

The Role of the Family in Forming Children's Religious Identity: A Case Study of Urban Muslim Families in Pamekasan

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INFO ARTIKEL

Accepted : June 15, 2025

Revised : June 25, 2025

Approved : July 10, 2025

Published : July 16, 2025

Keywords:

Family, religious identity, children



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ABSTRAK

This study focuses on examining the role of urban Muslim families in shaping adolescents' religious identity. The research specifically explores: (1) religious parenting patterns, (2) the family atmosphere in fostering religious identity, (3) the religious values taught, (4) the methods of delivering religious teachings, and (5) challenges within the family environment. Employing a qualitative approach, data were collected through direct and participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted in three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings reveal that parents act as primary guides, encouraging and facilitating their children's engagement in religious activities such as attending mosque lectures and participating in religious education. By actively practicing communal worship and leading by example, parents instill a sense of unity and spiritual identity in their children. A nurturing family environment characterized by emotional closeness, open communication, and mutual support significantly contributes to the formation of children's religious identity. In such settings, religion is not merely a ritualistic obligation but serves as a profound source of peace and harmony. Overall, parental involvement through modeling, dialogue, and the integration of Islamic values into daily life plays a crucial role in the spiritual development of children.

INTRODUCTION

The family is the center of education in addition to other environments. The primary and first educator is the family, where the educators who are most responsible for the implementation of education for children are parents. Many Muslim parents do not realize that they must be responsible for maintaining their children's fitrah, namely ensuring that their children remain in Islam with kaffah, so that they devote their attention and efforts wholeheartedly to this matter. For this reason, this research aims to reveal the Islamic concept of maintaining human nature through Islamic education in the family (Mizani, 2022).

Education in the family is the basis for the further education of children, or it can also be said that the family is the foundation for the first and primary education. It is said so because all knowledge, intelligence, intellect, and interests of children are obtained first from parents (family) and other family members. Therefore, parents must

instill values that are indispensable for the development of their children's personalities so that children will grow up to be independent, resilient and have good personality traits, such as not getting angry quickly, not getting emotional easily, being able to adapt and so on (Saputra, 2021).

Education in the family with an Islamic perspective is education based on Islamic religious guidance applied in the family, which is intended to form children to become human beings who believe and have faith in God Almighty, as well as noble character which includes ethics, morals, character, spirituality or understanding and experience of religious values in everyday life. It is the great responsibility of parents to educate children to become pious individuals.

Parents have the responsibility to provide religious education from an early age so that children can grow and develop in accordance with the religious demands of the family. In this case, parents must set a good example, train children to worship, and provide an understanding of religious values. Parents have an important role in shaping children's religious identity because the family is the first environment where children learn about religion. Parents must provide appropriate and correct religious teaching and provide good examples so that children can internalize religious values properly (Taubah, 2015).

The importance of the role of parents in the formation of children's religious identity cannot be underestimated. In the context of Muslim families, parents serve as the first and primary educators for their children, influencing the way children understand and internalize religious values. Key factors that influence how parents in Muslim families socialize their children to internalize Islamic values include religious teachings from the Qur'an and Hadith, cultural norms, community support, and an emphasis on maintaining emotional bonds and shared family identity.

Pamekasan, a city on Madura Island, Indonesia, offers a fascinating context for this study, given its socio-economic diversity and urbanization dynamics. Although known for its strong Islamic culture, Pamekasan is also undergoing significant social change due to the influence of modernization and urbanization. This condition creates its challenges for Muslim families in maintaining and transmitting religious values to their children. This study aims to explore how Muslim families in Pamekasan adapt to these challenges and what strategies they use to ensure that their children's religious identity is firmly established.

Previous research has shown the importance of the family's role in the formation of children's religious identity. However, there is still a gap in the literature that specifically examines the mechanisms and strategies used by Muslim families in urban environments such as Pamekasan. Existing research focuses more on the Western context or Muslim families in rural areas, thus paying less attention to the dynamics that occur in urban areas with all their complexities. In addition, existing research has also not explored how Muslim families in urban areas face the challenges of modernization and urbanization and how this affects the process of forming their children's religious identity (Abubakar, 2023).

