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PARENTING AND MIDDLE CHILDHOOD : A META-ETHNOGRAPHIC SYNERGY OF ISLAMIC AND WESTERN PARENTING GUIDELINES FOR MUSLIM PARENTS

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Abstract

Parenting, being a pivotal factor in child development, has a profound impact on the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional outcomes. The current integrative-synergistic and interpretive study builds upon the qualitative research approach to investigate parenting during middle childhood.

The objectives that shaped the current study were: to examine the middle childhood characteristics in light of Islamic and Contemporary Western research, to pinpoint the key parenting principles for this critical age period, to produce developmental milestones of the target age group through blended Islamic and Western frameworks, and to suggest practical, milestone-based activities to support holistic development.

In order to achieve the mentioned objectives, the study employed two qualitative research models: qualitative historical synthesis and qualitative meta-ethnographic model of Noblit & Hare (1988) to analyze and blend collected data into a holistic development framework for Muslim parents in Muslim countries. By blending the Islamic perspective of Tarbiyah (holistic development training) and Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah (objectives of Islamic law) with contemporary Western parenting perspectives, the research incorporates Islamic teachings and Western pro-Islamic modern parenting frameworks into modern blended parenting guidelines for Muslim parents.

Key findings of the study underline the pivotal role of parenting in shaping cognitive, physical, spiritual, and socio-emotional development while responding to challenges faced by Muslim children. The study guides towards Muslim Parenting Outcomes (MPOs), detailing milestones for fostering moral integrity, resilience, and emotional intelligence during the middle childhood stage. Through the combination of two qualitative methods, the study presents a comprehensive analysis and synthesis to generate concrete strategies.

The study advances parenting education, curriculum design, and policy formulation by providing a unified model to bridge home and educational settings. The research enables parents, policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders to cultivate well-adjusted, balanced, morally grounded, and skilled individuals to meet the demands of today's complex and changing society.

Keywords: parenting, middle childhood, Muslim Parenting Outcomes, holistic development, child development milestones, qualitative synthesis

Introduction

Children depend on their parents in terms of their physical and psychosocial development (Alimohammadi et al., 2017). During this developmental period, parents prepare their children to be capable enough to survive and flourish (Bornstein, 2016). Locke, the famous British philosopher and educationist, opines that "*the well-educating of children is so much the duty and concern of parents, and the welfare and prosperity of the nation so much depend on it* (Locke, 1887). In terms of all its pervasiveness, parenting is considered the single largest variable associated with school disruption, child abuse, juvenile crimes, employability, child illnesses, underachievement, mental illness, and truancy (Kolvin et al., 1990).

Parenting comprises three components: first of all, care, which protects the child from damage and injuries; along with it, care also covers physical and emotional health. The second component is control, which encompasses deciding and applying boundaries in order to ascertain children's and others' safety. The third important component is to enhance a child's potential and make the best use of the opportunities to utilize such potential (Hoghughi & Speight, 1998). In order to better explore academic growth and literacy in relation to parenting, it is highly needed to discover parenting factors such as sensitivity, family learning environment, control or discipline, stimulation of cognitive abilities, parenting style, etc. that unite to shape academic growth in different ways, both indirect and direct (Collins et al., 2000; Morrison & Cooney, 2002).

Keeping in view the policy and practice implications, the research study deals National Education Policy of Pakistan (2017)'s Taleem, Tarbiya, and Tazkiya (knowledge and training-based purification of body and soul) and Islamic values, along with holistic development of a child on one hand and on the other hand it deals Single National Curriculum (2022) and National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan (2009)'s "standard 2 "Human Growth and Development" and standard 3 "Knowledge of Islamic Ethical Values/Social Skills". From the Islamic perspective, the highest standard of life for a Muslim to achieve is the total obedience of Allah (God) through ways and means shown by His final prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) for the balanced and harmonious development of personality. Muslims believe in living this life according to the will of Allah (God) and to prepare themselves and their children for this life and the life hereafter. This needs holistic, balanced, and harmonious development of a child which starts with effective parenting (Alimohammadi et al., 2017; Bornstein, 2016). If Muslim parents themselves are not aware and trained, they are unable to provide Muslim society with a balanced and harmoniously developed child. Therefore, today, a more pressing need exists than in the past and demands Muslim parents to be aware of it in detail.

Research Questions of the Study

1. What **characteristics** of middle childhood do Islam and Western research provide guidance about?
2. What are the **principles** Islam and Western research lay down for parents to follow while parenting a middle childhood?
3. What middle childhood-related milestones can be developed in the light of blended Islamic and contemporary Western parenting initiatives?

4. *What activities, based on milestones for parenting guidance, can be suggested to support parenting for the given stages of child development?*

Literature Review

Parenting a child as a path is very intricate, a whole comprises so many parts and filled with so many facets, each of which possess the capacity to considerably influence the growth and development of a child. In this context, ‘Parental Styles’ are one of the so many contributing elements in formation of a caregiver’s or parent’s approach to rear a child. In this regard, the importance of emotional atmosphere can never be ignored, which is, in principal, determined by what parenting approach or style the parents or caregivers adopts. Parenting style research was presented by Baumrind in 1971. She developed a typology with, initially, three parenting styles i.e. authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting style, to suggest variations in actions of parents (White & Berns, 2022). According to her, parents with authoritarian style try to assess, mold and control their child’s behavior by applying rigid rules, contrary to which parents with permissive style are open to accepting child’s independence than controlling him or her. In the middle of these two styles, she observed a third style which she named as authoritative style. Later in 1983, Maccoby and Martin identified one newer and three similar parenting style as identified by Baumrind. Maccoby and Martin’s identified four styles were labelled as authoritative (high demand and high response based style), authoritarian (high demand and less response based style), indulgent (low demand and high response based style) and last the newer one as neglectful (low demand and low response based style) parenting style based on parental behavior control and parental support dimension. In this connection, Baumrind, in 1991, added Uninvolved as a newer fourth style in her typology following the research of Maccoby and Martin (1983) (Checa & Abundis-Gutierrez, 2018).

