



Habituation of Fasting and Mosque Prayers: Family Educational Efforts to Cultivate Worship Independence in Early Childhood

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Abstract

The phenomenon of declining interest among children in religious activities indicates the need for more practical and continuous family education in instilling religious values. The family plays a primary and essential role in shaping the spiritual foundation of children through habit formation and role modeling. This study aims to explore family-based Islamic education strategies in fostering independence in worship among young children through prayer and fasting activities. This study uses a qualitative method with a library research approach, namely by reviewing and analyzing various scientific sources such as accredited journals, books, and the latest research results (2021–2025) relevant to the theme of worship habits in Muslim families. Data analysis was conducted using content analysis techniques with stages of reduction, theme categorization, and conclusion drawing oriented towards theoretical findings and Islamic education practices in the family. The results of the study show that effective religious habits for children can be built through three main aspects: parental role modeling, consistent worship routines, and strengthening the religious environment at home. In addition, the targeted use of digital media and positive communication within the family also strengthen children's spiritual motivation. This study produced the concept of the Islamic Family Worship Habituation Model as a practical strategy for fostering spiritual independence in early childhood. The implications of the study emphasize the importance of synergy between families, Islamic educational institutions, and the social environment in shaping a generation of Muslims who are independent, have strong character, and are rooted in the values of faith and piety.

INTRODUCTION

The formation of religious character in early childhood is a very important foundation in Islamic education. The habit of religious values in early childhood is not only taught verbally, but also practiced in daily life (Ningsih et al., 2025). This habit is practiced through congregational prayers at the mosque and fasting from an early age as a family routine. These worship activities are not merely rituals, but

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also a means of instilling a sense of responsibility, gratitude, and independence in practicing religious teachings (Abd & Na'imah, 2022).

However, the actual conditions in society show a decline in children's interest in religious activities. This phenomenon can be seen from the fact that children spend more time on digital devices and online entertainment than on worship or religious activities with their families (Darti et al., 2024; Zainal et al., 2022). This trend illustrates a serious challenge in efforts to instill religious values in the family environment, even though the family should play a role as the first madrasah for shaping children's personalities and characters. As the first informal educational institution, the family has the task of providing real role models and establishing consistent worship routines (Sobah et al., 2025).

In practice, there are a number of issues that hinder the formation of children's religious character from an early age. First, parents' limited time to accompany their children to the mosque or pray together at home due to work and other activities. Second, the influence of digital culture and entertainment, which replaces family time and shifts children's priorities from religious activities to consumptive entertainment. Third, the lack of consistent family worship routines, such as praying together, practicing light fasting, so that children are not yet accustomed to worshipping consciously on their own. Fourth, children have not yet developed independence in worship: the ability to worship without full parental supervision, with their own understanding of meaning and initiative. Research shows that the independence of young children in worship is still limited and influenced by factors such as parental guidance, routine habits, and a supportive family environment.

This is increasingly important to study, given that in Islamic education, the family functions as the primary institution for shaping independent worship habits in children (Novianti, 2019). Parents have a strategic role as role models (*uswah*) and primary motivators in accustoming children to love the mosque, perform congregational prayers, and fast with spiritual awareness, not merely because of coercion, but because of awareness and habits formed through loving routines (Lutfiyah & Ulum, 2024).

The habit-forming process, carried out consistently and with exemplary behavior, will foster children's internal awareness to worship sincerely. Of course, this is in line with the concept of *tarbiyah ruhiyah* in Islamic education, which emphasizes the cultivation of the soul and character through role models and habituation (habit training) from an early age. Recent research shows that the application of daily habits, parental role models, and a religious family environment have a significant contribution to the formation of the religious character of early childhood (Fahira, 2024).

This study emphasizes the importance of strengthening the role of the family as the center of children's spiritual education amid the challenges of globalization and digitalization that weaken religious values (Asril et al., 2023; Rahawarin et al., 2023; Umam & Hamidah, 2020). The results of this study are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of family-based Islamic education through a concrete model of worship habits, as well as practical contributions to parents, educators, and educational institutions in fostering children's independence in worship. With the application of the right model, early childhood can grow into religious, independent, and strong-charactered individuals as a provision for building a generation of Muslims who are faithful and pious (Purwanto et al., 2022).

