Internalization of Islamic Values in Children within Families in the Digital Era

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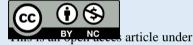Department of Islamic Early Childhood Education, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Madura, Pamekasan, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The digitalization of a wide range of information poses a significant challenge in the current era, especially concerning the integration of Islamic values in early childhood education. This research delves into the Islamic education of young children within familial settings during the digital age, utilizing a "library research" methodology. Generally, digital technology offers a dual-edged nature. The advantages of such technology lie in its capacity to simplify access to information and assist educators in creating digital-based educational content. However, on the downside, it also provides children with easier access to potentially harmful content that may be inappropriate for their age. Islamic education for young children in a family context during this digital epoch must address the evolving dynamics of the times while implementing positive and transformative approaches. To achieve this, several initiatives can be adopted within the family: developing an understanding of child growth stages, being informed of the educational content being conveyed, particularly regarding Islamic teachings, mastering the ability to regulate the digital platforms frequently accessed by children, and leveraging digital media as a valuable tool for education within the home setting. This research contributes an understanding and methodology for preserving Islamic values within the family sphere while navigating the complexities of the digital age. It highlights the importance of balancing technological advancements with foundational religious teachings in early childhood instruction.

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Introduction

In the age of rapid technological advancement, we find ourselves in the Digital Era. This period is often labeled as the "disruptive era", marked by significant global shifts driven by innovations capable of overhauling systems and introducing novel methodologies (Indriani & Yemmardotillah, 2021). Such technological progression compels the educational sector to reconstruct conventional systems to align with contemporary demands. Within the educational realm, the internet stands out as the predominant digital system, frequently utilized for sourcing any education-related information (Mahfud et al., 2021). It offers a platform for individuals to access, communicate, disseminate information, and conduct myriad online activities.

Today's youth are well-acquainted with the shifts brought about by the Digital Era, especially those concerning the internet. In this modern age, human lives appear inextricably intertwined with digital media. Data released by the Indonesian Internet Service Provider Association indicates a surge in internet usage. In 2016, the user base was 10.56 million, which escalated to 143.26 million in 2017, signifying that over 54.58% of the total Indonesian population was online (Kominfo, 2018). In essence, more than half of Indonesia's populace is now internet-connected.

However, the digital age brings its array of concerns. Online platforms can sometimes be a hotbed for issues such as child trafficking, hate speech, dissemination of false news, sexual exploitation, online prostitution, among others (Hijriyani & Astuti, 2020). The increasing immersion of children in digital media renders them susceptible to its influences. It was asserted by Swara Cita magazine that, as of 2016, Indonesian children spent an average of 7.5 hours daily in front of gadgets, computers, and televisions (Tim Redaksi Majalah Swara Cita Anak Indonesia, 2016). While the internet has the potential to be a conduit for success, its misuse might also lead to detrimental consequences (Dhahir, 2018).

Given the aforementioned challenges and their implications for child education, it is imperative for parents to exercise caution. While the Digital Era brings significant benefits, its adverse impacts cannot be understated (Astuti et al., 2022). As the nation's future generation, children necessitate meticulous attention from their parents to equip them for future challenges. Therefore, educators, especially parents as primary mentors, should be more attuned to their children's circumstances. Beyond its utility for information retrieval, the digital realm, as evidenced by platforms like YouTube, boasts impressive achievements - over 12 years, it saw the upload of no fewer than 300 million videos every minute, garnering an audience of 2 billion monthly (Taubah, 2016).

One solution for parents lies in introducing their children to religious values from an early age through quality education. Religion is often regarded as a guide for humanity; the vast majority of life's challenges can be addressed through its teachings. In raising children in this digital age, instilling religious values is paramount and deserves parents' attention. Crafting a child's character isn't instantaneous but requires time and apt strategies by the parents. Alongside instilling religious values, parents must ensure they are not left behind in this digital transition and should, at the very least, monitor their children's digital activities. This paper aims to discuss the concept of child education in the digital era family setting, emphasizing the importance of imparting religious values to children.

