



Family-Based Islamic Religious Education: A Phenomenological Study on the Roles of Muslimat NU and Aisyiyah Mothers in Cepu

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Article history: Received: June 24, 2026 Revised: July 25, 2026 Accepted: August 18, 2026 Available Online: September 10, 2026	Family-based Islamic religious education serves as the primary foundation for shaping a child's character, moral conduct, and spirituality. Amidst the challenges of the digital era and the demands of dual roles, mothers hold a central position as the first and primary educators (al-madrasah al-ula). This qualitative study using a phenomenological approach explores the subjective experiences, spiritual consciousness, and personal values of mothers belonging to the Muslimat NU and 'Aisyiyah Muhammadiyah communities in Cepu District. The differing socio-religious backgrounds—Muslimat NU rooted in tradition and pesantren, and 'Aisyiyah grounded in modernity and rationality—produce rich and diverse parenting dynamics. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis to reveal informal education strategies, ways of navigating contemporary challenges, and the impact of community participation on mothers' pedagogical capacity. The study concludes that the mother's role in religious education is interpreted as transformative worship and a spiritual calling, rather than a mere domestic obligation. The essential structure of this educational experience is realized through leading by example (uswah hasanah), the cultivation of daily worship habits, and contextual dialogue at home. Despite facing the dilemmas of dual roles and digital disruption, active involvement in the Muslimat NU and 'Aisyiyah organizations serves as a key pillar of resilience. These communities provide pedagogical capacity building, peer emotional support, and spiritual motivation. These findings underscore the importance of integrating religious community empowerment with the strengthening of the family's informal educational function to nurture a generation of Muslims who are both morally upright and adaptable.
Keywords: Islamic Religious Education; Role of Mothers; Family; Phenomenological Study; Muslimat NU; 'Aisyiyah.	
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	ABSTRAK
	Pendidikan agama Islam berbasis keluarga merupakan landasan utama dalam membentuk karakter, perilaku moral, dan spiritualitas anak. Di tengah tantangan era digital dan tuntutan peran ganda, ibu memiliki posisi sentral sebagai pendidik

	pertama dan utama (al-madrasah al-ula). Penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi ini mengeksplorasi pengalaman subjektif, kesadaran spiritual, dan nilai-nilai personal para ibu yang tergabung dalam komunitas Muslimat NU dan 'Aisyiyah Muhammadiyah di Kecamatan Cepu. Perbedaan latar belakang sosial-keagamaan—Muslimat NU yang berakar pada tradisi dan pesantren serta 'Aisyiyah yang berlandaskan modernitas dan rasionalitas—menghasilkan dinamika pengasuhan yang kaya dan beragam. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan analisis dokumen untuk mengungkap strategi pendidikan informal, cara para ibu menghadapi tantangan kontemporer, serta dampak keterlibatan dalam komunitas terhadap kapasitas pedagogis ibu. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa peran ibu dalam pendidikan agama dimaknai sebagai bentuk ibadah yang transformatif dan panggilan spiritual, bukan sekadar kewajiban domestik. Struktur esensial dari pengalaman pendidikan tersebut diwujudkan melalui keteladanan (uswah hasanah), pembiasaan ibadah sehari-hari, serta dialog kontekstual di lingkungan keluarga. Meskipun menghadapi dilema peran ganda dan disrupsi digital, keterlibatan aktif dalam organisasi Muslimat NU dan 'Aisyiyah menjadi salah satu pilar utama ketahanan keluarga. Kedua komunitas tersebut memberikan penguatan kapasitas pedagogis, dukungan emosional dari sesama anggota, dan motivasi spiritual. Temuan penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya mengintegrasikan pemberdayaan komunitas keagamaan dengan penguatan fungsi pendidikan informal keluarga untuk membentuk generasi Muslim yang memiliki integritas moral sekaligus mampu beradaptasi dengan perkembangan zaman.
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A. Introduction

From an Islamic perspective, the family serves as both the smallest social unit and the most fundamental pillar for transmitting Islamic values, shaping character, and nurturing a child's spirituality from an early age. Within this informal structure of family education, the mother holds a central position as the first and primary educator (al-madrasah al-ula). This role is not merely defined by the fulfillment of domestic duties and obligations; rather, it constitutes a form of transformative worship and a noble spiritual responsibility. Through strong emotional and spiritual bonds, the mother acts as a key figure in providing a virtuous example (uswah hasanah), establishing habits of daily worship, and instilling the values of noble character (akhlakul karimah).

The exalted status and immense pedagogical responsibility of a mother are affirmed by the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) in his statement that Paradise lies beneath the feet of mothers (narrated by Ahmad and An-Nasa'i)—a symbolic acknowledgment of the mother's fundamental contribution to guiding the life orientation and religious foundation of the next generation.

