# The Role of Parents in Developing Early Childhood Independence Based on Islamic Values within the Family Environment

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#### Abstract

Early childhood independence is a fundamental aspect of personality and social development. In Muslim families, Islamic values play a central role in shaping children's character and fostering independence. This study aims to explore the role of parents in promoting early childhood independence through the application of Islamic values within the family environment. A qualitative case study approach was employed, utilizing observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation as data collection techniques. The findings reveal that parents play a significant role as role models, facilitators, and mentors in instilling Islamic values such as amanah (trustworthiness), shiddiq (truthfulness), istiqamah (consistency), and sabr (patience). These findings are supported by developmental theories from Erikson, Piaget, and Vygotsky, as well as Islamic educational perspectives from scholars such as Ibn Khaldun and Imam Al-Ghazali. This study highlights the importance of synergy between family-based education and Islamic values in holistically fostering independence in early childhood.

Keywords: independence, early childhood, Islamic values, parental role, family education

#### **Abstrak**

Kemandirian anak usia dini merupakan aspek fundamental dalam pembentukan kepribadian dan kompetensi sosial anak. Dalam konteks keluarga Muslim, nilai-nilai Islam memegang peran sentral dalam mendukung proses pembentukan karakter dan kemandirian tersebut. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi peran orangtua dalam menumbuhkan kemandirian anak usia dini melalui internalisasi nilai-nilai Islam dalam kehidupan keluarga sehari-hari. Pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus digunakan dalam penelitian ini, dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa orangtua memiliki peran krusial sebagai teladan, fasilitator, dan pembimbing dalam menanamkan nilai-nilai Islam, seperti amanah, shiddiq, istiqamah, dan sabr, dalam kehidupan anak. Temuan ini diperkuat oleh teori perkembangan psikososial Erikson, teori konstruktivisme Piaget dan Vygotsky, serta perspektif pendidikan Islam dari pemikiran Ibnu Khaldun dan Imam Al-Ghazali. Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya sinergi antara pendidikan keluarga dan nilai-nilai Islam dalam membentuk kemandirian anak usia dini secara holistik.

Kata kunci: kemandirian, anak usia dini, nilai-nilai Islam, peran orangtua, pendidikan keluarga

#### INTRODUCTION

Independence is one of the fundamental aspects in early childhood development that greatly determines their readiness to face various challenges in life in the future (Dini, 2023). Children who grow up with independence tend to have self-confidence, initiative, and problem-solving skills (Anisa & Wulansari, 2023). This process does not happen suddenly, but is the result of continuous nurturing in the family environment as the first and primary educational unit.

In Muslim families, Islamic values play an important role in shaping children's character and independence from an early age. Ibn Khaldun emphasized that independence education not only includes physical skills, but also mental and spiritual dimensions that guide children towards independence in thinking, worship, and social interaction (Sirajudin et al., 2023). Islamic education emphasizes the formation of noble character and moral responsibility as part of efforts to build independence holistically.

However, in practice, the application of Islamic values in children's independence education often faces challenges. Parents' busy schedules, the dominance of digital media, and a lack of religious understanding are the main obstacles. Not all parents have the capacity or full awareness of the importance of building children's independence through Islamic values. As a result, many children grow up dependent, undisciplined, and unaccustomed to taking responsibility from an early age.

Albert Bandura's (1989) social learning theory asserts that children learn through observing the behavior of adults around them. In this context, parental behavior becomes the primary model in shaping children's attitudes and character. Consistent parental role modeling of honesty, discipline, and responsibility will make it easier for children to imitate and internalize these values. In addition, Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory shows that a secure emotional relationship between children and parents supports the gradual development of children's self-confidence and independence.

Parenting styles also have a significant impact on the process of developing independence. Baumrind (1991) classified parenting styles into four types: authoritarian, permissive, neglectful, and democratic. Democratic parenting has been proven to be the most effective in encouraging children's independence, as it combines emotional support and healthy

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supervision. In Muslim families, this parenting style can be aligned with the principles of shura (consultation), compassion, and Sharia-based education.