Other than styles of parenting, assessment of such styles is also worth considering. In this connection, there are various scales available for the purpose, however, ‘Parenting Styles and Dimension Questionnaire’ (Handbook of Family Measurement Techniques: Volumes 1 - 3., 2000) is considered one of the best-known scales to determine style of parenting for caregivers, researchers and other stakeholders. Robinson, Mandleco, Oslen and Hart developed this questionnaire in 2001 to assess different styles of parenting particularly in clinical and academic settings. This scale is based on identifying three basic parenting styles i.e. authoritative, authoritarian and Permissive. Authoritative style exhibits realistic and clear expectations in terms of behavior, high level of support and warmth, appropriate monitoring and control of the child. Whereas authoritarian style exhibits less attentiveness and warmth in terms of response while on demandingness side it exhibits severity in behavior and being in charge of all matters of the child. Such style-led parents have strict instructions and demand blind compliance. Contrary to authoritarian style, permissive style parents exhibit low control and high levels of support and warmth. Such style parents are careless in terms of imposing punishments, setting limits and norms for their children. This scale being based on Likert scale,

Table 1

Baumrind’s four parenting styles: Authoritative

Parenting Style	Description
Authoritative	- Warmth, support, and attentiveness to the child's needs and emotions at a high degree. - Expectations for conduct that are fair and clear, and that are consistently upheld. - Promoting liberty and independence within reason. - Open dialogue and conversations between parents and kids. High levels of self-esteem, independence, and social competency are among the favorable child outcomes that are linked to this parenting style.

possess a number of parenting related statements and identifies how often parents or caregivers exhibit each behavior. Clinicians and researchers while looking at the questionnaire's rating may assess which particular parenting style or then mixture of styles caregivers or parents are employing to rear their child (Handbook of Family Measurement Techniques: Volumes 1- 3, 2000).

Table 2

Baumrind's four parenting styles: Authoritarian

Parenting Style	Description
Authoritarian	- Strictness and tight control, generally with less warmth and receptivity to emotions. - Strict regulations and strict standards for adherence. - A restriction on flexibility and an emphasis on upholding parental control. - Punishment is a common tool in the disciplinary process. Children raised in this manner may be obedient yet nervous, lacking in social and self-esteem..

Table 3

Baumrind's four parenting styles: Permissive

Parenting Style	Description
Permissive	- Kindness and emotional support in excess. - Lack of discipline and little control, with minimal restrictions. - A propensity to avoid conflict and give the youngster a lot of independence. - A reluctance to impose penalties. Children raised in this manner may exhibit poor self-control, impulsivity, and trouble adhering to norms.

Table 4

Baumrind's four parenting styles: Neglectful

Parenting Style	Description
Neglectful (Uninvolved)	Low degrees of control, reactivity, and warmth. - Parents are often emotionally aloof and uninvolved. - The absence of defined limits and expectations. - Little to no participation in the child's life or activities. Due to the lack of parental support and direction, this parenting style may cause children to feel neglected and may result in a variety of emotional and behavioral problems in them.

Islamic Perspective of Child Development and Parenting

Parenting has also been seen through the lens of religion. In this regard, religion is a key player in shaping beliefs and basic values about family life, and it has also influenced parenting styles (Bornstein, 2016). In a longitudinal study, religiosity was found to be associated with greater parenting satisfaction (Henderson, 2016). In another study by Weyand et al. (2013), it was found that positive religious coping approaches improved the parents' abilities, especially in dealing with behavioral issues with the child. Parenting and raising children have been given special importance in Islam, as evident from the Holy Quran and the hadiths of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him): Luqmân added,

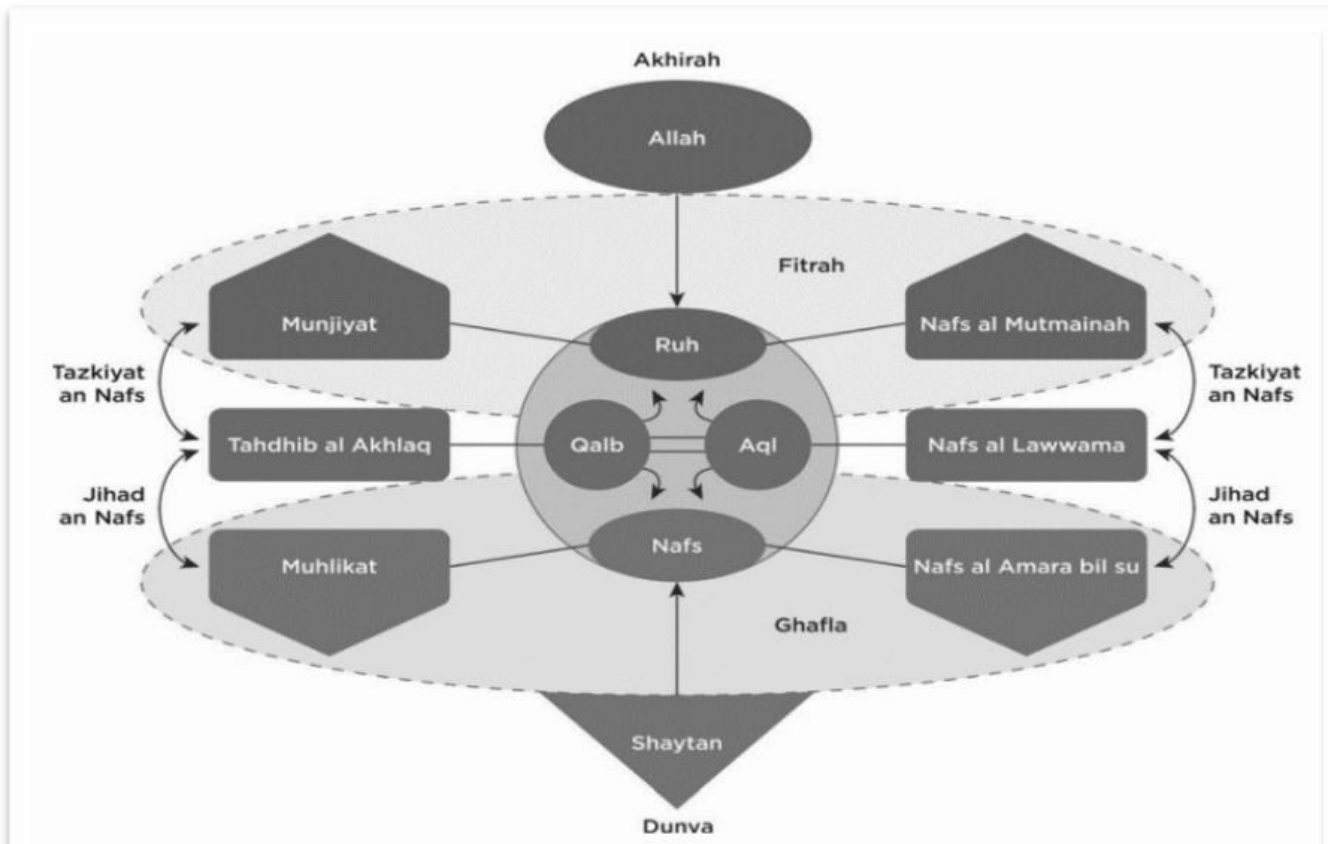
“O my dear son! Even if a deed were the weight of a mustard seed—be it hidden in a rock or in the heavens or on earth—Allah will bring it forth. Surely Allah is Most Subtle, All-Aware (Al-Quran, 31: 16). In another ayah of the Holy Quran, Allah Almighty narrates: And remember when Luqmân said to his son, while advising him, “O my dear son! Never associate anything with Allah in worship, for associating others with Him is truly the worst of all wrongs.” (Al-Quran, 31:13). Importance of parenting, in the hadiths of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), is as follows: "The best gift from a father to his child is education and upbringing." (Tirmidhī, 1970). The man is responsible for the inhabitants, the wife for her husband’s house and servant regarding his master’s property and they will be questioned (Bukhāri, 1966). Allah Almighty (God) has revealed in His sacred book, Al-Quran fourteen centuries ago on his beloved Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) the detail of how a sperm is changed into a living being (Qur’an 23: 12-14).