Methods

This study employs a library research methodology, also known as literature-based research. Data collection techniques utilized involve an elaborate examination of various literatures such as journals, books, proceedings, e-books, and other related works concerning family-based child education. This study places specific emphasis on the challenge of internalizing Islamic values in early childhood within the digital era.

Digital media utilization in the current age is intricate, varying in forms, types, and benefits. For the purposes of this research, the scope of media is limited to gadgets and television only, as these are the most readily accessible mediums for both children and parents at home. As for the data analysis technique, it incorporates content analysis of journals and other accessible online documents (Sari & Asmendri, 2020). This analysis engages in the identification, categorization, and interpretation of information pertinent to the research focus (Zed, 2014). The findings will be contextualized within the modern setting and compared to previous studies. The conceptual framework of this research encompasses concepts related to early childhood education, Islamic values, the use of digital media, and strategies for internalizing these values via digital means. These concepts will facilitate a comprehensive understanding and data analysis.

Result and Discussion

The Urgency of Islamic Education

Fundamentally, Islamic education remains consistent despite the rapid advancements in technology today. Its primary aim has always been to cultivate individuals who are devoutly faithful to Allah SWT. However, it is undeniable that with the increasing immersion in technology, many worldwide are becoming more engrossed in gadget-related activities and are inadvertently neglecting their spiritual duties. The rise of technological platforms, such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, online games, and other media outlets, entices users and often distracts them from their spiritual connection to the Divine.

The discourse on Islamic education has grown, especially as Western culture becomes more prevalent globally. Islamic education can be understood as an entity with multiple paradigms designed to make substantial contributions in achieving its envisioned mission through the collaboration of Islam and education (Azra, 1999). Hence, for cultural values to align with the progression of time, Islamic education must consistently provide a positive, reflective, and transformative paradigm.

Islamic education serves as a medium for the transformation of Islamic values, taking the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet as its guiding principles. Generally, Islamic education possesses a religious character and an ethical framework in its objectives and targets. According to Al-Ghazali, the ultimate goals of education are attaining human perfection, which culminates in drawing nearer to Allah, and achieving human excellence associated with both worldly and afterlife happiness (Nata, 2000). This perspective illustrates a deeply religious tone, yet it does not neglect worldly affairs.

The significance of Islamic education in daily life is paramount. Here are some reasons why: Enhanced Understanding of Islam: Islamic education aids individuals in recognizing and comprehending Islam more profoundly. Through it, one can learn about religious teachings, moral values, ethical principles, and Islamic laws, strengthening faith and building a closer relationship with Allah.

Moral development: Islamic education aims to shape individuals with good character. The importance of ethics and morality in daily life is strongly emphasized, and through teachings about noble qualities and commendable deeds, it molds individuals who are responsible, honest, just, patient, and morally upright. Promoting Harmonious Relations: Islam teaches values like compassion, justice, cooperation, and tolerance. By understanding and implementing these values, individuals can forge harmonious relationships with others, irrespective of ethnic, religious, racial, or cultural differences. Deep Spiritual Knowledge: It assists individuals in acquiring profound spiritual knowledge by exploring life's meaning and its relationship with God, enabling a person to cultivate a robust spiritual relationship and enhance their spiritual life. Equipping for the Contemporary World: In this era of globalization and technological advancement, Muslims need to comprehend their religious values well to remain steadfast in their faith amidst contemporary challenges. Quality Islamic education equips individuals with a robust understanding of their religion, allowing them to uphold the integrity of their faith against various social and cultural changes.

In summary, Islamic education is crucial in strengthening identity and constructing the moral and spiritual foundation of the Muslim community. By understanding and implementing Islamic teachings in daily life, individuals can achieve a balance between worldly and afterlife pursuits, making positive contributions to society.

