

The Role of the Family in Islamic Education

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Abstract

The family is the first and primary educational institution that significantly influences the development of children's morality, personality, and character. From an Islamic perspective, the family functions not only as a place of residence but also as the center of education, commonly referred to as *madrasah ula* (the first school). As *madrasah ula*, the family is responsible for instilling social values, moral conduct (*akhlaq*), faith (*aqidah*), and worship practices from an early age. This article aims to examine the role of the family in Islamic education and to explain the educational approaches implemented within the family environment. This study employs a library research method by reviewing various literature sources and scholarly journals related to Islamic family education. The findings indicate that the success of Islamic education within the family is highly influenced by the active involvement of parents through role modeling, religious practices, advice, supervision, and effective communication with their children. Furthermore, harmonious emotional relationships within the family play a crucial role in supporting children's spiritual, moral, and social development. Modern families face new challenges arising from technological advancements and globalization, which may affect children's behavior and character formation. Therefore, parents are required to play a more active role in monitoring and guiding their children's use of technology. Consequently, Islamic education within the family holds a vital role in nurturing a generation that is faithful, morally upright, and responsible, capable of preserving Islamic values while adapting to the demands of contemporary society.

Keywords: family; Islamic education; parents; children's character; family education.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic education constitutes an essential aspect of human life as it encompasses spiritual, moral, social, and intellectual development. Since the revelation of the first verses of the Qur'an (Qur'an, Surah Al 'Alaq: 1–5), Islam has emphasized the importance of reading, learning, and acquiring knowledge as fundamental elements in the development of human civilization. This indicates that education in Islam is not merely a formal activity but rather a lifelong obligation for every Muslim. Furthermore, Islamic education possesses a broad dimension that extends beyond the transmission of knowledge to include the formation of character, spirituality, and social responsibility within society. Islamic education is regarded as a means of producing generations capable of upholding Islamic values while maintaining intellectual, emotional, and religious balance (Merlianda et al., 2026). From the perspective of contemporary educational thought, Islamic education is also understood as a process of developing the complete human being (*insan kamil*), namely an individual who is not only intellectually competent but also possesses strong faith and noble character (*akhlaq*) (Anas & Mustofa, 2025).

In this context, the family serves as the primary educational institution for children. Even before entering formal schooling, children receive their earliest educational experiences within the family environment. According to Islamic educational principles, the family is the most appropriate setting for a child's growth and development. It also plays a crucial role in shaping children's morality, character, and personality (Sahrul, 2025). Consequently, Islamic education fundamentally begins at home, where parents actively instill values of faith, worship, and behavior consistent with Islamic teachings. This role is firmly grounded in Islamic teachings. In Surah At Tahrir verse 6, Allah SWT commands believers to protect themselves and their families from the Hellfire, implying the obligation of parents to educate their children. Furthermore, a hadith narrated in Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim states that every child is born in a state of fitrah, while parents play a decisive role in shaping the child's beliefs and personality. These teachings demonstrate the significance of the family in providing education aligned with Islamic values. Islamic education also views the family not merely as a place of residence but as a setting in which religious identity and values are instilled from an early age. Therefore, the quality of education received within the family is highly influential in determining children's future moral and spiritual development (Anas & Mustofa, 2025).

Moreover, family education involves understanding and applying social, moral, and spiritual norms in everyday life. It is not limited to providing theoretical religious knowledge but also includes direct educational experiences through habituation, role modeling, and daily interactions between parents and children. The family becomes the first environment in which children learn to distinguish between right and wrong (Athaya Hasna Salsabila, Tajudin Noor, 2022). The role of the family has become increasingly significant amid contemporary societal developments, particularly in the digital era, while simultaneously facing complex challenges. The rapid flow of information through social media and digital technology can significantly influence children's mindsets, attitudes, and behaviors. In such circumstances, the family functions as the primary safeguard for preserving Islamic values and internalizing ethical and moral norms in daily life. Children who lack strong family guidance are vulnerable to experiencing a crisis of values and losing direction when confronted with increasingly extensive environmental influences. This phenomenon demonstrates that the adoption of digital technology has a dual impact on children's education. While technology can facilitate learning, inadequate parental guidance and weak character education may undermine family supervision and social control (Merlianda et al., 2026).

