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Parenting Practices in Millennial Islamic Families of Pontianak: Navigating Between Pop-Islamism and Fluid Islamism

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Keywords:

Millennial Islamic; Parenting Families; Pop-Islamism; Early Childhood Development; Fluid Islamism

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Received 12 08 2023

Revised 25 09 2023

Accepted 26 09 2023

Published Online First

30 09 2023



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Abstract

This qualitative study explores the parenting practices of young Islamic parents in Pontianak, Indonesia, amidst the evolving contexts of pop Islamism and fluid Islamism. The research uses anthropological lenses to focus on early childhood parenting within millennial Islamic families. The city of Pontianak, characterized by rapid development, ethnic and cultural diversity, and varied religious practices, provides a unique setting for examining these dynamics. Data collection encompassed observations, interviews, and documentation, targeting millennial Muslim parents born between 1981 and 1996, with children aged 0-8 years, totaling 83 participants. Interviews spanned a range of Islamic ideologies, including popular Islamism, tarbiyah, Tahrir, Salafi, and jihadist. The methodology involved data assembly, comprehensive observation, coding, categorization into themes, and narrative presentation. The results reveal diverse parenting patterns influenced by religious affiliations, advisors, worship practices, and explicit or implicit religious affiliations. While parenting styles varied, a high prevalence of authoritarian approaches was noted, with religion playing a pivotal role in child-rearing decisions and social interactions. The study also highlights the material aspects of parenting, including doctrinal ideologies and their manifestation in everyday life. The findings provide crucial insights into contemporary Islamic society's social and religious dynamics, emphasizing the need for an inclusive, multidimensional approach to understanding Islamism that extends beyond political and ideological realms. This research contributes to a deeper comprehension of Islamic millennial families' social and cultural intricacies in Indonesia and their strategies for balancing religious traditions with modern challenges.

To cite: Sapendi, Prasojo, Z. H., Shah, S. A. A. & Munastiwi, E. (2023). Parenting Practices in Millennial Islamic Families of Pontianak: Navigating Between Pop-Islamism and Fluid Islamism. *Golden Age: Jurnal Ilmiah Tumbuh Kembang Anak Usia Dini*, 8(3), 183-192. <https://doi.org/10.14421/jga.2023.83-01>

Introduction

Child-rearing practices among millennial Islamic families are a crucial topic in the global and societal context, particularly in the fields of education and contemporary Islamic studies. The significance of this topic lies in its implications for shaping the character of young generations within societies undergoing constant social and cultural changes (Mansir, 2022; Supaat & Fa'atin, 2019). Specifically, it concerns how various Islamic values—from the most militant to the more moderate—are integrated into everyday parenting practices. In the context of Islamism, the emphasis on a holistic and strict lifestyle in accordance with Sharia raises questions about how this influences parenting approaches within families (Alghafli et al., 2014; Bensaid, 2021). Therefore, this study aims to elucidate the dynamics between pop Islamism and fluid Islamism and their implications for early childhood parenting.

Previous studies have explored various aspects of Islamism, primarily in political and proselytizing contexts (Duraesa & Ahyar, 2019; Fuad, 2020; Hasan, 2018a; Kuswanto et al., 2023). This research underscores the importance of understanding Islamism not just as a political or religious movement, but as an ideology influencing all life aspects, including child-rearing. According to Hasan (2018b), Islamism has evolved through print and online literature, affecting

the Muslim youth in public spaces. This study starts by observing that Islamist ideology has permeated various social life aspects, including family parenting practices.

Research by Wildan and Qibtiyah (2020) provides essential insights into the influence of parenting styles on the level of Islamism among high school teenagers in Yogyakarta. Their findings indicate that authoritarian parenting tends to shape students into more conservative, militant, and extremist in their Islamic beliefs. Meanwhile, authoritative and permissive parenting styles appear to have no significant impact on the students' level of Islamism (Ayu et al., 2023; Wildan & Qibtiyah, 2020). This study lays the foundation for understanding how certain parenting styles can influence the acceptance and practice of Islamism among teenagers.