The Digital Era and Its Impact on Child Development
The Digital Era is synonymous with the fourth industrial revolution. It is termed the Digital Era due to the proliferation of computers and the automation of record-keeping across all fields. Digitalization is an indicator of human civilization's transformation in this age, recognized as the Digital Era (Baharun & Finori, 2019). In this period, information can be accessed based on users' preferences. The significant impact of this ease of access to information is palpably felt in human life, especially among children. Children's lives influenced by this technological growth are termed "digital natives" or "digital generation." Marc Prensky coined the term "digital native" to describe a generation born amidst the rapid technological advancements. They spend their time immersed in online games, computers, mobile phones, cameras, digital music, and other desired technologies (Prensky, 2001).

In terms of age, the digital generation refers to those born in 1993, though some suggest 1994 onwards (Hasugian, 2011). Some even extend this to include those born as early as 1982 as digital natives (Mardina, 2011). However, Akyacir asserts that age cannot be the sole determinant of being a digital native. Individuals born in the 1980s but unfamiliar with technology, lacking skills to operate it, and not having enough interaction with the technological world, cannot be classified as digital natives (Istiana, 2016). The defining measure of a digital native lies in their depth of interaction and their knowledge and experience with the digital world.

Broadly speaking, the digital era is a double-edged sword, having both positive and negative implications. If utilized wisely, it can significantly facilitate various contemporary activities. But, if not used proportionally, it can be detrimental. Among the positive impacts of the digital era on children include expanding their horizons, promoting more extensive social interactions without temporal or spatial restrictions, facilitating easier access to information, enhancing the appeal of their learning activities both at school and home, providing educators with solutions to address children's quickly diminishing attention spans, and boosting children's creativity (Alia & Irwansyah, 2018).

On the other hand, the adverse effects of digital technology on children include: stunting their physical development due to decreased physical activities, reduced social interactions because of gadget preoccupation, inhibited brain development as decreased stimulation occurs when children are addicted to gadgets, compromised eye health, diminished concentration, sleep-related issues (both in quality and duration), and exposure to violence, pornography, and other negative values.

Islamic Early Childhood Education within the Family Environment
The practice of child education within families differs greatly from that in schools. Educational facilities common in schools, such as desks, chairs, and a variety of classrooms, are challenging to find within the family setting (Nurhanifah, 2018). Nevertheless, the role of an educator within the family is analogous to that in schools; both aim to transfer knowledge to the child, utilizing the unique methods or improvisations available within their respective environments.

Education is the most significant investment in nurturing and fostering a holistic human development. Educative efforts can shape civilized and quality human resources. As the primary educational institution for a child, the family plays a crucial role in realizing these aspirations. Families have the responsibility of molding a child's personality, social demeanor, and religious attitudes (Saputra & Subiyantoro, 2021). Hence, Islam, serving as the primary guideline, gives considerable attention and regulations to the execution of education within both the family and general educational institutions.

Within the familial environment, parents are not merely obligated to provide basic needs like food and drink but also to educate their children. It is vital for parents to understand the growth and development phases and know how best to impart education to their children (Astuti, 2023). The mission of Islamic education is to nurture righteous individuals – a generation whose words and actions are grounded in faith and piety. M. Natsir emphasized that the ultimate goal of human life is wholehearted servitude to Allah. This notion aligns with the purpose of human creation as described in the Qur'an.

The parental role, mirroring the objectives of Islamic education, is to ensure that their children grow up to be righteous. To achieve this, parents must recognize that every child is born with various potentials needing development. Therefore, parents' duties involve fostering these inherent potentials. Consequently, the educational materials provided should represent all potentialities the child possesses.

In this digital age, parents ought to be more aggressive and attentive to their children to harness technology's benefits. Several actions are essential for parents, as the primary educators: educate and enlighten children to avoid detrimental behaviors such as smoking, consuming alcohol, gambling, theft, committing injustices, and other actions distancing them from their Creator. Advising children differs from advising adults. For children, it's crucial to introduce basic concepts about actions that could harm them.