Theoretically, this study is based on the concept of *tarbiyah al-usrah* (family-based Islamic education), which emphasizes that the family is a child's first school, where parents serve as role models, supervisors, and motivators in instilling religious practices in their children. In addition, the theory of habituation in developmental psychology states that repetition of actions in a meaningful context will become

ingrained habits (Aerdker et al., 2022). Furthermore, Bandura's Social Learning Theory shows that children learn by imitating their parents or figures they see as examples in worship. The combination of these theories shows that the habit of praying at the mosque and the consistent introduction of fasting in the family environment can encourage children's independence in worship (Aharoni et al., 2024).

Previous studies have shown that the role of the family in teaching children to worship has a major influence on the formation of religious character and independence in worship. Research conducted by Huda, (2023) emphasizes the importance of active parental involvement in guiding children aged 5–8 years to perform fasting. The results of the study show that consistent supervision, parental role modeling, and the use of educational games are effective strategies in introducing and accustoming children to fasting voluntarily and consciously.

Research conducted by Am et al., (2023); Murniyetti et al., (2016); Oktavia et al., (2023). This qualitative narrative study was conducted in an Early Childhood Education with early childhood children. Data was collected through observation, interviews, and documentation of children's morning activities. The results showed that morning routines, including daily prayers, reading hadiths, and short surahs, helped children develop religious character traits such as honesty, discipline, and independence.

Further research was conducted by Arnita et al., (2022). This was a qualitative field study that examined parenting patterns in the context of families in Pasaman Regency. With parents and children aged 5-6 years as informants, it was found that there were significant differences in parenting styles: some parents gave their children freedom, some gave a lot of guidance, and some spent little time accompanying their children. Factors that influenced parenting styles were economic status, parents' occupations, and parents' education levels.

Furthermore, research by Amirudin et al., (2024) examined the application of the method of accustoming young children to prayer in an Islamic educational environment. This study found that habituation carried out routinely and collaboratively between teachers and parents has a positive impact on children's spiritual development. Through activities such as praying in congregation at school and at home, children learn to understand the values of discipline and togetherness in worship.

Meanwhile, a study by Mudzakir et al., (2023) emphasizes the importance of Islamic education management in the family as the main foundation for shaping children's religious personalities. The results of the study reveal that the habit of worship, such as prayer and fasting, not only shapes discipline but also fosters a sense of responsibility and spiritual awareness from an early age. The researchers explain that the educational patterns applied in the family serve as the “first madrasah” for children, where Islamic values of worship and morality are instilled through real examples, affection, and positive communication.

Based on several previous studies, it can be concluded that the habit of worship from an early age is greatly influenced by the active role and example set by parents. Consistent guidance, regular worship routines, and positive communication have been proven effective in fostering children's awareness and independence in worship. Synergy between families and educational institutions is also important so that religious values can be instilled in a sustainable manner. Thus, families play a role as the first madrasah in shaping children's religious character and spiritual independence.

The results of this study reveal a research gap, namely that there has not been much research specifically discussing the relationship between the habit of praying at the mosque and fasting practice as a family education strategy in shaping the religious

independence of early childhood. Previous studies have generally only discussed moral aspects and character building, while concrete worship practices and the role of the family in instilling spiritual values have not been studied in depth. In addition, there has been no research that combines the two main acts of worship, congregational prayer and fasting, as an integrated approach to fostering discipline and spiritual responsibility in children from an early age.

The novelty of this research lies in its attempt to integrate the habit of praying at the mosque and fasting into a family-based Islamic education framework. This research not only highlights the role of parents but also explores the real experiences of Muslim families in implementing these habits at home and in the mosque environment. Using a phenomenological qualitative approach, this study aims to develop a conceptual model of “Islamic Family Worship Habits (PIKI)” that can serve as a practical guide for Muslim families in fostering their children's independence in worship in a fun and sustainable manner.

This study focuses on how Muslim families implement strategies to accustom young children to praying at the mosque and fasting in order to develop their independence in worship (Lutfiyah & Ulum, 2024). The objectives of this study are: i) to identify family practices in accustoming children to the mosque for congregational prayer, ii) to describe the gradual approach of parents in introducing fasting to young children, iii) to formulate an integrative model of family-based worship habits that can be widely adapted, and iv) to reveal the supporting and inhibiting factors in shaping children's independence in worship.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research method (Murniyetti et al., 2016; Nawali, 2018; Ningsih, 2019; Oktavia et al., 2023; Rahawarin et al., 2023). This approach was chosen because it is in line with the research objectives, which are to gain an in-depth understanding of the concepts, values, and strategies for instilling religious practices in early childhood in Muslim families based on existing research results and scientific literature (Engkizar et al., 2022; Engkizar, Jaafar, Hamzah, et al., 2023). This method allows researchers to critically review and analyze various scientific sources without collecting field data (Ananda, 2017; Engkizar et al., 2021; Notosrijoedono, 2013; Nurasyiah & Atikah, 2023). The main focus of the research is to explore relevant ideas, theories, and empirical findings from books, accredited national journals, and reputable international articles.