After the birth of the baby, Islam has made parents responsible to rear their children appropriately as evident from the hadith: “*Indeed, each of you is a shepherd, and each of you will be questioned regarding his flock*” (Bukhāri, 1966). In light of parenting responsibilities, Islamic scholars have suggested the following areas in which their parents have to train their children to be pious, intelligent, healthy children:

- i. Responsibility of faith development
- ii. Responsibility of character development
- iii. Responsibility of physical development
- iv. Responsibility of intellectual development
- v. Responsibility of psychological development
- vi. Responsibility of social development
- vii. Responsibility of sexual development

In terms of fulfilling responsibility of rearing children in Islamic way, Allah Almighty (God) has revealed in His sacred book, Al-Quran, the purification of soul which is presented below as an ‘Islamic Model of Purification of Soul’:

Figure 1



Islamic Model of Purification of Soul

The Islamic model of purification of soul has been derived from the Holy Quran; this model starts from 'nature of the soul' and proceeds through 'structure of the soul', stages of the soul', and ends at 'development of the soul'. Starting from the 'nature of the soul', nature i.e. *fitrah* posits that all individuals have the same sound nature at the time of their birth with possessing direct link to God but then their parents or caregivers change them to other directions. As Narrated by Abu Huraira: Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said, "No child is born but has the Islamic faith, but its parents turn it into a Jew or a Christian. It is as you help the animals give birth. Do you find among their offspring a mutilated one before you mutilate them yourself?" (Bukhari, 1966). Thus, according to the research, human beings most of the psychological problems are due to their misalignment with the nature. In this connection, following is the figure that represent Islamic worldview with human personality:

Islamic Worldview and Human Personality Connection

As the human being conceive the idea of *fitrah*, there comes *dunya* (temporal world) wherein human being passes and due to worldly desires distance, themselves from the pure nature bestowed earlier. *Fitrah* (nature of the soul) is followed by the structure of the soul wherein it has four key aspects i.e. nafs, qalb, aql and ruh as presented by Al-Ghazali in his 12th century work *Ahya-e-Ulummudin* i.e. The Revival of the Religious Science, 2015(Othman & Mohamad, 2019). In this whole story, *nafs* (the lower self or similar to ego) begin to divert to worldly desires and handover itself to the hands of the *shaytan* (the devil). *Qalb*, here, is the spiritual center of man; in it resides the consciousness. If *nafs*

dominates then *qalb* is turned towards *dunya* and *shaytan* and if not, then based on Islamic *tarbiyah* (spiritual training) it follows *aql* (intellect) and ascend a higher state. Here comes the role of the *ruh* (spirit) which is a direct linking point to God where human beings can be awarded divine knowledge, healing and guidance. This is followed by the stages of the soul, mentioned in the Holy Quran, which are as follow:

- i. *Nafs al ammarah* (evil inclined soul)
- ii. *Nafs al lawwama* (self-reproaching soul)
- iii. *Nafs al mutmainah* (peaceful soul)

Nafs al ammarah is the stage of the soul wherein intensive struggle is not placed to control *nafs* which consequently let the lower self to go wild and stay busy in worldly desires and ends up with *ghafra* which means forgetfulness of God. *Nafs al lawwama* is the next stage which is a struggle or diligence to stay away from *nafs*, *shaytan* and *dunya* and stay close to the *ruh* and *akhira* (afterlife) through religious knowledge and spiritual training to stay pious. The next stage of the soul is *nafs al mutmainah* which is, can be said, an ideal state of complete tranquility of the soul.

Islam provides a complete code of life, a system, to the human beings to purify the soul and reach the original *fitrah*. Thus, it is a cleansing process to make the mirror (turbid *nafs*) shine and reflect the divine light. This making the mirror shine is done through *ilm un nafs* (knowledge of the soul), *fiqh un nafs* (deep knowledge of the soul) and *tazkiyat un nafs* (purification of soul). This is putting deep knowledge to practice or application which is called *jihad un nafs* (struggle of the soul) under the supervision of a well-trained mentor. Such a well-trained mentor or expert starts the process of *tahdib al akhlaq* (refinement of character) in which *muhlikat* (vices) are removed from the personality and *munjiyat* (Godly qualities in our *fitrah* or virtues) are instilled through rigorous practice and *mujahidda* (the struggle to refine the character) (Al-Ghazali's Adapted Summary of Ihya Ulum al-Din: The Forty Principles of the Religion, 2016; Othman & Mohamad, 2019).