Albert Bandura (1989) through his social learning theory, emphasizes that children learn through observing the models around them. In the context of Muslim families, parents' behavior in performing religious duties, taking responsibility, and demonstrating discipline become models that children will imitate. Role modeling is the primary means of shaping independent character. According to John Bowlby (1969), a secure emotional attachment between children and parents creates a sense of security that allows children to explore and learn independently. Children who feel accepted and emotionally supported will have the confidence to act independently.

Ibn Khaldun believed that education should shape well-rounded individuals by balancing physical, intellectual, and spiritual aspects. Family education should begin with setting an example and instilling a habit of worship and noble character (Sirajudin et al., 2023). slamic values education is an instrument for shaping children's character and independence, rooted in spirituality and social responsibility.

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of the role of parents in shaping children's character based on Islamic values (Dewi, 2024; Fatmawati & Al Baqi, 2023; Hidayat et al., 2023). These studies show that parental involvement through exemplary behavior, communication, and Islamic parenting has a significant impact on the formation of children's personalities and responsibilities. However, most studies are still descriptive in nature and have not specifically linked Islamic values with practical strategies for building independence in early childhood in the family context.

According to Ibn Khaldun, ideal education does not only focus on intellectual development, but also includes the balanced formation of children's physical and spiritual aspects (Sirajudin et al., 2023). This approach emphasizes the importance of holistic guidance to shape individuals who are well-rounded and have good character. In the context of Muslim families, parents play a central role as the first and foremost educators. Through exemplary behavior, instilling positive habits, and consistent guidance, parents become the main agents in instilling Islamic values in their children's daily lives (Hidayat et al., 2023).

However, the implementation of this function is not without challenges. The busyness

of parents in the modern era often reduces the intensity of educational interaction with children. On the other hand, massive exposure to digital media without adequate supervision can shift family and religious values. In addition, many parents still have limited understanding of Islamic values-based education, making it difficult for them to apply it appropriately and consistently at home. These challenges become obstacles in the process of internalizing values and forming children's independence based on Islamic spirituality.

This study aims to explore how Islamic values can be effectively applied in building independence in early childhood within Muslim families. Through this understanding, it is hoped that parents and educators will gain insights and practical strategies in shaping children who are independent, responsible, and have strong character in accordance with Islamic teachings. In addition, the results of this study are expected to enrich the literature on Islamic value-based education models that are applicable and in line with the needs of contemporary Muslim families. Thus, families can function optimally as centers for shaping children's character and independence based on Islamic values.

Studies emphasizing Islamic values as a conceptual framework in the development of independence in early childhood are still relatively limited. Most studies tend to focus on the moral and spiritual aspects of children in general, without mapping out how values such as *amanah* (responsibility), *shiddiq* (honesty), *istiqamah* (discipline), and *sabr* (patience) can be concretely internalized in daily parenting practices. In fact, the practice of daily worship such as prayer and fasting, as well as instilling independent behaviors such as making beds or helping parents, are concrete means of instilling value-based independence.

The state of the art shows that although the concept of child independence has been extensively researched from the perspectives of developmental psychology and modern parenting, the integration of Islamic values and Muslim family-based parenting strategies remains an area that has not been studied in depth. Haryanto et al. (2024) highlight the effectiveness of democratic parenting in promoting child development, but have not explicitly linked it to Islamic values. Meanwhile, Agirija (2023) and M.Syamsuddin (2023) have explored the Qur'anic narrative on child education, but have not examined it in an applicable manner in building independence in modern times.

The novelty of this research lies in its in-depth exploration of how Islamic values are

practically implemented by parents in fostering independence in young children within Muslim families. This study not only describes the normative role of values, but also explores concrete strategies and experiences of parents in educating children to be physically, mentally, and spiritually independent. Using a qualitative case study approach, this study provides a contextual perspective that is relevant to the dynamics of Muslim family life in the modern era, which is fraught with the challenges of digital culture and globalization.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method, which aims to explore in depth how Islamic values are applied in building the independence of early childhood in Muslim families. A qualitative approach was chosen because it is able to describe social phenomena and the meanings contained in the interactions between parents and children in a contextual and holistic manner.