This research will fill the gap by exploring in depth how urban Muslim families in Pamekasan shape their children's religious identity amidst the challenges. The main focus of this research is to identify specific issues that families face in their efforts to maintain and instill religious values in a fast-changing urban environment, for example, how families manage their children's exposure to different values through social media

and social interactions, and what strategies they employ to maintain a balance between religious traditions and the demands of modern life.

By identifying and analyzing these specific issues, this research seeks to provide deeper insights into the internal dynamics of Muslim families in Pamekasan and how they adapt to contextual changes. This research will not only contribute to the academic literature on religious education and family but also provide a basis for the development of more effective policies and practices to support Muslim families in shaping their children's religious identity in urban environments.

The focus of this research is: 1) religious parenting patterns of urban Muslim families, 2. Family atmosphere created by urban Muslim families in shaping adolescents' religious identity, 3) Religious Values Taught, 4. Teaching Delivery Methods, and 4) Challenges in the Family Environment.

This research highlights the novelty aspect and the importance of the family's role in the formation of children's religious identity in urban Muslim families in Pamekasan. In the existing literature, the role of the family in the transmission of religious values has been recognized as a crucial factor in the formation of an individual's spiritual identity. However, this study offers a new perspective by examining the unique urban context, where the challenges of modernization and urbanization present new dynamics that affect the process. Muslim families in Pamekasan are not only dealing with rapid social change but also with the influence of digital media and broader cultural interactions, all of which can disrupt traditional practices and religious values.

The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive and contextual approach, using the case study method to dig deeper into the strategies and practices of Muslim families in Pamekasan in maintaining and transmitting religious identity to their children. This research also emphasizes the importance of understanding the specific challenges faced by families in a dynamic urban environment, as well as how they cope with external influences that may affect religious values.

The justification for this research is based on the urgent need to enrich the academic literature with more relevant and contextualized insights on the role of families in religious identity formation in urban settings. The findings of this study are expected to contribute significantly to the development of theory and practice in the fields of religious education and family studies. In addition, this study also aims to provide practical recommendations that policy makers and educational practitioners can use to support Muslim families in their efforts to maintain children's religious identity amidst the challenges of modernization and globalization. As such, this research is not only academically relevant but also has broad practical implications for improving the effectiveness of religious education programs at the local and national levels.

METHODOLOGY

This research is qualitative research, namely data not in the form of numbers, either interval, ordinal or discrete data that tries to describe reality as it is (the original reality). Data collection in this study uses 1) direct and participant observation; that is, the researcher observes directly and is involved with the object's activities to find out the phenomena relevant to the problem and research objectives, with systematic disclosure to test the hypothesis. The method of collecting data through in-depth interviews is a type of interview that is more based on natural searches that develop in

the field. The interview targets are parents (father and mother) and children involved in the formation of religious identity.

Another type of interview conducted in this research is the open-ended interview, a form of interview that asks respondents about the facts of an event in addition to their opinions about the event

Furthermore, researchers determine key informants, namely respondents, who provide much information for researchers. Key informants are very useful for obtaining information from researchers and can also provide information about other sources of information. Meanwhile, documentation is used to add evidence and research sources, which can serve to verify names and titles obtained in interviews, add specific details to support information and other sources and make inferences from these documents.

Data analysis in qualitative research is characterized by a process carried out in three stages, namely: (a) data reduction, (b) data display, and (c) conclusion-making and verification. Conclusions and verification, namely the activity of looking for patterns, models, similarities and so on from the data that has been collected so that more accurate conclusions can be drawn. Data that has been collected in the field is edited and grouped based on the category of answers so that the problem point is known to be then concluded and generalized and produce theory.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data Overview and Analytical Framework

This study involved 100 respondents, including parents and children from Muslim families living in the urban area of Pamekasan. Respondents were selected through purposive sampling techniques to ensure that they met the criteria relevant to the focus of the study, namely Muslim families who are active in religious practices. Data collected included in-depth interviews, questionnaires, and participant observations. In-depth interviews were conducted with 30 parents and 30 children to gain a deeper understanding of their views on the role of family in religious identity. Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data on family religious practices, children's level of religious knowledge, and family interactions related to religious values. Observations were conducted in everyday contexts, including religious activities carried out at home, such as prayer, religious studies, and celebrations of Islamic holidays. Description of Respondent Characteristics. In research on the role of family in the formation of children's religious identity, it is important to understand the profile of the families that are the subjects of the study.