Islamic Holistic and Balance Development Model

Islam sets, holistic and balance development of an individual, a goal of education and training. All the acts, in the light of Islamic Injunctions, are the branches of *Tahdib al Akhlaq* (Refinement of Character) i.e. acts are generated according to the *Akhlaq* (character) of an individual. Therefore, *Akhlaq* is the real source of holistic and balance development of an individual personality. In order to understand *Akhlaq*, three key powers or energies are needed to be understood which are responsible to generable good or bad *Akhlaq* i.e. vices or virtues from one's character. Following are the three forces or energies or powers man is bestowed with:

Firstly, in order to understand lawful or valid worldly benefits or the benefits in the afterlife or to remove any danger or threat one needs *Quwat-e-aqalia* to differentiate between the good and the bad. Secondly, then after the differentiation between the good and the bad, one needs the power to obtain that beneficial thing where the *Quwat-e-shahwaiya* (Feelings, emotions, desires) is needed. Thirdly, in order to remove any danger or threat in the way of obtaining beneficial thing one needs *Quwat-e-ghazabia* (Will power, fury, anger). Through the combination of these three forces, certain acts are given birth in human life. These acts are the actions of human beings which fall in three categories:

In light of three categories, now the three forces or powers discussed above are explained below: Force or power 1 i.e. *Quwat-e-aqalia* (intellect) has three stages when it is put to test. This *Quwat-e-aqalia* (intellect) is in *lfraat* stage if one so intellectual or genius that he uses his intellect for deceiving others. The *Quwat-e-aqalia* (intellect) is in *tafreet* stage when one is so ignorant that his intellectual ability is almost nill and his dull mind is unable to understand important ideas and matters. The *Quwat-e-aqalia* (intellect) is in *aetidaal* stage when it is in balanced state of understanding both material and spiritual world according to the revealed knowledge Allah Almighty (God) revealed on Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Similarly, force or power 2 i.e. *Quwat-e-shahwaiya* (feelings and desires) has also got three stages when it is put to test. This *Quwat-e-shahwaiya* (feelings and desires) is in *lfraat* stage if one becomes so much an animal or blind in lust that he cannot wait to distinguish between *halal* (lawful) and *haram* (unlawful). For him there remain no difference between his own wife and other women. The *Quwat-e-shahwaiya* (feelings and desires) is in *tafreet* stage when one becomes so austere and abstinent that even avoid his own wife or avoid *halal* opportunities permitted by Allah Almighty (God). The *Quwat-e-shahwaiya* (feelings and desires) is in *aetidaal* stage when it is in balanced state and utilize *halal* i.e. permissible things or fulfill his desires utilizing permissible opportunities and avoid *haram* or unlawful.

Likewise, force or power 3 i.e. *Quwat-e-ghazabia* (will or fury) has also got three stages when it is put to test. This *Quwat-e-ghazabia* (will or fury) is in *lfraat* stage if one becomes so much wolf that he feels no guilty in bloodshed. For him there remain no difference in lawful and unlawful while using this force or power. The *Quwat-e-ghazabia* (will or fury) is in *tafreet* stage when one becomes so coward that even cannot react in its due place or cannot speak the truth. The *Quwat-e-ghazabia* (will or fury) is in *aetidaal* (equilibrium) when it is balanced and employed his/her fury or will power within the boundaries prescribed by Allah Almighty and he/she refraining from using fury or will power in situation where Allah Almighty has ordered restrain. All the three set, each comprising three stages total in nine stages. These stages comprise three of *lfraat* (excess), three of *tafreet* (deficiency) and three of *aetidaal* (equilibrium). These total nine stages include both positive and negative qualities of personality. However, the main aim and the focus is on the three stages of equilibrium i.e. Hikmat (wisdom), Iffat (chastity) and Shuja'at (bravery) which collectively are referred to as 'The Principles of Equilibrium'. Such qualities characterize a balanced personality, and due to these positive qualities the Islamic believers worldwide are called as *ummat-e-aadila* (community in balance) or *ummat-e-wasata* as mentioned in the text (Al-Quran, 2:143) (Thanvi, 2015).

Theoretical framework of Al-Ghazālī's Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah: Al-Ghazali, a well-known Islamic Scholar, has contributed in different ways towards development of an individual through various notable books and lectures. His works, after centuries, are still popular and being utilized all over the world. He has presented a well-being model in which, in the light, of Islamic injunctions, he has presented the holistic development system for an individual which is as follow:

This model is called '*Maqasid-al-Shariah Model*'. As evident from the figure above, it has five key aspects: *Hifz-al-Iman* or *Hifz al-din* (Protection of religion or faith), *Hifz al-nafs* (Protection of life), *Hifz-al-Aql* (Protection of intellect or mind), *Hifz-al-nasl* (Protection of Progeny or Lineage) and the fifth and last *Hifz-al-Mal* (Protection of Property or Wealth). This model can be employed at both the individual and broader level, encompassing nations and community for the implementation of Islamic law. This model guides Muslim parents and caregivers or mentors and teachers on how to rear children based on maqasid al-shariah. The sequence of the maqasid can be applied according to the situation. Firstly, this *Maqasid al-Shariah* model through *Hifz al-nafs* (Protection of life) guides parents

and caregivers to rear children in a way that is focused on the safeguarding of life and its associated aspects. Secondly, it guides through *Hifz-al-Iman* or *Hifz al-din* (protection of religion or faith) that parents have to protect and prevent their child from all those things and activities which lead to damaging or weakening his/her faith or religion. Parents should contribute towards advancement of faith of the child in Allah Almighty through Quranic and Prophetic guidance. Thirdly through *Hifz-al-Aql* (Protection of intellect or mind) it guides parents and caregivers that they should protect their children from damaging their intellect and doing all possible to advance their intellectual capabilities through education and training. Fourthly, through *Hifz-al-nasl* (Protection of Progeny or Lineage), it guides parents about protection of progeny or lineage which in its essence deals both nature and nurture perspectives. Fifthly through *Hifz-al-Mal* (Protection of Property or Wealth), this model guides parents to protect all belongings – property or wealth from all types of theft, misuse, extravagance etc. and train child to earn *halal* (lawful) and spend in *halal* (lawful) matters of life and protect the *halal* wealth from all types of misuse, extravagance and theft etc. (*Al-Ghazali's Adapted Summary of Ihya Ulum al-Din: The Forty Principles of the Religion*, 2016; Ibn 'Āshūr, 2006; Jan, 2019).

In short, the Islamic perspective on parenting and child development explored above discusses the role of Islamic injunctions-based frameworks in the development of child personality with particularly focus on inner qualities of the personality. It referred to studies that linked religiosity to greater satisfaction of parents. The Quranic and Prophetic lead importance of parenting with specific guidance on physical, psychological, social, sexual, intellectual development, character refinement and advancement of faith on Almighty Allah (God).

The literature review above presents Islamic model of purification of soul, holistic and balanced development model of Islam and Maqasid al-Shariah model of Al-Ghazali in terms of covering development of well-rounded Individual based on Islamic principles. The literature review on Islamic models guides parents about developing their children's personality in terms of both this world and the world hereafter.

In summary, the Western and Islamic theorists discussed contributed substantially to the comprehension of child development and parenting, presenting distinct viewpoints on the applications of their theories to different child development and parenting variables. Together, these offered frameworks advance our understanding of the multidimensional and multifaceted nature of child development and parenting by underscoring the interplay of intellectual, physical, socio-emotional, and moral development in the background of child raising.