The research was conducted at Muslimat 83 Anisah Kindergarten, located in Pasuruan Regency, East Java. This location was chosen based on the characteristics of the institution, which integrates Islamic values into learning activities and family life. The research subjects consisted of 20 parents with children aged 3–6 years, who were actively involved in fostering their children's independence at home.

Data collection was conducted using several techniques, namely: participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted using an interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (dalam Sugiyono, 2013) which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/verification. To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, the researcher used the triangulation technique.

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

## A. The Role of Parents in Shaping the Independence of Early Childhood

The results of observations and in-depth interviews show that parents play a very important role in the process of shaping the independence of early childhood. This role is not only limited to physical and practical aspects, but also includes moral and spiritual dimensions. Parents are the first and foremost agents of education in a child's life. In the

context of early childhood education, the role of parents is crucial because this is the stage when children are forming the foundations of their personality, including their attitude toward independence. Independence in this context includes the ability of children to perform activities without excessive dependence, make decisions, and take responsibility for their actions in accordance with their stage of development.

According to Erikson (dalam Susanto, 2011), children aged 2–4 years are in the stage of autonomy versus shame and doubt, which is the phase where children begin to learn to control their behavior and take initiative on their own. If children are given trust and room for exploration by their parents, they will develop self-confidence and independence. Conversely, excessive control can cause children to feel ashamed and doubtful, which actually hinders the development of independence.

In the context of Muslim families, parental responsibilities include not only fulfilling the physical and emotional needs of children, but also instilling Islamic values that underpin character building. Therefore, the role of parents in shaping children's independence cannot be separated from an Islamic approach based on the Qur'an, Hadith, and the examples set by the prophets.

Based on the results of research at Muslimat 83 Anisah Kindergarten, the role of parents can be categorized into five main forms, namely:

## 1. As Moral and Spiritual Role Models

The first and foremost role of parents is to be uswah hasanah (good role models). Young children rely heavily on imitation in the learning process. Therefore, the behavior of parents becomes a direct reflection for children. If parents live their lives with discipline in worship, honesty in speech, and patience in facing problems, then children will imitate these values. This exemplary behavior is in line with the view of Imam Al-Ghazali, who emphasized that learning spiritual and moral values is more effective through habit and example, rather than just lectures or advice (Ariani & Ritonga, 2024a). For example, parents who regularly invite their children to pray, show enthusiasm for work, and act fairly within the family provide a direct example to their children of how to be responsible and independent individuals.

## 2. As Facilitators of Independent Activities

Parents also play a role as facilitators who create a conducive learning environment for children. They need to give children the opportunity to perform simple tasks appropriate for their age, such as dressing themselves, preparing eating utensils, tidying up toys, or helping with light housework. Piaget (in Ardiati, 2021) xplains that in the preoperational stage (2–7 years), children begin to develop symbolic thinking skills and learn through direct interaction with their environment. When children are given the space to try and complete tasks independently, their cognitive and motor skills will develop. Parents who are overly protective and always take over their children's tasks actually hinder the process of independent learning. Conversely, parents who guide patiently and give children the opportunity to learn from their mistakes help children grow into individuals who are able to face life's challenges.

#### 3. As a Motivator and Emotional Companion

The role of parents as motivators is very important in supporting children's emotional development and self-esteem. When children succeed in doing something independently, positive reinforcement such as praise, hugs, or recognition of their efforts will increase their self-confidence. Conversely, if children experience difficulties or failures, parental support in the form of empathy and encouragement to try again will foster resilience and perseverance. This is in line with Vygotsky's scaffolding approach, which is the gradual support from adults that helps children achieve independence (Ardiati, 2021). In this context, parents act as companions who are actively present in their children's learning process, both physically and emotionally.