Teach children the importance of time discipline, whether it's for play, worship, study, etc. Time should not be wasted solely on playing with gadgets. It's better for children to play with their peers for longer durations than spend short times with gadgets. The right moment to introduce a gadget is when they are responsible and deemed capable of managing its use.

Instill in children the habit of dressing according to Shariah guidelines. Educate children to avoid accessing negative sites when using gadgets. Here, parental roles as

regulators or educators are pivotal. They can introduce positive websites and block those detrimental to the child.

Islamic Early Childhood Education Curriculum in the Digital Era
The curriculum is an integral component in educational endeavors, serving as a guideline towards achieving learning objectives. While the interpretation of a curriculum may differ among scholars, there is always an underlying congruity in perspective. At its core, a curriculum pertains to a set of plans and arrangements concerning objectives, content, and instructional materials, as well as methods used to guide the implementation of learning activities towards particular goals (Nurmayani, 2017). Thus, the curriculum can be viewed as a school's endeavor to influence students to learn effectively, in line with its established guidelines.

To optimize a child's development, efforts to provide stimulation, motivation, and support are imperative. In order for educators to accomplish this optimally, a systematic curriculum preparation is required. Apart from instilling positive attitudes and behaviors, children also need intellectual capabilities to adapt to the evolving digital age. Consequently, an educational program should encompass attitude formation and basic skills development, holistically equipping learners to be independent, responsible, and prepared for subsequent educational stages.

The substance of the Islamic early childhood education curriculum should encompass all Islamic teachings. Generally, Islamic education materials include aqidah (faith), ibadah (worship), and akhlak (moral character). These components should be aligned with the teachings embedded in the Quran and Hadith, which are the primary sources.

Aqidah Education: Teaching aqidah to young children is vital, given Islam positions faith as foundational. Therefore, faith education should be continuously internalized as a foundation for subsequent development stages. Ibadah Education: This is crucial to support the faith being cultivated in children. Introducing and familiarizing children with worship practices from an early age will facilitate their growth into devout individuals. Akhlak Education: In order to shape good moral character in children, engaging materials should be provided, demonstrated directly by educators or parents. Examples include illustrating respect towards parents, teachers, peers, and general social etiquette. It's beneficial to initiate this as early as possible in a structured manner (Mansur, 2009).

These materials constitute the foundation of the Islamic education concept to be included in the early childhood Islamic education curriculum. In addition to the basic Islamic education materials, the curriculum should also incorporate health, hygiene, physical activity, literacy, play, socialization, and other activities conducive to child development.

For the effective execution of early childhood education to achieve anticipated outcomes, a method congruent with the characteristics of young children and influential educational principles is required. Within Islamic educational concepts, several methods, though ancient, remain relevant for today's digital age early childhood education. These methods include: Exemplary Method: Research indicates that the exemplary method fosters the moral-religious (Abdurrahman, 2019) and socio-emotional (Nurjannah, 2017) development of young children. Children observe and mimic their surroundings, absorbing and emulating what they see. If positive behaviors are displayed around them, they are inclined to replicate them, and vice versa.

Advisory Method: Every human is predisposed to be influenced by words they hear. This predisposition isn't fixed, necessitating repetition. The advisory method aims to distinguish good from bad since not everyone can grasp these values, thus requiring clear explanations (Siswanta, 2017). In advising children, a gentle approach is paramount. Success with this method relies heavily on the advisor practicing what they preach.

Narrative Method: Storytelling is an effective means of instilling values in children through character portrayals, legends, and folktales. This method aids in appreciating values, morals, and shaping attitudes (Aqib, 2010). Moreover, it provides an auditory learning experience (Moeslichatoen, 2004). For it to captivate, both the story choice and delivery should be compelling. Educators need mastery in storytelling techniques to maintain children's enthusiasm.

Habituation Method: According to Zainal Aqib, this method focuses on developing a child's behavior encompassing religious, social, emotional, and independence aspects (Aqib, 2009). Positive habits inculcated early on have long-term beneficial effects. Specific practices to be cultivated include prayer, ablution, time discipline, among others that bolster their development.