Research methodology

The current study is both integrative and interpretive (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Research Methodology Overview of Qualitative Research, 2023) in nature under the umbrella of qualitative research approach (Alotaibi, 2018) with qualitative historical synthesis and meta-ethnographic synthesis as focusing lenses (Snyder, 2015) (Austin & Sutton, 2014) to deal specific kind of analysis and synthesis (Toye et al., 2014; Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007). The study has middle childhood as a major area to focus (Newman & Newman, 2012) under Islamic and Contemporary Western parenting guidelines to extract and synthesize data about. In this regard, after going through qualitative research methods, qualitative historical synthesis (Johnson and Christensen, 2008) and meta-ethnographic model of Noblit & Hare (1988) (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007) were found best-fit methods to achieve the objectives of the study.

Qualitative Historical Synthesis

Historical research methodology is a process of investigating systematically past documents/events etc. to reach an account of what took place, to present, interpret or reconstruct under multiple point of views (Johnson and Christensen, 2008).

This research methodology, in general sense, adhere to the following five stages:

- 1) Identifying a researchable topic and formulating a research problem/question
- 2) Reviewing literature or collecting data
- 3) Evaluating the materials
- 4) Synthesizing the reviewed literature or data
- 5) Preparing report

Historical research was found to provide five reasons to conduct it i.e. answering questions, uncovering the unknown, identifying the relationship which the past reveal to the present times, recording and evaluating the achievements of organizations or individuals and contributing towards understanding various aspects.

Keeping in view the aforesaid methodology, the researcher utilized it with data type as secondary source in the form of books, articles, thesis etc. Efforts were put to ensure a high level of external and internal criticism for validity, trustworthiness, authenticity and reliability or accuracy of the data sources to be utilized (Johnson and Christensen, 2008)

Qualitative Meta-ethnography

Meta-ethnography, as a qualitative research method, was first introduced by Noblit and Hare in 1988 in the field of education. Other than qualitative historical synthesis method, meta-ethnography is a method which facilitates to blend findings of two or more than two qualitative research studies to answer a similar topic or a research question. It is, essentially, to go beyond a traditional review of literature to look at individual research studies in order to facilitate generalizations by extracting themes, metaphors and concepts (Toye et al., 2014).

Findings

Middle childhood, the period of growth that lasts from 6 to 12 years of age, serves as milestone along the developmental pathway for humans and is characterized by a specific constellation of unique traits and developmental milestones.

Physical Characteristics of Middle Childhood: Middle childhood marks a period of limited growth.

Coordination Skills: Improved hand-eye coordination and balance can allow children to participate in cycling, playing catch or organized sports more confidently and skillfully. The transition in dental development during middle childhood includes the loss of primary (or baby) teeth and the emergence of permanent teeth. This makes dental care and hygiene all the more important during this time.

The maturation of visual acuity and auditory skills also impacts a child's ability to read, write, and participate academically. Periodic examinations of these organs are conducive to health and well-being. Sleep in middle childhood tends to shift significantly. Children generally need less sleep than they did when they were younger. However, maintaining a predictable sleep routine is vital for their well-being.

Body Awareness: Children are more aware of their bodies and will be more curious or concerned about their bodies and how they look. Promoting a positive body image and strong self-esteem is important especially during this formative time. It is well recognized that meeting nutritional needs is crucial in middle childhood through establishing good eating habits and seeking help where needed. Unsurprisingly, various researches done by professionals on the subject have shown human nutrition to be vital in the growth, cognitive, and overall health we need in our regular lives. Encouraging a balanced diet with plenty of different fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins is essential for good health. Regular exercise is essential to children of this age as it strengthens bones and muscles, aids in maintaining a healthy weight, and reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease. Encourage your kids to join a sports team and play active games. As children develop their gross motor skills, they can learn to run faster, jump higher, and participate in more complex physical activities such as team sports or dancing.

Puberty: There is some variability in the timing of puberty for children during the last years of middle childhood (between ages 9 and 12), as kids experience body hair growth and the development of secondary sexual characteristics. There can be much variation between individuals in when and how puberty starts and develops. It should be understood that although these features for physical development in middle childhood are standard, individual differences are not rare. Children must be enthusiastic about a healthy way of life that includes regular exercise, proper nutrition, and adequate sleep for their physical development and overall health.

Traits of Cognitive Development in Middle Childhood (6 to 12 years old): This middle childhood period and the preceding development (roughly ages 6–12) of cognitive growth will show amazing progress in cognitive development, focusing on thinking skills, solution skills and the efficiency of processing information. This period possesses multiple essential characteristics related to cognitive development. Concrete operational thinking is the phase of cognitive growth seen in children during middle childhood when they win the ability to think flexibly about real things and events. (Conservation is the idea that the amount of something does not change even if its shape does; think of the amount of water in a beaker and that in a pale, it is still the same, even though it looks different) Moreover they can create objects by using different criteria and perform the simplest reasoning tasks. This area has a massive increase in memory capacity.

Language and communication skills in young individuals continue to develop in this stage, with the development of vocabulary and linguistic abilities occurring. This sequence not only allows children to communicate their ideas clearly but to also understand increasingly complex language. People have become more skilled at using language for all sorts of things negotiation, persuasion, and storytelling, to name a few. The evolution of mathematical reasoning illustrates the way that mathematical skills develop. They are the ones who want to include children more deeply in mathematical concepts and the operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Children also learn about fractions, decimals, and basic algebraic equations.

You learn that in middle childhood, thinkers are still rooted in concrete operational thought (which is characterized by a way of thinking that is concrete and physical), although some children may show early signs of abstract thought. However, humans can think about fictional situations, understand analogies, and grasp complex moral and ethical systems. Furthermore, middle childhood is also characterized by a significant improvement in the speed and efficiency of information processing. Kids

show improved skills in filtering relevant information from distractions, engaging with the decision-making cycle, and organizing their thoughts.

Meta cognition is the awareness that children become aware of their cognitive capacities and their thinking processes. People start using meta cognitive strategies, like setting goals, tracking their progress, and adjusting their strategies as needed. Another benefit is that it increases attention span, which means you're able to keep your focus and attention set for long periods. Such enhancement allows kids to get involved in activities for an extended amount of time and focus on scholastic projects, including activities and tasks. Social cognition relates to its development in children as they move through many social interactions and relationships.