The study by Mustakim et al., (2022) explores the representation of Islamist ideology in popular media, particularly through the animated film "Nussa." They found that the film introduces Salafi ideas in the context of early childhood parenting, depicting an authoritative parenting model blended with pop-Islamism. On the other hand, a study by Syarif et al., (2023) examines the religious movement of Salafism in West Kalimantan, showing an ideological contestation between Salafism and traditional Muslims. This study contributes to the understanding of how Islamism, in both traditional and popular forms, influences parenting practices in young Islamic families.

Prior research concerning parenting within Islamist contexts, specifically in West Kalimantan, has predominantly focused on traditional parenting methodologies, as evidenced by studies such as those conducted by Calorina et al., (2021), Lessy et al., (2021), and Suratman & Arif, (2020). This trend highlights a notable deficiency in scholarly discourse regarding the parenting practices of young Islamic families, particularly when considering the dynamics of urban living, the role and impact of digital media, and the broader influences of globalization. The current study seeks to address and bridge this lacuna in the literature. By delving into how Islamist ideology is manifested and intertwined with parenting practices in early childhood among young Islamic families, this research endeavors to enrich the academic understanding of these practices and shed light on the intersection of religious beliefs and modern societal influences (Franceschelli & O'Brien, 2014; Strhan & Shillitoe, 2019). This exploration is particularly pertinent in an era where traditional practices encounter the evolving demands of contemporary life, thereby offering a comprehensive understanding of the transformation and adaptation of parenting strategies within young Islamic families under the influence of modern globalized contexts.

Although there are several studies related to parenting and Islamism, there are still limitations and controversies in the existing literature. This research identifies that most studies focus on political and proselytizing aspects, with little emphasis on everyday parenting practices in Islamic families. Additionally, there is a lack of research examining parenting in the context of modern urbanization and globalization, and how this affects the understanding and practice of Islamism. Therefore, this study aims to bridge this gap by exploring parenting in young Islamic families in Pontianak city.

The focus of this study is to uncover how ideals, materials, and methods and styles of parenting are practiced by young Islamic parents in Pontianak city. This research aims to provide a deeper understanding of how Islamism, both in traditional and modern forms, influences child-rearing practices. Through this research, it is hoped to contribute significantly to the understanding of parenting practices in the context of Islamism and provide new insights into religious dynamics among young Islamic families in the era of globalization.

Methods

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach with an anthropological lens, focusing on the practices of early childhood care in Islamic millennial families in Pontianak, South Kalimantan. The choice of Pontianak as the research location is based on its unique characteristics as a city with rapid development, diverse ethnicities and cultures, as well as a variety of religious and Islamic practices. This social and cultural dynamic makes Pontianak a

strategic place for understanding the dynamics of child care within the context of Islamic millennial families. In this study, data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The observation was used to gain a deep understanding of the daily interactions between parents and children, as well as the cultural and social context in which childcare takes place. Interviews were conducted with Muslim millennial parents who follow various streams of Islamism, including popular Islamism, Tarbiyah, Tahriri, Salafi, to Jihadi. The selection criteria for informants involved millennial parents born between 1981 and 1996 who have children aged 0-8 years, totaling 83 participants. The documentation approach, such as daily activity notes and cultural artifacts, supported and enriched data obtained from observations and interviews.

In the data analysis, this study adopted the method developed by Creswell & Creswell (2018), which includes data organization, comprehensive observation of data, coding, categorization of data into common themes, and presenting data in narrative form. This process allowed researchers to identify patterns and themes relevant to child-rearing practices. Furthermore, the validity of the data was strengthened through triangulation, which included the triangulation of data sources and data collection techniques. Source data triangulation ensured that the research did not rely on just one type of information source, but integrated various perspectives. Meanwhile, data collection technique triangulation emphasized the importance of using diverse methods to obtain more comprehensive and valid data. This triangulation approach enhanced the research's reliability and strengthened the findings' validity (Cohen et al., 2018).