The research data was collected from various scientific references published in the last four years (2021–2025) discussing the themes of Islamic education in the family, children's worship habits, and strengthening religious character from an early age. Some important sources include research by Arnita et al., (2022) which emphasizes the importance of parental role models in shaping children's religious behavior at home, as well as a study Am et al., (2023) on the effectiveness of prayer routines and spiritual activities in Early Childhood Education in building children's spiritual independence. Additional literature also includes the results of research by Mudzakir et al., (2023) on the management of Islamic education in the family as the basis for shaping children's religious character Hanifah et al., (2024), as well as an article in the Obsesi Journal (Sinta 2) discussing early childhood moral education through the approach of role modeling and habitual worship (Sari & Hakim, 2023).

Data analysis was conducted using content analysis techniques, which involved examining the content of various literature sources to identify patterns, themes, and meanings relevant to the research objectives. The analysis stages included i) literature data reduction, by selecting the most relevant and credible sources; ii) data presentation, by grouping the reading results into broad themes such as the role of the family, role models, worship habits, and children's spiritual motivation; and iii)

drawing conclusions, by linking the literature findings to Islamic education theory, particularly the theory of habituation (accustoming) and social learning (Engkizar et al., 2025; Engkizar et al., 2023).

Through this method, the study is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of the concept of worship-based family education, as well as provide practical benefits for parents, teachers, and mosque institutions in shaping children's independence in worship from an early age. The results of the study are also expected to serve as a reference for the development of a family education model that is enjoyable, structured, and appropriate for the developmental stage of children, in line with Islamic values and the principles of *tarbiyah rubiyah*.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The phenomenon of declining interest among children in religious activities, such as congregational prayer and fasting, has become a major concern in Islamic education. Many children are not accustomed to going to the mosque or lack enthusiasm for fasting due to the influence of modern lifestyles, digital media, and a lack of habit formation and role models within the family environment (Islam, 2023). However, the family is the first and foremost institution that shapes a child's religious foundation. Based on these conditions, this study aims to examine and analyze the concepts and strategies of habit formation for praying at the mosque and fasting in Islamic family education as an effort to shape the independence of worship in early childhood.

This study was conducted using a qualitative approach based on library research, which involved reviewing various relevant scientific literature such as journals, books, previous research results, and scientific documents from the last four years (2021–2025). The focus of the study was directed at theories, concepts, and research results that explain the role of the family, habituation methods, and spiritual values in shaping children's independence in worship (Milah et al., 2023). The analysis process was carried out through four main stages, namely: i) collection of literature sources, ii) classification and selection of relevant data, iii) content analysis and synthesis of findings, and iv) drawing conclusions and research implications.

The first stage involved collecting sources through searches on scientific portals such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and DOAJ, using the keywords “Islamic family education,” “child worship habits,” and “spiritual independence.” The search results showed that the majority of studies agreed on the importance of the family's role as the first madrasah in instilling the value of worship in children (Armadi & A., 2022). The second stage involved classification by selecting literature that specifically discussed the practice of accustoming young children to prayer and fasting in Muslim families. The third stage, content analysis, showed that effective worship accustoming strategies involved parental role modeling, consistency in worship times, and providing positive motivation without pressure. Children who are accustomed to being taken to the mosque from an early age tend to have higher spiritual sensitivity and worship responsibility compared to children who do not receive similar habits (Suryawati, 2021).

Furthermore, the synthesis results show that worship activities carried out with the family, such as praying in congregation and eating together, are effective means of fostering emotional bonds and instilling spiritual discipline. This is reinforced by the opinion Yuhana, (2022) that families who apply Islamic education based on worship habits can naturally shape their children's religious character and responsibility towards Allah. The fourth stage, drawing conclusions and implications, resulted in the understanding that the habit of praying at the mosque and fasting is not only an aspect of worship, but also a character education strategy that builds children's spiritual independence from an early age.

The results of the literature review show that habitual worship in the family is a very effective educational method in shaping the independence of worship in early childhood. Habitual prayer at the mosque helps children learn time discipline, responsibility, and togetherness in worship. Meanwhile, fasting teaches the values of patience, self-control, and sincerity (Khotimah et al., 2025).