Social Cognition in Middle Childhood: During middle childhood, children experience tremendous growth in their social cognition. The increased social awareness that comes with this period is due to the ability to perceive, understand, and discern social situations. People gain a deeper understanding of social roles, rules and customs. In addition, they begin to understand more abstract ideas like empathy, perspective-taking, and moral reasoning. At this developmental stage, children are becoming more aware of cultural differences and inequalities. People have a deeper understanding and appreciation for the cultural practices, traditions, and beliefs of others.

During middle childhood, or ages 6 to 12, children often develop an increased desire for knowledge and a more significant curiosity about how they learn. This can allow children to develop independent interests or hobbies, resulting in greater autonomy in their education. These generalizations are tendencies, and it is important to remember that there can be variation between different children. Moreover, one should also understand that the rate of cognitive development can differ across many domains within a single child. Parents and educators primarily promote and develop intellectual growth during this period by teaching, questioning and offering opportunities to develop and practice problem-solving and critical-thinking skills.

Middle Childhood: Socio-Emotional Development (Ages 6–12): The period of age 6 to 12 years, known as middle childhood, is marked by social and emotional growth and development. In this phase, children become more autonomous and develop a deeper understanding of themselves and their social world. Here are some key socio-emotional features apparent during the middle childhood stage: In middle childhood, children value peer relationships more and seek to spend time with their peer groups. As children become capable of forming deep bonds with other children in their class, friendships influence self-esteem and social skills. The onset of self-concept, or the idea of who we are, becomes more complicated in boys and girls between 6 and 9 years old. ... fostering a greater self-awareness about their strengths and weaknesses, thus understanding who they really are and their place in the world.

Middle childhood sees continued growth in emotional regulation development. Young children show better emotion regulation by using different strategies to express their emotions adequately and better understand how others feel. This is a crucial time for developing empathy and conflict-resolution skills. A growing desire for independence and individualism characterizes the middle childhood period. As children mature, they take on more responsibility, from completing more schoolwork to doing more chores. These days, people seek out the chance to prove their skills and demonstrate that they can get the job done and do it themselves.

Social comparison, refers to comparing one's self with his or her classmates or fellows. Such behaviour may have positive or negative consequences. Through healthy competition, people might be motivated but the negative aspect is that those children are more likely to struggle with their self-worth especially if they view themselves as less capable than their classmates. This cognitive growth further extends into moral concepts, such as fairness and justice, as children mature in middle childhood. Through internalization, children thus learn moral ideals and rules; when they violate these rules, they develop a sense of guilt or shame.

In this developmental stage, the power of peer pressure is magnified. They are likely to face with societal expectations to conform to the norms dictated by their peers, which entices them to be involved in doing new things and adopting new mindsets to fit into their group. When peers, more commonly, interact with one another, bullying and teasing can occur, which may negatively impact the self-esteem and emotional development of some individuals. It is important to formulate methods to deal with such situations. The development of resilience and coping skills marks middle childhood. Men and women learn how to bounce back from setbacks quickly and build a sense of competence and trust in their skills. Gender roles and identity continue to develop throughout middle childhood. As people become more aware of cultural expectations regarding gender, they may resist or adhere to these norms.

But the strength of the bond to a parent continues, along with the growing influence of peers. Children can develop a strong sense of their own identity and rely on their family for emotional nourishment and security.

Moral Development Characteristics: Middle childhood, typically defined as the age range of 6 to 12, is a period where significant cognitive and social development takes place, and these processes are closely linked to the development of morality. Here are some main features regarding moral development in this stage: The middle childhood child is more flexible in understanding social society rules and the similar consequences for breaking the rules. People slowly become aware that their actions have beneficial and adverse effects. So, they become even better at predicting and foreseeing such outcomes. Middle childhood is the start of the stage that is marked by empathy that could shape middle aged sexually mature children's understanding and ability to relate to the emotions of others.

At this age, children will develop a conscience and guilt as their awareness of moral responsibility becomes more mature and comprehensive. This can be because when people do something that they consider subjectively bad and they feel guilty about it, this will lead to self-regulation.

Moral thinking can be observed in early middle childhood, marking the commencement of the developmental process. In the process of developing moral judgment, kids start to factor things like motives, achievements and equity into their decision-making process. People progress from simple compliance with rules to an understanding of moral principles.

As children are introduced to a more diverse culture, they become more aware of cultural and ethical differences. This increased awareness could lead to questions and conversations around equity, fairness, and social mores. It is through the experience of things that children develop their morals, whether through their own values or through the things they have been taught. Inappropriate vs Appropriate: When someone makes an error, we usually chastise, and this is a part of the development of morality. In middle childhood, kids are better equipped to resolve conflicts with friends. Through this process, they learn skills such as negotiation, compromise and conflict resolution, which are fundamental in maintaining healthy relationships and sustaining them.

Integrity and Reliability Cultivation: At this time of life, children become keenly aware of the value of honesty and dependability. These people understand the importance of honoring commitments and telling the truth. Around middle childhood, some children start to experience an increasing awareness of social justice issues. People might begin recognizing inequalities and want to advance equity worldwide. Furthermore, moral development is not an activity of the youth that is always continuous across the board and at a uniform pace. As parents, caregivers, and educators, we can encourage moral development by practicing transparency in communication, modeling empathy and accountability, and allowing opportunities for kids to participate in deliberation and ethical decision-making. Between the ages of 6 and 12, children experience moral development. While some research discusses mid-childhood moral development in stages, this process is complex. It includes the development of empathy or understanding of moral language and being able to make the right choices.

Characteristics of Language Development: During middle childhood, which typically occurs between the ages of 6 and 12, language and cognitive development are greatly influenced by the gradual expansion of thought processes and the context of language use. Here are some characteristics of language development familiar to this age group: Children in middle childhood are still known for their rapid vocabulary growth, acquiring an even more expansive vocabulary. People grow their verbal stock by partaking in things like reading, talking, and exposure to various topics and experiences. They start using more precise and complex vocabulary to express their ideas. At this stage, they better understand grammatical rules and an increased ability to use correct verb tenses, plurals, possessives, and more complex sentence structures. Oral proficiency improves over time, with fluency and coherence increasing. Most children experience this aspect quite early on, but some go through this process during mid-childhood. The family of sounds used in speech usually takes on a sharper and clearer form, making the utterance understandable to peers as well as older people.