As the first educational institution, the family plays a pivotal role in shaping children's personalities. In Islamic education, the family is often referred to as *madrasah ula* (the first school), as it is within this environment that children first learn religious principles, traditions, and teachings through direct interaction with their parents. Similar to educators, parents bear the responsibility of teaching moral values, worship practices, and faith. Family education remains fundamental and continuous even before children are introduced to formal educational institutions such as schools. In practice, family education occurs through various means, including role modeling, habituation, guidance, and emotional interaction between parents and children. Parental role modeling is particularly important because children tend to imitate the behaviors they observe in their parents on a daily basis. Therefore, the quality of family education largely depends on parents' awareness and understanding of their role as educators. As the first madrasah, the family plays a strategic role in preserving children's fitrah through moral habituation, exemplary conduct, and harmonious communication between parents and children. Consistent educational practices within the family establish a strong foundation for children's social and religious development (Lina Alfiah¹, M. Azhari Rasyid², 2026). This is consistent with

the view of Ulwan (2019), who argues that the family environment significantly influences the success of Islamic education, particularly in shaping personality and moral character.

Nevertheless, the role of the family in contemporary Islamic education faces increasingly complex challenges due to rapid societal transformation. Social change, technological advancement, and globalization have profoundly influenced parenting patterns and family interactions. Many parents increasingly delegate educational responsibilities to formal educational institutions, thereby reducing the family's function as the primary educator. Furthermore, uncontrolled use of digital devices and social media may negatively affect children's behavior and morality, resulting in declining ethical awareness, reduced social interaction, and increasing deviant behavior among adolescents. The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) has reported a rise in cases involving bullying and the misuse of technology among children and adolescents in recent years. This situation reflects inadequate supervision and character education within the family. Additionally, reports from Statistics Indonesia (BPS) indicate that digital technology has altered patterns of family interaction, consequently reducing the quality of communication between parents and children. These conditions reveal a discrepancy between the Islamic educational ideal that positions the family as the central pillar of education and the realities of contemporary society. Although families are expected to play a vital role in fostering Islamic values and character formation, various external factors have weakened this function. Therefore, the role of the family in Islamic education must be reinforced to address contemporary challenges and remain the primary foundation for nurturing morally upright generations (Isti Mahfuzhah¹, Ajat Rukajat², 2022).

Based on the foregoing discussion, it can be understood that the family occupies a highly strategic position in Islamic education, both as the initial foundation for children's personality development and as the primary safeguard against challenges arising throughout their developmental stages. However, this role has not yet been fully realized, thereby necessitating substantial efforts to restore the family's position as the center of Islamic education. Amid the continually evolving dynamics of modern life, the role of the family in Islamic education has become increasingly important. Strengthening the family's educational function is essential to preventing moral and social problems among children. Therefore, research on the role of the family in Islamic education is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding and serve as a foundation for developing effective approaches to family education.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach using a library research design. The qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to obtain an in depth understanding of the concepts, roles, and significance of the family in Islamic education based on theoretical perspectives and relevant research findings. Rather than utilizing numerical data, this method emphasizes the analysis of meanings, concepts, and values contained in various scholarly sources.

The data sources consisted of both primary and secondary materials. Primary data were derived from the Qur'an and Hadith related to family education, including Surah At Tahrim verse 6 and the hadith concerning the fitrah of children. Secondary data were obtained from scholarly books, national journals, and academic articles relevant to the research topic, including the works of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan on child education in Islam, as well as various studies discussing the role of the family in Islamic education.

Data collection was conducted through documentation studies by gathering, reading, and critically reviewing literature related to the research topic. The selected literature was evaluated based on its relevance, source credibility, and the currency of information to ensure the validity of the study.

The data were analyzed using content analysis techniques. This method involved identifying, classifying, and interpreting information obtained from various sources and systematically organizing it according to the focus of the discussion. The analysis was conducted by linking existing concepts and theoretical perspectives to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the role of the family in Islamic education.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Results

The findings of this study indicate that the family occupies a central position in Islamic education and serves as the primary institution responsible for shaping children's character, morality, and religious identity. The family is generally defined as a group of individuals connected through blood relations, marriage, or other social bonds who live and interact within a shared social environment (Aliyah et al., 2025). Before entering formal education, children acquire their initial understanding of values, norms, and behavioral patterns through family interactions. Previous studies have demonstrated that the family is the first institution that significantly influences children's character formation, moral development, and identity construction (Andi, n.d.).

From an Islamic perspective, the family functions as a religious, educational, and social institution responsible for introducing children to faith (*iman*), moral values (*akhlaq*), and acts of worship (*ibadah*) from an early age (Fitri, n.d.). Family education is regarded as an integral component of Islamic education because the family serves as the primary foundation for developing individuals with strong faith and noble character (Bain & Mubarakah, 2024).

The findings further reveal that the family performs several interconnected functions. These include biological functions related to the continuation of lineage, social functions that facilitate children's adaptation to societal norms, educational functions that introduce fundamental life values, and religious functions that foster adherence to Islamic teachings (Sarif, 2025). The successful implementation of these functions contributes directly to children's moral, spiritual, and social development.