The Central Role of the Family as the First Madrasah

The family is the first and most influential environment in a child's life, especially during early childhood. As the first madrasah, the family provides a context for religious learning, worship habits, and an introduction to fundamental spiritual values. Recent literature shows that when families create a religious atmosphere, for example, through regular family prayers, praying together at home or at the mosque, and light discussions about the meaning of worship, children gain direct experiences that help them internalize values. For example, a study conducted by Yuhana, (2022) in Tulangbawang, Lampung, found that “exemplary and habituation of parents' religious behavior” has a significant influence on the moral and religious development of early childhood.

In addition, literature on religious education models at the family level shows that parents are not only teachers, but also role models (*qudwah hasanah*) who consistently practice worship and involve children in family worship activities. This is in line with the idea of *tarbiyah al-usrah*, which emphasizes that the formation of children's religious character must begin in the family. Thus, the literature review shows that the family, through the active role of parents, worship routines, and a supportive environment, is an important foundation in shaping the worship independence of early childhood.

Role Modeling and Consistency as Keys to Habituation

The second finding reinforces that parental role modeling and consistency in habituation are key factors in the success of children's worship habituation. Albert Bandura's social learning theory states that children learn behavior through observation and imitation of figures they consider important, such as their parents. If parents routinely perform prayers at the mosque and involve their children in light fasting, then children will see that worship is part of everyday life and they will be more likely to follow suit.

Furthermore, the theory of habituation explains that the repetition of meaningful actions (such as praying in congregation, practicing fasting, and daily prayers) will become habits that are ingrained in children. A study by Hafidz et al., (2025) on “A Religious Education Model Through the Habituation of Religious Values in Early Childhood” confirms that instilling religious values through daily activities such as reading prayers together and smiling while worshiping has formed patterns that support children's religious development.

In practice, the literature shows that habituation must be done consistently and in a pattern that is easy for children to understand: for example, a fixed schedule for congregational prayers, gradual introduction to fasting (half a day, light fasting days), rewards, and a supportive environment (e.g., family prayer room, visits to the mosque together). When this consistency is combined with parental role modeling, the habit formation becomes more effective in shaping children's worship habits.

The Positive Impact of Habituation on Children's Independence and Religious Character

A literature review shows that habitual worship in the family environment is not only related to rituals, but also has a broad impact on children's independence in worship and religious character. Children who are accustomed to praying in congregation with their parents tend to be more disciplined, have a sense of time, responsibility, and feel that worship is part of their lives. For example, a study by Angraini, (2024) found that the habit of regular prayer in the family supports the

formation of independence in worship. On the other hand, introducing fasting from an early age, even if done gradually and lightly, teaches the values of patience, self-control, and empathy for others.

A study by Murdan et al., (2022) shows that children who are involved in fasting exercises show an increase in moral and spiritual attitudes. In library research, it is important to look at literature that links family worship habits with children's psychological, social, and spiritual outcomes. This shows that structured and enjoyable worship habits can be an effective family education strategy for shaping an independent and characterful Muslim generation. Furthermore, these results theoretically reinforce that independence in worship does not only depend on formal instruction, but also on consistent family habits and a supportive environment (Aerdker et al., 2022).

The implications of this study indicate that Islamic educational institutions, mosque communities, and families need to work together to create a religious environment that supports children's worship habits. Programs such as Islamic parenting training, children's activities at the mosque, and *sakinah* family coaching can be used as concrete models for implementing worship habits. Recommendations for further research include the need to develop a conceptual model of "Islamic Family Education Based on Worship Habits (PKIBPI)" that can be adapted by schools and religious institutions to strengthen children's spiritual character in a sustainable manner.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that the habit of praying at the mosque and practicing fasting within the family environment play an important role in shaping the independence of worship in early childhood. Children who are regularly taken to the mosque for congregational prayer and gradually trained to fast show an increase in discipline, responsibility, and spiritual sensitivity. They become more courageous in taking the initiative to worship without being told and better understand the meaning of worship as part of their daily lives. The success of this habit formation is inseparable from the active role of parents as role models and primary guides. Parents who are able to set a real example, create a pleasant worship atmosphere, and give praise or light motivation are proven to be more successful in fostering children's enthusiasm for worship. Overall, this study confirms that family education based on worship habits has a major influence on the formation of children's spiritual character from an early age. These results enrich Islamic education theory on the importance of role models and a religious environment in the process of shaping children's personalities. A suggestion for further research is to examine in more depth how the development of digital technology, social media, and peer influence affect children's consistency in performing worship. Thus, further research is expected to provide worship practices that are more adaptive to the challenges of the modern era, without diminishing the spiritual values that are to be instilled.

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