Result

3.1. Parenting Practices of Millennial Islamic Group Parents in Pontianak City

Based on the interviews conducted, it appears that the majority of millennial parents in Pontianak who are affiliated with Islamic religious understandings exhibit a high degree of diversity. For instance, the parenting styles of millennial parents in Pontianak vary depending on factors like the religious tendencies of the parents, the clerics they consult, their worship practices, and their religious affiliations, both explicitly and implicitly, revealing a significant level of diversity. According to a survey conducted among millennial family communities based on religious expression, families aligned with Islamic-Jihadist, Islamic-Tarbiyah, Islamic-Puritan, and Islamic-Tahriri orientations tend to favor authoritarian parenting styles. However, only families within the Islamic-Tarbiyah group have less than 60% adopting authoritarian parenting. Interviews with several informants indicate that indicators of authoritarianism are evident in the full authority parents exert over their children. For millennial parents in the Islamic group, the faith of the child is paramount, necessitating strict adherence to the parents' theological directives.

Furthermore, there is a prevailing belief that people outside their group, especially those of different religions, could negatively impact their children's religious development, particularly concerning matters of faith

"For those of different religions, I limit interactions, but for different ethnicities, I don't limit their friendships. I don't want, or rather, I don't want them to be too close. They can be friends but not best friends. I'm afraid they might be influenced. We as parents are worried, given the extraordinary nature of current social interactions. I see today's children feeling sad, many unaware of what is permissible and what is not. That's why I'm fearful. Therefore, even in choosing friends, one must be selective. Our friends greatly influence us. Even a friend's way of speaking, if they use foul language, can influence us to do the same. Even within the same religion, we are concerned, let alone with those of different religions, with their eating habits, worship practices, universal perspectives, and possibly permissive attitudes towards LGBT issues, for instance. We can't be sure. That's my worry. For ethnicities, no, be it Madurese or Malay, there are no restrictions. But for religious differences, especially as they grow more aware, I limit interactions. I've started

to say, 'Don't go near those Chinese or Christians. They'll end up in hell,' even influencing my child to think this way," says NN, a millennial parent in Pontianak (Interview, February 2023).

Consequently, in the social interactions or friendships of children of millennial Islamic group parents, the control is strict, disciplined, binding, and unilateral. In terms of authoritative parenting, the majority of millennial Islamic group parents interviewed, predominantly highly educated and employed in formal sectors like offices, education, and health, are aware of the importance of their children's development and growth. However, the number or percentage of those using authoritative parenting is relatively small, indicating that the majority of millennial parents tend to favor authoritarian methods.

In contrast, the number of parents adopting permissive parenting styles is relatively low compared to authoritative styles. The reasons behind adopting these three parenting styles include factors such as parents believing that they alone understand their children's needs, thereby justifying their parenting practices for the children's and parents' benefit. Moreover, the majority of parents, both authoritarian and authoritative, base their understanding of parenting on literature and studies by clerics, discussing Islamic perspectives on parenting from each of their groups. Those who adopt permissive parenting styles often do so due to a lack of understanding of parenting knowledge and generally have lower educational backgrounds.

The objectives of parenting, whether to direct children towards religious obedience and a promising future, influence their educational plans. Bustami, a member of the Tarbiyah group, plans to enroll his child in an Islamic school with quality religious and general education (Interview with Bustami, August 26, 2023). In another case, Hafizah, a sympathizer of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), is hesitant about sending her child to a boarding school until she finds one that meets her standards in both religious and general education. Once she finds such a school, she will have no hesitation in sending her child there (Interview with Hafizah, August 16, 2023). This highlights the balance of parenting goals among young Islamic parents, aiming for both worldly and spiritual well-being.