The study also identifies that Islamic family education is implemented through four major educational dimensions. First, *aqidah* education focuses on instilling belief in Allah SWT and strengthening children's spiritual awareness (Anas & Mustofa, 2025). Second, worship education aims to familiarize children with religious practices such as prayer, Qur'anic recitation, and supplication (Bain & Mubarakah, 2024). Third, moral education (*akhlaq*) emphasizes the development of positive character traits, including honesty, discipline, responsibility, and respect for others (Sarif, 2025). Fourth, social education seeks to cultivate empathy, social awareness, tolerance, and the ability to interact constructively within society.

In addition, the findings indicate that parental involvement plays a decisive role in the effectiveness of Islamic education within the family. Educational methods commonly applied include exemplary conduct (*uswah hasanah*), habituation of religious practices, constructive advice, supervision, and emotional support. Parents who actively participate in their children's education contribute significantly to the development of positive character traits and religious commitment (Haderani, 2019).

Furthermore, the findings reveal that contemporary families face new challenges resulting from technological advancement and globalization. The widespread use of digital technology has influenced children's attitudes and behaviors, thereby increasing the need for parental supervision and guidance. Families are therefore required to adapt their educational practices while maintaining Islamic values and principles (Anam, 2024).

Discussion

The findings confirm that the family remains the most influential educational environment in the development of children's character and personality. Consistent with Islamic educational philosophy, the family functions as *madrasah ula*, the first and most fundamental institution in which children acquire religious, moral, and social values. This finding supports the argument of Anas and Mustofa (2025) that Islamic education aims not only to develop intellectual competence but also to nurture spiritually and morally responsible individuals.

The identification of *aqidah*, worship, moral, and social education as the primary dimensions of Islamic family education demonstrates the holistic nature of Islamic educational principles. Unlike many contemporary educational approaches that emphasize cognitive achievement, Islamic education seeks to achieve balanced development across spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and social domains. This perspective aligns with the concept of *insan kamil*, which emphasizes the formation of a complete and well rounded human being.

The results also highlight the importance of parental role modeling as the most effective educational method within the family. Children naturally imitate behaviors observed in their immediate environment; therefore, parental actions often have a greater influence than verbal instruction alone. This finding is consistent with Ulwan's educational philosophy, which emphasizes exemplary conduct as a fundamental strategy in Islamic child education. Through continuous exposure to positive behaviors, children internalize Islamic values and transform them into personal habits and character traits.

Another important finding concerns the role of emotional relationships within the family. The study indicates that educational success is strongly associated with the presence of affection, effective communication, and emotional closeness between parents and children. Such relationships create a supportive environment that facilitates the transmission of religious and moral values. Consequently, Islamic family education should not be understood solely as the transfer of religious knowledge but also as the cultivation of meaningful interpersonal relationships that strengthen children's emotional and spiritual well being.

The findings further suggest that technological advancement presents both opportunities and challenges for Islamic family education. While digital technology offers broader access to information and learning resources, it may also expose children to negative influences if not accompanied by adequate parental supervision. This situation reinforces the need for families to adopt adaptive educational strategies that integrate Islamic values with digital literacy. Parents are therefore required to act not only as educators but also as guides who help children navigate the complexities of the modern digital environment.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that the effectiveness of Islamic education within the family depends on the integration of religious instruction, parental involvement, emotional support, and adaptive responses to contemporary challenges. Strengthening the educational role of the family is therefore essential for developing generations who possess strong faith, noble character, social responsibility, and the ability to respond constructively to the demands of modern society while remaining committed to Islamic values.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the family plays a fundamental and indispensable role in Islamic education, as it represents the first environment in which children's character, personality, and moral and spiritual development are formed. From an Islamic perspective, the family functions not merely as a place of residence but also as the primary educational institution (*madrasah ula*) responsible for instilling the values of *aqidah*, *ibadah*, *akhlaq*, and social responsibility from an early age. The education provided within the family serves as the principal foundation for children's development, both in their social lives and in the practice of religious teachings.

The success of Islamic education within the family is strongly influenced by the active involvement of parents through exemplary conduct, habituation of religious practices, constructive advice, and the establishment of positive emotional relationships with their children. Parental role modeling constitutes one of the most effective educational methods, as children naturally tend to imitate the behaviors and attitudes they observe within their family environment. Furthermore, parental attention, affection, and effective communication are essential for creating a positive educational atmosphere that supports children's character development and overall well being.

In the context of rapid technological advancement and globalization, families are required to adapt to contemporary challenges while maintaining the fundamental values of Islamic teachings. Parents must play a more active role in guiding and supervising their children's use of technology to ensure the development of self control and resilience against negative external influences. Therefore, Islamic education within the family contributes not only to the development of intellectually competent individuals but also to the formation of generations who are faithful, morally upright, responsible, and capable of maintaining spiritual and social balance in their daily lives.

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