This study involved 100 respondents, consisting of 30 parents and 30 children, and focused on Muslim families in Pamekasan. To provide a clearer picture, here are the demographic details of the families studied. The age range of parents involved in this study varied between 30 and 50 years. The majority of parent respondents were between 35 and 45 years old. This age indicates that parents are in a stable phase of life, both emotionally and financially, which allows them to focus more on education and the formation of children's religious identity. The level of education of parents varies, ranging from elementary school to college. Around 40% of parents have a bachelor's degree, while 30% have secondary education, and the rest are elementary school graduates.

This level of education has a significant impact on parents' understanding and knowledge of religious values, as well as their ability to teach religious concepts to their children. Parents' occupations also vary. Most parents work as civil servants, teachers,

and professionals in the private sector. Some work as traders or small businessmen. Stable employment provides an opportunity for parents to be more actively involved in religious activities, both at home and in the community, which in turn has an impact on the religious education of their children. The majority of respondents consist of nuclear families with two to three children. This composition shows that children can receive greater attention from parents in the process of religious learning, especially in the context of religious practices at home. The religious background of parents is an important factor in the formation of children's religious identity. In this study, several aspects related to parental religiosity and family religious experiences will be analyzed. Most of the parents involved in this study showed a high level of religiosity. They routinely carry out daily worship, such as praying five times a day, reading the Qur'an, and attending religious studies at the mosque. In this study, the focus will be on the pattern of religious parenting applied in the family, as well as how joint religious activities, religious education at home, and the role of each parent contribute to the process of forming children's religious identity.

1. Aspects of religious parenting patterns found in this study is joint religious activities. In many Muslim families in Pamekasan, these activities are considered an effective way to instill religious values in children. These activities include praying in congregation, reading the Qur'an, and attending recitations or lectures at the mosque. Religious parenting in Muslim families often focuses on strengthening spiritual values from an early age. In the context mentioned, joint religious activities - such as praying in congregation, reading the Qur'an, and attending recitations - are the main instruments used by families to instill religious understanding in their children.

In many cases, parents help children understand the meaning and interpretation of the verses being read. This activity not only serves as religious education but also builds emotional closeness between parents and children. The active involvement of children in reading the Qur'an also increases their self-confidence and self-esteem in their religious identity. One compelling aspect of the activity of reading the Qur'an together is its ability to build emotional closeness within the family. This activity also gives children a sense of connectedness to the broader religious tradition. They do not just feel like separate individuals but as part of a larger Muslim community, all of whom share the same teachings. This helps strengthen the sense of social and religious solidarity in children while giving them a solid foundation to face life's challenges. Always remind children to pray on time. By teaching children real examples of everyday life. For example, involving them in religious activities such as worship, reading the holy book, and praying together. You can also explain religious values through stories, discussions, and games that are relevant to their age. It is also important to provide consistent examples and be role models in daily religious practices.

2. Family atmosphere and environment in the formation of children's religious identity.

The family environment is one of the most important factors in the formation of children's religious identity. The family is not only a social unit but also the initial place where children first become acquainted with religious values, norms, and teachings. In this context, a positive family atmosphere and environment can support the development of children's religious identity. In contrast, a less supportive environment can cause confusion or even rejection of religious values. This narrative will explain

how various aspects of the family environment contribute to the formation of children's religious identity. Parents ethically influence their children's religious identity and values, emphasizing the importance of guidance, open dialogue, and respect for children's autonomy in exploring beliefs, which ultimately fosters a balanced understanding of religion in context. A positive family environment significantly influences children's religious identity by fostering adherence to religious teachings. A democratic parenting style, characterized by responsible freedom, along with parental examples, habituation, and warm communication, contributes to the formation of compelling religious character in children.

The family is the first place where children gain an introduction to religion. In the family, children learn about religion through examples, rituals, and direct teachings from parents or other family members. Therefore, the family plays a role as the primary foundation in the formation of a child's religious identity, both in cognitive, emotional, and social aspects. It is from this first experience that children begin to internalize the religious values that they see and feel in their daily lives. The family environment has a direct influence on how children understand and experience religion. Parents who are active and consistent in involving their children in religious activities, such as congregational prayer, reading the Qur'an, or attending religious studies, provide a precise model of the importance of religion in their lives. Conversely, families who pay less attention to religious education or even ignore religious teachings can make children feel distant or alienated from the religious values that should be part of their identity.