"We use technology when needed, like giving the child a gadget during meals to keep them still and not running around. We need it. Then, we also show them Islamic programs on our phones, like Quran recitation competitions with Sheikh Ali Jaber," says TM, a millennial Islamic-Puritan parent (Interview, January 2023).

The interviews and observations of millennial Islamic group parents in Pontianak reveal that the core materials of parenting include faith, morality, worship, and intellect. The transmission of faith to children includes teachings on monotheism, worship, prophetic biography, Quranic studies, etc. While there are general similarities in faith education across millennial families, detailed differences exist within each Islamic group. The transmission of faith is not merely the conveyance of Islamic values but also ideological doctrines manifested in religious symbols such as hijabs, long trousers, Islamic names, use of Arabic, children's reading and viewing material, among others. Parenting materials, influenced by religious aspirations of millennial parents across Islamic groups and religions, also include general knowledge focusing on skills, with almost all Islamic group families in Pontianak providing such education from an early age.

3.2. Parental and Child Activities in Islamic Families

In exploring the activities of parents at home with their children, I conducted interviews with several millennial parents in Pontianak City. The results are varied, largely influenced by the parents' occupations, which affect the time they spend with their children. The parental activities are outlined in the following table:

Table 1. Number of Hours Parents Spend with Their Children

No	Aspect	Hours	Description
1.	Parental Work Hours (Monday-Friday)	8-9 hours per day	Working from 7:30/8:00 to 15:00-16:00.
2.	Parental Activities Outside Work Hours	3-4 hours per day	Engaging in activities like attending Islamic studies and sports (mostly fathers, except when mothers attend Islamic studies).
3.	Parent-Child Time During Workdays (Monday-Friday)	5-8 hours per day	From 05:00 to 07:00 in the morning and 16:00 to 21:00 in the evening.
4.	Parent-Child Time on Saturdays-Sundays	8-14 hours per day	Increased family time during weekends in Pontianak's millennial Islamic families.
5.	Average Weekly Working Hours for Parents	55 to 60 hours per week	Cumulative total from all collected hours.
6.	Weekly Parent-Child Time	56 to 98 hours per week	Cumulative total from all collected hours.

The data indicates that millennial Islamic parents in Pontianak spend a considerable amount of time with their children. However, this time is not always effectively spent in activities such as studying, playing, family gatherings, accompanying children in their activities, dining together, etc. This is due to other responsibilities, such as completing household chores, sleeping, and individual parental commitments.

In millennial Islamic-Puritan or Salafi families, mothers tend to spend more time with children as most women in this group are homemakers. The data shows that even working mothers in Islamic-Puritan families predominantly engage with their children. During these moments, Islamic-Puritan mothers often teach their children to read, recite the Quran, and memorize it.

The data collected from interviews with millennial parents in Pontianak City reveals significant insights into the dynamics of parenting practices in Islamic families. It's evident that the amount of time parents spend with their children varies, predominantly influenced by their work schedules. On average, parents are engaged in work for about 8-9 hours on weekdays, leaving a limited window for direct interaction with their children. This pattern reflects a balancing act between professional commitments and familial responsibilities, a common challenge in modern parenting.

Outside work hours, parents dedicate 3-4 hours to activities such as Islamic studies and sports, with a notable difference in participation between fathers and mothers. This discrepancy suggests a gender-based division in leisure activities, where fathers are more involved in sports while mothers, especially in Islamic-Puritan families, focus more on religious studies. Such differences in parental roles highlight the diverse ways in which Islamic teachings and cultural norms shape family life in Pontianak.

During the weekdays, parents spend 5-8 hours with their children, primarily in the early morning and evening. This time is crucial for developing strong familial bonds and engaging in various activities. However, the effectiveness of this time is often compromised by other responsibilities like household chores and individual commitments. This indicates a need for millennial parents to strategize and prioritize their activities to maximize quality time with their children.