In summation, the essence of an effective early childhood Islamic education curriculum lies in its comprehensive coverage of Islamic teachings and its alignment with modern-day pedagogical approaches, ensuring relevance in the digital age.

The Paradigm of Islamic Child Education within the Family in the Digital Era
Islam provides insight into the significant role and responsibility of parents in children's education. In this digital age, it is crucial to recognize that children face challenges distinct from those of previous generations. Thus, it is essential to adapt the patterns and approaches to education, as every era presents unique challenges. This sentiment is captured by Ali bin Abi Thalib's statement: "Educate your children to be ready for their times, as they were created for a different era than yours" (Hamruni, 2008).

The reconstruction of Islamic education for children in the digital age should not be understood as a complete overhaul, removing or replacing its essence. Instead, it's about choosing the right educational approach. The advent of digital technology does not fundamentally change the core of education. As mentioned, Islamic education encompasses aspects that support the development of a child's potential, including sexual education, social education, moral education, physical education, rational education, faith-based education, and psychological education. With educational components centered around a child's innate nature, the hope is to nurture virtuous and quality individuals.

Parents' understanding of the aspects of child growth and development can serve as the foundation for their education. Each child has a unique developmental trajectory, each progressing in its own time. Children have specific needs at every developmental stage, such as security, love, biological needs, and self-existence. Differences arise from both endogenous factors (nature) and exogenous factors (environment), which include social aspects, physical attributes, intelligence, and individual talents and interests.

In connection with the digital era, parents are tasked with familiarizing themselves with digital media and harnessing it for their children's education. As previously explained, technology has both positive and negative values. Parents are tasked with understanding these dual aspects. Awareness of the digital realm is paramount so that parents can make informed decisions regarding technological advancements. Essentially, the digital age is no longer optional; it's a reality we cannot evade. The only choice is to

equip oneself to navigate it (Setiawan, 2017). Therefore, mastering and controlling technology in alignment with educational objectives is paramount.

In essence, technology does not inherently have negative effects on humans. The primary determinant is not the device but the content within. Technology can be harnessed for varied purposes depending on the user. If managed by virtuous individuals, it serves positive functions; if controlled by malevolent forces, it can have detrimental effects. Thus, it's vital for parents to understand the differences between their generation and the current reality. Modern society often views technological media not just as professional tools but also as lifestyle trends.

The educational environment, be it within the family or school, serves as a supportive factor in child development. It is not just the physical face-to-face realm where children interact with peers, but with the advent of technology, there are virtually no boundaries unless imposed. Drawn to engaging platforms, children immerse themselves in the virtual world, often oblivious to its negative aspects. During a child's developmental stages in the digital era, parental guidance becomes crucial. The importance of such guidance isn't merely about physical presence but more about the quality of supervision. Key considerations for parents in the digital era include: Adaptation: Parents must become well-versed in digital media, such as gadgets, websites, blogs, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and other platforms their children might access, enabling them to protect their children from potential online dangers. Clarity: When educating using digital media, parents should set clear boundaries. Agreements regarding time allocations for play, study, rest, etc., can be established. Positive Selection: Parents should opt for apps that positively influence their child's development. Presence: It's crucial to spend time with children when they are using digital media. Avoid letting children use these tools unsupervised excessively.

Conclusion

Islamic education for early childhood within families during the digital era should already be a matter of grave importance, especially for parents. In this era, a joint commitment between children and parents is indispensable. The use of digital media should be circumscribed by time limits, and rules should be established concerning what content can be accessed by children. Therefore, it is imperative for parents to consistently update their knowledge of digital media to prevent being left behind by their tech-savvy offspring. The family, being the primary educational entity, can cultivate and mold a child to be analytical and prepared to confront the rapidly evolving world. Ideally, every family should have an educational foundation that can bolster the child's development. However, recognizing that not every family member might have such an educational background, it becomes essential for families to adapt to the current times, especially in matters relating to a child's education.

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