#### 4. As Instillers of Islamic Values through Habituation

Parents are also value inculcators who shape their children's character through a continuous process of habituation. Islamic values such as *amanah* (responsibility), *shiddiq* (honesty), *sabr* (patience), and *istiqamah* (consistency) can be taught through daily activities, such as: assigning children to take care of their personal belongings (developing *amanah*); encouraging children to be honest when they make mistakes (instilling *shiddiq*); training children to complete tasks even if they are delayed (teaching *sabr*); encouraging children to pray and recite the Quran regularly (forming istiqamah)

(Nurwiyanti et al., 2024; Rahman, 2018; Wardana et al., 2025). These values are not only the foundation of personality, but also a reference for acting independently in accordance with Islamic teachings.

#### 5. As a Link between Family and Social Environments

In the digital and social media era, the challenges of fostering independence in children are becoming increasingly complex. Therefore, parents play a role as gatekeepers who filter outside influences and guide children in choosing positive activities and environments. Parents need to be actively involved in building two-way communication with their children and introducing them to ways of being responsible towards their social environment. Furthermore, Wahyuni & Putra (2020) explain that Islamic character education requires consistent collaboration between the home and the social environment. In this case, parents become mediators who ensure that Islamic values remain the main foundation in guiding children to become independent individuals.

The role of parents in shaping the independence of early childhood is not an instant process, but rather a continuous process of guidance that involves physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions. By being role models, facilitators, motivators, and instillers of values, parents can create a family environment that supports the development of children into independent individuals with Islamic character. In the context of Islamic education, fostering independence is part of the main mission of developing individuals who are pious, resilient, and responsible for themselves and their surroundings.

#### B. Implementation of Islamic Values in Early Childhood Independence Education

Independence education in the Islamic perspective is not only aimed at physical or social independence, but also encompasses spiritual, emotional, and moral dimensions. Islamic values are the main foundation in shaping children's characters so that they are able to live independently while remaining within the corridor of noble character. The implementation of these values in Muslim families is highly dependent on the consistency of parents in guiding, habituating, and setting an example. Based on the results of research at Muslimat 83 Anisah Kindergarten, the implementation of Islamic values in early

childhood independence education can be described in five main forms, namely:

## 1. The Value of *Amanah* (Responsibility)

The concept of *amanah* in Islam is a form of responsibility that not only concerns worldly duties, but also accountability to Allah SWT. In teaching children independence, trust can be instilled through age-appropriate tasks, such as tidying up toys, taking care of personal belongings, or helping parents with light household chores. This habit trains children to appreciate tasks, fulfill their obligations well, and understand that every action has consequences. Research by Dini (2023) confirms that children who are accustomed to taking responsibility from an early age show an increase in self-confidence and decision-making skills.

In the Qur'an, *amanah* is one of the characteristics of believers in Surah An-Nisa verse 58:

"Indeed, Allah commands you to convey the trust to those entitled to receive it, and (commands you) when you judge between people, to judge with justice. Indeed, Allah is the best teacher for you. Truly, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing." (QS. An-Nisa: 58)

This verse emphasizes the importance of trustworthiness as part of a Muslim's faith and morals. Trustworthiness does not only mean safeguarding entrusted property, but also includes moral and social responsibilities including fulfilling obligations, keeping promises, and maintaining the trust given by others. The implementation of this value of *amanah* can be done through a dialogical approach, which involves explaining the meaning of responsibility in simple terms to children and giving them full trust to complete small tasks.

# 2. The Value of Shiddiq (Honesty)

Honesty is a fundamental value in Islam and an important part of developing an independent character. Honest children will find it easier to develop self-confidence, because they are not accustomed to hiding their mistakes or relying on lies. The value of shiddiq can be instilled by: accustoming children to tell the truth, including when they make mistakes; setting a direct example through parental behavior (e.g., being honest in

transactions, not lying in front of children); providing a safe space for children to admit their mistakes without being judged (Fatmawati & Al Baqi, 2023).

The Prophet Muhammad SAW said: "Be honest, because honesty will lead to goodness, and goodness will lead to paradise." (HR. Bukhari & Muslim)

Honesty encourages children to take responsibility for their actions independently, without being told or forced to do so.