Interestingly, in Islamic-Puritan families, there is a noticeable trend of mothers, predominantly homemakers, spending more time with their children, engaging in activities like teaching the Quran. This reflects a cultural emphasis on maternal involvement in children's religious education, resonating with the broader theme of parenting practices in millennial Islamic families of Pontianak. These families navigate between Pop-Islamism, which tends to be more liberal and accommodative of modern lifestyles, and Fluid Islamism, which represents a

more traditional, conservative approach to Islamic teachings. The parenting strategies in these families, therefore, embody a complex interplay of religious, cultural, and modern influences.

Discussion

This research delves into the dynamics of child-rearing practices among millennial Islamic families in Pontianak, providing an in-depth exploration of their aspirations, methodologies, and materials. It situates these practices within the broader context of the evolution of Islamic beliefs and practices, particularly the shift from traditional Islamism to expressions more fluidly integrated with popular culture and modern urban lifestyles. This shift reflects a broader societal evolution where religious practices increasingly intertwine with urban culture and contemporary consumerism, as outlined by Müller, (2014) and Weng (2018). This background is crucial for understanding the high variability in child-rearing approaches observed among millennial Islamic families in Pontianak, ranging from authoritarian to more flexible authoritative styles.

This context is intriguing, located at the intersection of traditional Islamic values and modern influences. Particularly among millennials, there is a synergy between Pop-Islamism and Fluid Islamism, representing a new manifestation of Islamism that is more flexible and adaptive to the changing times (Arifin et al., 2022). This study takes place in a shifting social and cultural landscape where Islamic principles are integrated with consumerist culture and modern lifestyles, differing from the more monolithic and anti-secular views of Islamism previously understood (Barton, 2021; Müller, 2014).

The main findings of this research reveal various parenting styles among Islamic millennial parents in Pontianak, ranging from authoritarian to authoritative, with a majority leaning towards the former. Authoritarianism is particularly evident in families with strong affiliations to specific Islamic groups, where religious doctrines significantly influence child-rearing practices. Conversely, a minority adopting an authoritative style, typically characterized by higher education levels and formal employment, demonstrates a more balanced approach to parenting. As evidenced by the research, this diversity of parenting styles reflects a complex interplay of religious, educational, and socio-economic factors, indicating a complex matrix influencing child-rearing in Islamic families.

These findings also reflect a deep commitment to Islamic values mirrored in the parenting methods and materials taught to children. The importance of religiously oriented parenting goals and the afterlife reflects Islamic families' strong attachment to their religious traditions (Walzer, 2015). Meanwhile, concerns for their children's economic future indicate awareness of the importance of preparing for global economic competition (Fuad, 2020). These results are significant as they show how contemporary Islamic families balance religious aspirations with the demands of modern life.

Compared to previous studies, this research shows both congruencies and significant differences. Earlier studies emphasized the ideological aspects of Islamism in the context of family and society (Nurani, 2018; Platt et al., 2018; Rodríguez & Murtagh, 2022; Sulaiman, 2020). In contrast, this research highlights practical aspects and adaptations in parenting, reflecting a form of negotiation between Islamic values and the realities of modern urban life (Adly, 2023; Fuad, 2020). These results support the idea that millennial Islamic families are not solely focused on ideology but also on implementing these values in daily life, including in child-rearing.

The parenting styles identified in this research offer a contrast to previous perceptions of Islamism as a monolithic and anti-secular ideology. Instead, they reflect a more nuanced and diverse approach that aligns with the concepts of pop-Islamism and fluid Islamism. These findings support the notion that young Islamic groups are increasingly blending their religious beliefs with modern urban lifestyles and consumerist culture, as observed in the studies by Müller, (2014) and Weng (2018). This evolution in Islamic practices indicates a shift from rigid traditionalism, moving towards more varied and adaptive forms of religious expression in urban environments (Ahmad, 2021; Burhanudin, 2021; Duraesa & Ahyar, 2019).