The family environment plays a very crucial role in the formation of a child's religious identity. As the first social unit, the family is the starting place for children to learn and internalize religious values. A positive atmosphere and parental support in religious activities will strengthen children's ties with religion and help them form a strong religious identity. On the other hand, families that are less supportive or inconsistent in religious teaching can lead to confusion or rejection of religious values. Therefore, the role of parents as the first educators is vital in ensuring that children have a strong religious foundation and can face it with confidence in this increasingly complex world. A harmonious and loving family atmosphere dramatically influences the formation of a child's religious identity. When children are raised in a positive environment where parents respect each other and communicate well, children tend to feel safe and comfortable. This sense of security allows them to be more open to exploring and understanding religious values. A positive atmosphere in the family provides excellent support for the development of children's religious identity. Families that have strong emotional ties, open communication, and mutual support create a safe space for children to explore religious values. In this atmosphere, religion is not only seen as an obligation or routine but also as a source of peace and balance in life. Parents play a critical role in shaping their children's religious identity and values by intentionally engaging in spiritual practices, encouraging discussion about beliefs, and integrating Islamic culture into everyday life, thereby helping children navigate diverse cultural influences and affirm their faith.

Parents who set good examples in practicing religion, such as patience, honesty, and caring for others, help children connect religious teachings with actual actions in everyday life. For example, when parents show tolerance towards religious differences, children will learn to develop the same attitude in themselves, which is important in forming an inclusive and understanding religious identity. Parents, as the first and

primary educators in the family, have a huge role in instilling religious values in their children. Parents who are active in teaching religious teachings, both through formal teaching (such as religious education at home) and informally (such as giving examples in everyday life), help children to understand and internalize actual religious values. Conversely, if the family environment is less supportive or inconsistent in implementing religious values, children can experience confusion or even rejection of religion. For example, when parents are not involved in religious activities, do not set a good example, or even ignore religious teachings, children may feel that religion is irrelevant or unimportant.

In some cases, children who do not receive clear religious guidance at home may feel lost in forming their religious identity. Good communication between family members is also essential. In an open family, children feel free to ask questions and discuss matters related to religion. Parents who are willing to listen to their children's questions and confusions tend to build a deeper understanding of religion. For example, if a child feels confused about a particular meaning in religious teaching, parents who are ready to explain patiently and lovingly will help the child to understand and accept the teaching better. The willingness of parents to listen encourages effective interpersonal communication, allowing children to express their religious questions and concerns. This openness enhances the transmission of religious messages, positively impacting children's religiosity and their overall involvement in religious practices and beliefs. Good communication within the family allows children to express questions or doubts they have about religion. When children feel free to ask questions without fear of being punished or ridiculed, they can more easily absorb and understand religious teachings.

Open communication also gives parents the opportunity to listen and understand their children's confusion or doubts, which often arise as they begin to explore more deeply the religious values they are learning about. Parents who are patient and open in listening to their children's questions will help them explain things that they still do not understand. For example, if a child is confused about the meaning of a verse in the Quran or a concept in religion, parents who are willing to take the time to explain in a way that is easy to understand will provide a better understanding to the child. This strengthens the process of internalizing religion in children and helps them connect religious teachings with their real lives. This non-stressful communication is important so that children do not feel that religion is a taboo topic to talk about or feel pressured to accept religious teachings unquestioningly. Instead, healthy discussions allow children to develop a more critical and mature understanding of religion, which in turn will strengthen their religious identity in the long run.