## 3. The Value of *Istigamah* (Consistency and Discipline)

Istiqamah means steadfastness in doing good deeds continuously. In the context of teaching children independence, this value is very important in fostering independent habits, such as waking up early, praying on time, tidying up toys, or studying without being told. Children need to be encouraged to engage in positive activities repeatedly in a pleasant atmosphere. In this case, habit formation is the key, such as: parents inviting children to pray in congregation consistently every day; arranging a daily schedule of activities with children; rewarding children when they show perseverance in activities. According to Imam Al-Ghazali (in Ariani & Ritonga, 2024b), istiqamah must be instilled from an early age because it will form a stable and strong personality structure in children. Consistency in worship and good habits become the foundation for deep spiritual independence.

## 4. The Value of *Sabr* (Patience and Self-Control)

Patience is the ability to restrain oneself, not rush, and remain calm in the face of difficulties. The value of *sabr* is very important in the process of teaching children to be independent, because this process is not always smooth. Children often fail, make mistakes, or feel frustrated when trying to do something on their own. Parents need to teach their children that failure is not the end, but part of the learning process. Ways to implement this include: guiding children to solve problems without immediately taking over; giving children enough time to try and repeat; calming children down when they feel disappointed and giving them emotional encouragement (Dewi, 2024).

In Surah Al-Baqarah verse 153, Allah says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

"O you who believe! Seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with

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those who are patient." (QS. Al-Baqarah: 153)

This verse emphasizes the importance of *sabr* as an inner strength in facing various challenges in life. In the context of early childhood education, the value of patience plays a major role in shaping resilience, which is the ability of children to bounce back from difficulties, control their emotions, and keep trying when faced with failure. The value of patience will foster resilience in children, which is one of the characteristics of an independent individual.

## 5. Implementation Methods in Daily Activities

The implementation of Islamic values in independence education does not have to be through formal activities. In fact, these values can be incorporated into children's daily activities in a natural and enjoyable way, such as: routine worship together: such as praying in congregation, reading prayers before bed, and reading the Qur'an together; Family responsibility activities: such as helping to cook, sweeping, or tidying up the room; Stories and examples: such as the story of Prophet Ismail, who showed obedience and courage in facing Allah's commands, or the story of Luqman, who educated his son with the values of monotheism, manners, and responsibility (see QS. Luqman: 13–19); Islamic educational games: to instill the values of honesty, cooperation, and leadership.

By making Islamic values part of daily life, children will find it easier to internalize these values completely and continuously. The implementation of Islamic values in early childhood education is the main foundation for shaping individuals who are spiritually, morally, and socially whole. Values such as trustworthiness, honesty, patience, and steadfastness provide direction and meaning in the learning process for children to become responsible, honest, disciplined, and resilient individuals. The success of this implementation is largely determined by the active involvement of parents in providing consistent role models, guidance, and habits within the family environment.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Independence is an important aspect in early childhood development, which includes not only physical and social abilities, but also spiritual and moral aspects. In the context of Muslim families, Islamic values play a central role in shaping children's independence through

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the process of habituation, role modeling, and meaningful daily interactions. This study shows that the role of parents is crucial in building independence in early childhood. Parents serve as moral and spiritual role models, facilitators of independent activities, emotional motivators, and instillers of fundamental Islamic values. Values such as *amanah* (responsibility), *shiddiq* (honesty), *istiqamah* (consistency), and *sabr* (patience) have been proven effective in fostering independence in children when applied consistently in daily life.

However, implementing Islamic values in shaping children's independence also faces various challenges, such as parents' limited time, lack of religious understanding, and the influence of the media and external environment. Therefore, strategies that need to be developed include increasing family Islamic literacy, habituating Islamic activities in the household, monitoring digital media, and strengthening cooperation between parents, schools, and the community. Overall, independence education based on Islamic values in the family can be an effective solution to shape a generation of early childhood who are not only physically and emotionally independent, but also have strong character, noble morals, and a solid spiritual foundation in facing the challenges of the times.

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