The tendency towards authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles among millennial Muslim parents can be linked to the confluence of religious zeal and modern challenges. These parents strive to instill strong Islamic values, considering religious education crucial for shielding their children from perceived harmful external influences. This approach is deeply rooted in Islamic principles of preserving faith and ensuring moral and spiritual education, consistent with traditional Islamic teachings and contemporary interpretations (Interviews with Bustami, August 26, 2023; Hafizah, August 16, 2023).

The findings on the strong emphasis on religious values in parenting highlight the importance of religion as a moral and social foundation in Islamic family contexts. This is closely related to the view that Islam is not just a religion but a comprehensive way of life, influencing all aspects of life, including child-rearing (Hasbullah et al., 2022; Mustakim et al., 2022). However, the interpretation of these results should be approached cautiously, as this representation may not reflect all Islamic families in Indonesia, but rather be specific to the social and cultural context in Pontianak. Additionally, the nurturing aimed at being the antithesis of traditional parenting styles, considered contradictory to Islamic teachings, forms a significant part of these findings (Latipah et al., 2020; Platt et al., 2018; Purnama et al., 2022).

The emphasis on preparing children for future economic challenges reflects awareness and response to global economic challenges. It mirrors how Islamic values are integrated with practical needs and contemporary economic realities (Hasan, 2010; Prasojo et al., 2020). This approach demonstrates how millennial Islamic families adapt religious principles in the context of complex modern life, seeking a balance between religious aspirations and pragmatic needs to prepare their children for economic competition.

Although this research provides valuable insights into Islamic parenting practices in Pontianak, the findings must be interpreted with caution. The study's focus on a specific geographical and cultural context may limit its generalization to other Islamic communities. Moreover, the complex interplay of religion, culture, and socio-economic factors in shaping parenting practices demands a deeper and more comprehensive understanding, acknowledging diversity in Islamic practices and potential regional variations (Interviews with Bustami, August 26, 2023; Hafizah, August 16, 2023).

The use of the internet and social media in religious education and child-rearing reflects the adaptation of millennial Islamic families to technology. This shift marks a significant change in how religious information and values are conveyed, indicating openness to new learning sources and communication methods (Aidulsyah, 2023; Farchan & Rosharlianti, 2021). This change is important to understand in the context of nurturing the younger generation, as it shows adaptation and flexibility in religious approaches, aligning with findings that their religious learning sources are increasingly dominated by internet-based sources (Akmaliah, 2020).

In terms of implications, these findings offer significant insights for a broader understanding of social and religious dynamics in contemporary Islamic society. Specifically, this study highlights how millennial Islamic families strive to align religious values with the challenges of the times. It suggests the need for a more inclusive and multidimensional approach to understanding Islamism, focusing not only on political and ideological aspects but also on social and cultural facets such as parenting. Furthermore, these findings highlight the need for further research on the impact of various Islamic parenting styles on child development and family dynamics in different cultural and socio-economic contexts. Thus, this study contributes a deeper understanding of social and cultural dynamics in contemporary Islamic societies in Indonesia and how they navigate the challenges arising from the interaction between tradition and modernity.

Conclusion

This study examines child-rearing practices in Islamic millennial families in Pontianak City, focusing on aspirations, materials, as well as methods and styles of parenting, and finds that

most families employ an authoritarian approach to child-rearing. The results of interviews and surveys show a diversity in parenting styles, with strong authoritarian indicators, especially in terms of religious affiliation, worship practices, and references in child education. The content of parenting is dominated by aspects of faith (*akidah*), morality (*akhlak*), worship (*ibadah*), and intellect, aiming to guide children to be religiously obedient and to secure a good future. There is variation in the application of parenting content among Islamic groups, and in many cases, strict control is applied to children's interactions with the external environment, particularly with those of different religions. These findings provide significant insights into how Islamic millennial families strive to align religious values with the challenges of modern times, reflecting the social and religious dynamics within contemporary Islamic society. However, this study is limited to a sample in Pontianak City, hence recommendations for further research include expanding the geographical scope and deepening the analysis of the long-term impacts of these parenting patterns on child development.

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