Middle childhood is another crucial period for the development of reading skills. Most children progress from the first stage of developing reading skills, called "learning to read," to the next stage, where reading is used as a tool to gain knowledge, called "reading to learn." When children learn more about letters, words, and reading, they can better identify the words they see, understand what words mean, and determine the main ideas and details of any reading material they are provided with. In contrast, the writer has a high writing skill at this stage. Minors can also write stories, essays and reports that are more articulate and structured. Learners develop skills in using punctuation, capital letters, and formatting correctly.

Children are not born with good conversational skills they pick those up during middle childhood when they learn to hold the back-and-forth of conversation. People learn to listen actively, ask relevant questions, and offer thoughtful answers. Moreover, people learn to adjust their communication style based on the audience and other contextual components.

Narrative and storytelling abilities grow during middle childhood. Children often enjoy telling stories, creating and passing on stories as they skillfully combine many elements of character, place and sequence in the story. From literal events to abstract scenario thinking, language development is closely intertwined with cognitive development. Children in the middle childhood stage have a significantly increased ability to understand abstract ideas, and they also engage in discussions about things that are not real and moral dilemmas. This course of action, though, is more challenging for

children in this age group who come to form meta-cognitive aspects of language. They become more conscious of their thinking processes, allowing them to self-analyze their word selection and increasing their ability to self-correct through speech and writing.

Maturation of Figurative Language Understanding: Children's cognitive capacities develop over time, leading to their ability to grasp and interpret figurative language, which includes idioms, metaphors and similes. Such expression could draw on oral as well as written communication. Because children learn to use many language registers more adeptly, they find ways to talk appropriately in formal and informal situations. Children in the middle childhood stage often participate in group discussions and collaborative projects revolving around peer communication. In their groups, students learn not only how to negotiate but also how to articulate their thinking.

Characteristics of Islamic Spiritual Development: Progressively, Islamic spiritual development of children continues in middle childhood (6–12 years). According to the word evidence from the Qur'an and Saheeh Sunnah, the following is the main building block at the Islamic hand-holding growth development stage.

Middle childhood is a crucial time for children to learn and practice Islamic individual worship. They are slowly getting used to common habits like Salah (prayer), optionally fasting in the holy month of Ramadan (if they are of an appropriate age) and saying simple Islamic prayers. A growing understanding and internalization of Islamic principles and beliefs typically marks the developmental phase of children around this age group. People start to develop deeper faith and connection with Allah (God). Within middle childhood, children also have increased sensitivity to moral and ethical ideals so that their moral and ethical development has progressed. People slowly learn what actions are morally right and wrong. During this, what holds a significant role in developing their code of ethics is the Islamic teachings. Children get a stronger affiliation with their I, Islamic ideality, from the age of 6 to 12 years (middle childhood). People could have a deep sense of belonging to the Muslim Ummah and feel satisfaction from his religious legacy. Many children in that age group begin their formal Quran education. So they could become proficient in reading and reciting Quranic verses, increasing their bond with Islamic text and understanding its significance to their essence. Middle childhood is a time when children can become part of a local Muslim community. There will also be different community events, volunteer opportunities, and Islamic education programs individuals can participate in, creating a sense of belonging and community responsibility. **Role Models and Influences:** Children of this age group often seek guidance from parents, teachers, and others in Islamic spirituality. The influence of good role models and mentoring can impact one's religion and lifestyle for a lifetime.

Middle childhood marks the common development of thankfulness and generosity in children, who start recognizing their benefits and are implored to commit to holy tenets of Islamic teachings such as altruism and benevolence. Children in middle childhood are naturally curious and start asking more difficult questions about religion and spirituality. Encourage the platforms or vehicles that allow for open discourse and provide them with appropriate developmental responses to aid their understanding. Children grow by learning to reflect upon their actions and eventually become accountable for them. The Qur'an teaches us to build character and take responsibility for our deeds. For parents, carers, and Islamic educators, establishing this caring and loving atmosphere is paramount to ensure children's spiritual development in middle childhood. Establishing a solid foundation for every individual's spiritual development is built upon spreading awareness and

understanding of Islamic principles and offering guidance in addressing questions and concerns. The phase of middle childhood is significant in the context of Children's Islamic Spiritual Development. This is when children start developing a deeper understanding of their faith and the rituals and traditions related to their religion.

Discussion

The research establishes that Islam offers explicit recommendations with regard to middle childhood. For example, the notion which MacArthur calls as loving and disciplining of young children, ethical and social responsibility of middle children, independent and accountability of adolescents are in sync with Islamic values. These principles are primarily Sourced from Qur'an and Hadith, providing a familiar paradigm for parents elaborated on spiritual and moral conduct (Rahmawati, 2021).

The Islamic religion gives an Islamic approach to child development, with recommended ways on how to cultivate love and discipline in the early ages, instill ethical and socially responsible character during middle childhood, and encouraging independence and self- responsibility during adolescents (Karim, 2018; Rahmawati, 2021). Such a conception is effective because it has regard for the all-round development of the child both spiritually and morally as well as physically and intellectually.

A study on the subject supports habituation and exemplary activities in the decreed teaching of Islamic values wherein, teachers and parents become role models to their children (Ardiansari & Dimiyati, 2021). For example, parents who opt for Islamic schooling are motivated in order to retain cultural heritage and to give their children positive sense of who they are and where they belong, as remarked by Merry (2005). Such an environment that is highly integrated with Islamic spirituality makes children grow up to be responsible and be disciplined for their growth to take place.

Thus, the idea of Islamic conception of holistic parenting embraced the fact of psychological well-being combined with the directions in effective child rearing. The teachings from the Quran which include 'guard yourselves and your families from a Fire' together with Prophetic teachings which include 'enjoin upon our children and our families Iqshah, and educate them' is an indication of the two vital signs namely; spiritual awareness and responsible child rearing (Rahmawati, 2021). Therefore, it is possible to emphasize that through the obtaining of giant theoretical material on child development provided within Islamic terms, the Muslim parents can construct the effective conditions for spiritual, moral, and social growth. This approach does not only help encourage the development of cohesive family structures, but also able individual who would build a functional society. Below are given the objectives wise contextualization of study findings:

Consequently, it must be noted that contemporary western research works as the foundation of this research study has benefited greatly by providing theoretical and empirical knowledge related to child development to which suitable Islamic guidelines and directions can copiously be sought and integrated for amalgamation into the overall framework of Muslim child rearing.

In Western countries there exists stages of development that are a checklist of what is expected of the child at each age in regards to physical, emotional, cognitively, and socially. For example, the theory of Erik Erikson, which presents understandable notions concerning the fulfillment of children's needs at different stages of development, corresponds to general aims of parenthood in Islam (Sulaiman et al., 2014) (Lahmar, 2020). These facts are in harmony with the overall concept of the Islam religion about

specialized guidance for each developmental phase, which definitely does not contradict common with the explored dichotomy.