3. Parents teach religious values, how they convey them, and children's responses to these teachings.

One of the central values taught by parents is obedience to God. In the context of Muslim families, this is often represented through teachings about the obligation of prayer, fasting, and zakat. Parents usually explain the importance of carrying out these worships as a form of devotion to God. The value of honesty is another important aspect taught in families. Parents often emphasize the importance of being honest in all aspects of life, both in interacting with others and in carrying out worship. The values of compassion and empathy are also important parts of religious teachings. In Islam, compassion is not only directed towards fellow human beings but also towards other living creatures. Parents usually teach children about the importance of helping those in

need and showing concern for others. Obedience to God is one of the central values that is highly emphasized in Muslim families. This obedience is represented in the leading practices of worship, such as prayer, fasting, and zakat. In Muslim families, parents play a key role in teaching children about the importance of this worship, which is considered a form of devotion and direct connection with God. Muslim parents communicate religious values through love, warmth, and guidance, addressing emotional needs. Important factors influencing children's responses include the family environment, psychological security, and parental adherence to Islamic teachings and practices.

Parents teach the social value of zakat, which is the obligation to help others in need. They often set a direct example by giving zakat to people experiencing poverty or families in need. Parents can also teach children that zakat is not only a religious obligation but also a form of generosity and concern for others. Parents also often engage their children in discussions about situations where honesty is tested, such as taking a school exam or being tempted to lie in a difficult situation. Children's responses to these teachings can vary; however, if parents set a good example and do not hesitate to show the consequences of dishonesty, children are more likely to internalize these values in their own lives. Compassion and empathy are two core values that are highly emphasized in Islam, and parents often instill these values in their children from an early age. In Muslim families, these teachings are not only limited to relationships between humans but also to relationships with other living things. Parents often teach the value of compassion through everyday actions, such as helping someone in trouble or giving food to someone in need. They may also teach children to show empathy by listening to other people's problems and providing assistance according to their ability.

4. Methods of instilling religious identity in Muslim families: One effective way to teach religious values is through everyday experiences. Parents can use the situations that occur around them as lessons. For example, when there is a conflict with a neighbor, parents can teach the importance of resolving the problem in a good way and respecting each other. Open discussion is another method that is often used. Parents can create an atmosphere where children feel comfortable asking questions and discussing religious values. This is important to ensure that children not only receive the teachings but also understand their meaning. Parents serve as role models in behavior.

Children tend to imitate what they see, so if parents consistently demonstrate behavior that reflects religious values, children will be more likely to follow suit. Open discussion is another critical method in teaching children about religious values. Through discussion, parents give children the opportunity to ask questions, have opinions, and clarify things that they do not understand well. Open discussion helps children not only accept religious teachings but also understand their meaning in depth. In families that support open discussion, children feel free to ask questions without fear of being ridiculed or punished. Parents who are patient in answering children's questions and providing explanations based on religious teachings will help children develop a more mature and comprehensive understanding of religion. For example, suppose children ask about why they have to fast. In that case, parents can explain using easy-to-understand language, such as the importance of controlling lust, sharing with the less fortunate, and getting closer to God. Open discussion about religious values and ethics plays an important role in shaping children's beliefs in exploring and adopting religious teachings. Engaging children in dialogues about diverse worldviews fosters an inclusive

environment that encourages critical thinking and personal reflection.

This approach not only enhances their understanding of different beliefs but also empowers them to navigate their spiritual journey. Open discussions about religious and ethical values foster children's self-confidence by creating a safe space for identity, encouraging them to express their spiritual or religious worldviews, and promoting values of openness and equality, ultimately enhancing their sense of belonging and agency. Open discussions about religious and ethical values encourage children to engage critically with diverse perspectives, fostering confidence in exploring and adopting religious teachings. These dialogues promote understanding, reduce exclusion, and support spiritual development by enabling children to navigate complex issues thoughtfully.

CONCLUSION

Parents in this context act as facilitators who invite and guide their children to engage in broader religious activities, such as religious studies or lectures at the mosque. Through this role, parents not only facilitate direct religious understanding at home but also introduce children to the larger Muslim community. They teach children to participate in religious activities together with other Muslims, which is important in building a strong sense of togetherness and religious identity. Parents also set an example by attending religious studies or lectures so that children see these virtues and are motivated to follow in their parent's footsteps. A positive atmosphere in the family provides excellent support for the development of children's religious identity. Families that have strong emotional ties, open communication, and mutual support create a safe space for children to explore religious values. In this atmosphere, religion is not only seen as an obligation or routine but also as a source of peace and balance in life. Parents play an important role in shaping their children's religious identity and values by intentionally engaging in spiritual practices, encouraging discussions about beliefs, and integrating Islamic culture into everyday life.

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