih Bukhari (cited in Al-Ghazali, 2021) regarding children being born with a *fitrah* and shaped by their parents' example. Second, 75% of participants reported using Quranic stories and Prophetic narratives as primary tools for moral education, supporting Ismail's (2020) findings about the effectiveness of storytelling in Islamic child rearing.

Third, the majority of parents (65%) described discipline approaches that balanced firmness with mercy, consciously avoiding harsh punishment in favor of more compassionate methods.

These findings suggest that contemporary Prophetic parenting is fundamentally relational rather than punitive, emphasizing emotional connection and the gradual internalization of moral values. This perspective aligns with Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969), as applied in Islamic contexts by Badri (2019), who demonstrated how secure parent child bonds contribute to more substantial religious commitment among Muslim youth. The data particularly highlights how parents are creatively adapting traditional Islamic principles to modern challenges while maintaining core values.

Several specific findings merit particular attention. The nearly universal concern about digital influences (reported by 90% of parents) mirrors broader trends identified in Pew Research (2023) data about parental anxiety regarding technology's impact on religious upbringing. Additionally, the study revealed interesting gender based variations in parenting approaches, with mothers typically emphasizing modesty training for their daughters. At the same time, fathers focused more on leadership development, a pattern that reflects cultural variations noted by Al Krenawi (2021).

When compared with previous research, the study shows both consistencies and important developments. Like Hussin's (2018) findings, participants strongly valued gentle correction over harsh punishment, frequently citing Quranic guidance about kind admonition (20:44). However, the data challenges Omar's (2020) assertion that modern Muslim parents are neglecting Sunnah principles, instead showing active and thoughtful reinterpretation of Prophetic traditions for contemporary contexts such as using educational apps for Quran memorization while maintaining traditional teaching methods.

Participants proposed several practical solutions to current parenting challenges. About 70% expressed strong interest in community based parenting programs that specifically address applying Sunnah principles in the digital age, supporting Abdul Rahman's (2021) call for more institutional support for Muslim families. Many also suggested the need for better quality Islamic media alternatives for children, highlighting a gap that recent Scopus indexed research (Ismail et al., 2022) has also identified.

The study's findings create an important bridge between Islamic epistemology (Al Attas, 1980) and modern positive parenting theory (Sanders, 2012). The data show how Prophetic principles, such as the emphasis on playfulness with children (Sunan Abi Dawud 4949), align remarkably well with contemporary child development research, suggesting an inherent compatibility between traditional Islamic approaches and modern psychological insights.

This research challenges common stereotypes about religious parenting being rigid or inflexible. Instead, the data reveals how Muslim parents are thoughtfully contextualizing Sunnah principles, for instance, adapting traditional disciplinary methods by using modern techniques like "time outs" that still maintain Islamic values of mercy and guidance. This adaptive approach aligns with Al Hashmi's (2020) framework for contemporary Islamic parenting. However, the study also highlights a significant research gap regarding technology integrated parenting models within Islamic literature.

However, tensions emerged between ideal Sunnah based principles and real world demands. For instance, some parents struggled to uphold gentleness during economic stress or single parenting. These conflicts reflect broader societal challenges where Islamic values must interact with fast paced, consumer driven environments. This study encourages acknowledging these tensions as part of adaptive faith based parenting.

The practical implications of these findings are significant. For parents, the study suggests developing a "Prophetic Parenting Checklist" (Table 2) that synthesizes key principles into actionable steps. For educators, there appears to be a strong need for training Islamic school teachers in Sunnah based conflict resolution approaches, as advocated by Khan (2021). At the policy level, the findings support the development of parenting support services that combine religious guidance with psychological expertise, building on successful models implemented in Malaysia (IIUM, 2022).

Table 1. Themes in Prophetic Parenting Practices

Theme	Frequency (%)	Example Quotes
Modeling Prophetic Character	85%	<i>"I try to embody patience and honesty like the Prophet (PBUH) so my children imitate it."</i>
Teaching Through Stories (Quran/Hadith)	75%	<i>"We discuss Prophet Yusuf's patience when facing sibling rivalry."</i>
Balancing Love & Discipline	65%	<i>"The Prophet said, 'Whoever is not merciful will not be shown mercy,' so I avoid harsh punishment."</i>
Challenges in the Digital Age	90%	<i>"Social media makes it harder to teach modesty and focus on worship."</i>

(Note: Percentages reflect the proportion of participants who emphasized each theme.)

Table 2. Prophetic Parenting Checklist

Principle	Action
Mercy	Praise good behavior 3x more than criticism (Hadith based)
Consistency	Daily family Quran sessions (15 mins)

Table B. Contemporary Prophetic Parenting Framework

Principle	Contemporary Practice
Qudwah (Modeling)	Parents strive to embody values
Qasas (Storytelling)	Digital storytelling apps, bedtime Quran
Rahmah (Mercy)	Avoiding harsh punishment
Tadarruj (Gradualism)	Step by step behavior correction
'Adl (Justice)	Fair rules across siblings

CONCLUSION

This study sheds light on how contemporary Muslim families interpret and apply Prophetic parenting principles, illustrating that effective Islamic child rearing balances timeless spiritual values with adaptable strategies for addressing modern challenges. The findings reveal that successful Prophetic parenting emphasizes role modeling, narrative based moral education, and balanced discipline approaches that align with both Islamic tradition and contemporary child development theories. However, the research also highlights significant challenges, particularly in navigating digital influences, indicating a need for more nuanced, technology integrated Islamic parenting frameworks. While the study offers valuable insights into how Muslim parents preserve their religious identity while engaging with modernity, it primarily reflects the perspectives of urban, educated families, suggesting limitations in generalizability.

Prophetic parenting refers to child rearing principles derived from the teachings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), emphasizing a balance between discipline, mercy, spiritual education, and emotional nurturing. This framework can be summarized into five core principles: (1) Tarbiyah through role modeling (qudwah), (2) teaching through storytelling (qasas), (3) communication imbued with mercy (rahmah), (4) gradual moral development (tadarruj), and (5) maintaining justice (adl) in discipline. These principles are rooted in the Qur'an and Hadith, providing a timeless yet adaptable guide for Muslim parents across various contexts.

Future research should expand to include more diverse socioeconomic and cultural contexts, employ longitudinal designs to assess long term outcomes of Prophetic parenting, and investigate the development of digital tools that align with Islamic values. Additionally, mixed methods studies could quantitatively measure the impact of specific Prophetic parenting practices on child well being, while further qualitative exploration of father specific roles in Islamic parenting would address a notable gap in current literature. These directions would strengthen the empirical foundation for faith based parenting models while providing practical resources for Muslim families worldwide.

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