Islamic approach to parenting turns to spiritual education, spirituality, concepts of responsibility, and family values. On the other hand, the Western models are research-informed and importance is given to the psychological talent and spiritual values such as liberty, self-reliance, dualism, and skepticism are expressed.

The relationship between these frameworks is based on the fact that one or another approach to child-rearing can be observed in them. Islamic parenting paves way to a healthier approach of a child's upbringing that is always interconnected with the principles of tarbiyah (Holistic training) and establishing a proper relationship with Allah (SWT) focusing on moral responsibility of a child. Whereas, Western parenting has a theoretical frame work which has been drawn from research in developmental psychology and focuses on four major aspects namely: independence, emotional regulation, empathy, and reasoning. This study also reveals that the amalgamation of religious and secular paradigms can provide Muslim parents with an all-encompassing and flexible parenting approach that meets various aspects of human development.

At the middle childhood stage, both Islamic and the western theories agree about the social aspect of child development, interpersonal etiquette, as well as, ethics, and problem solving. Islam also nurtures children to be truthful, respect themselves and others and also be responsible citizens in their societies. Ethical behaviour is supported with the Western guidelines that address importance of social competencies and and solving problem solving skills. This simplex parenting should involve routines, and schedule, but at the same time sand boxes and other ways by which children can interact socially, explore empathy, and even cognitively through constructive scaffolding. Both models emphasis the importance of clear directions, as well as positive examples in ethical decision making and self-management.

Contextualizing Western Practices within an Islamic Worldview: To name it, there is no doubt that Western parenting styles have to be amalgamated in the context of the Islamic framework. In contrast, Western parenting philosophy tends to value personal and personal individual responsibility and independence, still Islamic parenting highly values the social accountability, family cohesiveness, and communal welfare. The individualism which underpins many of the Western developmental theories can clash with the collectivist nature of the Islamic world which stresses the rights of the family and the community above and beyond those of the individual as person. On the other hand, when these Western practices are placed in context of Islamic culture and orientation, the usefulness of these practices could be introduced in the shape of stressing mutual help, family support and moral responsibility.

For instance, although the western way of parenting is built around child's learning how to be independent as a way of promoting individualism, this can be always linked to the Islamic teachings that pays emphasis on the cooperation with other members of the society. Such a balanced framework makes provision for what the child wants and what is needed in the society and other family members. These integration gives the parenting model to fit the modern life, but at the same time, based on the Islamic teachings.

Another major strategy of effective parenting is identified to include structured family discussions. Such discussions allow parents and children to discuss various issues in person, exchange the experience and search for the solution together. Such discussions which are based on the Islamic concept of consultation (shura) do not only help maintain and improve family bonds as well as foster the development of the children's analytical skills as well as ways and means of solving problems. This approach is similar to western family meetings hence acts as a cross-cultural and cross education system approach.

Conclusion

To conclude, the current study offers a comprehensive examination of parenting and child development guidelines pertaining to middle childhood, synergizing Islamic and Western frameworks to generate holistic approach to middle childhood development by applying qualitative historical synthesis and qualitative meta-ethnographic synthesis.

The study helps in extending the knowledge of theoretical propositions by building upon the realization of the similarities between Islamic and Western approaches to parenting. In enabling the formulation of a distinct theoretical framework of Muslim parenting the research integrates moral guidance from Islamic teachings and developmental science from the West. These dual approaches enhance the discussion on parenting by positing that there is a mutual interplay of spiritual, moral and developmental features thereby expanding the usability of parenting theories to secular and religiously different groups. This synthesis not only emphasizes the importance of the basic concepts and values of parenting on the basis of studied data but also points at the necessity of cultural and religious reference in relation to these conceptions. Heading the systematic record of parenting progress, this study empowers parents with a framework that aligns both ethical intervention and child developmental research. The two frameworks enable parents to help their children grow in all the aspects; spiritual, physical and even temporal.

Recommendations

The study's focus being parenting a Muslim child generates variety of aspects to present recommendations, however, some keynote recommendations are presented as follow: Organize workshops for Muslim parents on integrating Islamic and Western principles: Such activities should be planned and held from time to time so that parents especially Muslims should know how they can train their children according to the Islamic religion and also keep to developmental theories that are current in the society. They would also offer parents the required tools and knowledge on how to equally parent their children through the combination of Islamic and Western guidelines.

Create a digital tool for tracking parenting milestones aligned with Islamic and Western guidelines: A simple to use electronic interface or software should be created for mom and dad to evaluate their kids against the standards of Islamic and Western child rearing. This tool could thus provide parents with individualized targets, supports and feedback by which proper parenting roles are being met. Moral storytelling, learning by doing, and family-structured discussions appear as effective measures that can be used. Besides, such resources as Quran study circles, technological solutions for tracking developmental steps, parenting seminars equip parents with tools to execute these steps properly. The assimilation of these tools into the day-to-day parenting practices helps parents for the needs of development and spirituality of the child. This activity not only improves the parent-children relationship but also benefit other families around the Muslim community.

Develop and disseminate a comprehensive "Muslim Parenting Outcomes" document: It denotes that a sheet containing comprehensive information about the relevant milestones of parenting which is deriving from the compatibility of the two approaches to the Islamic culture should be developed to help the Muslim parents become effective in their parenting. This document would help the parents as a check list to use in determining the developmental milestones next to cognitive, emotion, and spirituality.

Recommendations for Future Research: Conduct empirical studies to validate the proposed parenting milestones: Future studies have to methodologically validate the suggested parenting milestones obtained in this research. It would be possible to use longitudinal or case studies to evaluate (in specific conditions of children's learning environment) the effects of these integrated milestones on child development.

Explore regional variations in Islamic and Western parenting interpretations: To understand how these two demanding parentage traditions exist in two totally different global systems, subsequent scholarly studies are required to examine how these principles are understood and practiced differently in various cultures and regions within Muslim and Western countries. This would help to appreciate wider differences of parenting practices across Muslim communities globally, and get some feel of the adjustments made per region.

Investigate the role of technology in facilitating milestone achievement for parents: Hence, in future research, staking attention in how technological enhancement, including applications and other online interfaces, encourage parents in milestone achievements. It is possible that this research may offer insights into understand better and potentially creating novel technological interventions that build on the understanding of parenting practices according to Islamic and Western theories.

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