Education is a fundamental process in shaping an individual's character and values. In the Islamic context, education holds a broad meaning; it is not merely a process of transferring knowledge but also encompasses the cultivation of moral character, spirituality, and devotion to Allah (SWT). The family is one of the primary environments where education takes place. It is here that the initial and most foundational educational process occurs—even before a child is introduced to the outside world. Within the family, the mother plays a pivotal role as the first and primary educator of her children.

Various contemporary studies confirm that the mother's role in religious education at home is a decisive factor in the direction and quality of a child's religious development. Sari and Kurniawati (2021), in research published in the *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, state that the intensity of a mother's involvement in family religious activities—such as guiding prayer, teaching daily supplications, reading the Quran, and discussing Islamic values with the child—positively correlates with the child's discipline and religious attitude. The study also emphasizes that the religious education provided by mothers is more personal and contextual, as it takes place informally through daily interactions.

However, in today's social reality, the religious role of mothers within the family often faces significant challenges. Modernization, the advancement of digital technology, and economic demands frequently require mothers to divide their time and attention among household chores, employment outside the home, and their religious roles. This phenomenon impacts the intensity and quality of Islamic education within the family. Nuraini (2020) indicates that mothers who balance dual roles—as both

homemakers and wage earners—tend to struggle to allocate sufficient time to optimally guide their children in religious education.

On the other hand, Muslim women's communities—such as Muslimat NU and 'Aisyiyah Muhammadiyah—play a pivotal role in fostering and strengthening the religious capacity and educational awareness of mothers. These organizations function not merely as socio-religious entities but also as agents for the empowerment of Muslim women across various domains, including child education. Fauziah (2022) notes that mothers' participation in religious activities, Islamic parenting workshops, and study forums organized by Muslimat and 'Aisyiyah significantly contributes to reinforcing their religious roles within the home. These communities serve as platforms for knowledge exchange and spiritual strengthening, as well as spaces for collective reflection on the challenges and strategies associated with Islamic education within the family.

A phenomenological approach was selected for this study to explore in depth the lived experiences of mothers from the Muslimat and Aisyiyah communities in fulfilling their roles as religious educators within the home. This approach enables the researcher to capture the subjective meanings, spiritual understandings, and personal values that underpin their religious education practices. As noted by Creswell (2021), the phenomenological approach allows researchers to understand the meaning of human experiences from the perspective of those who directly lived them, rather than relying solely on rigid, objective indicators.

The Muslimat and 'Aisyiyah communities in Cepu District serve as the focus of this study due to their long histories and deep-rooted socio-religious presence within the community. Muslimat NU is known for its traditional, **pesantren**-based approach, whereas 'Aisyiyah Muhammadiyah tends to be modern, emphasizing rationality and formal education. These differing ideological backgrounds and approaches offer a wealth of perspectives on the Islamic educational practices implemented by mothers within the family setting. This research aims to reveal how these two communities

influence the ways mothers nurture their children spiritually and how they navigate various prevailing social challenges.

Furthermore, the dynamics of contemporary Muslim families reveal that many mothers face a dilemma between social expectations of the "ideal woman"—who is religious, nurtures her children, and adheres to religious norms—and the realities of life that demand women's economic contribution. In this context, knowledge and engagement with communities such as Muslimat and Aisyiyah serve as decisive factors that reinforce the resilience of mothers in their religious roles. Kartini (2023) notes that women active in Islamic women's organizations possess higher levels of self-confidence and spiritual capacity when navigating modern family dynamics.

Given these findings, it is crucial to conduct an in-depth study on the role of mothers in Islamic education within the home, particularly within religious communities such as Muslimat and Aisyiyah. This research aims not only to identify the Islamic educational practices carried out by mothers but also to capture the spiritual significance, inner experiences, and the influence of the community on the construction of a mother's religious role.

This research is also expected to contribute to the development of family-based Islamic education models and provide insights to religious organizations and educational institutions for designing programs that empower mothers. In the long term, strengthening the role of mothers in family-based Islamic education will significantly impact the quality of the Muslim generation, fostering individuals who are intelligent, possess good character, and hold strong faith.

The significance of this research also lies in its methodological aspect. Most prior studies on Islamic religious education within the family have tended to employ normative-descriptive or quantitative approaches; consequently, they have not fully captured the dimensions of subjective experience, spiritual awareness, and personal meaning that underpin the religious educational practices of mothers. The phenomenological approach is crucial in this study because it enables the researcher to understand the essence of the mothers' experiences from their own perspectives and to

uncover the inner values that shape how they provide religious education to their children.

Based on the problem formulation, this study aims to explore and describe the essential structure and meaning of the experiences of the Muslimat and Aisyiyah communities in Cepu District in fulfilling their roles as Islamic religious educators within the family.

B. Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach, specifically a phenomenological research design. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables the researcher to explore in depth the meanings and subjective experiences of mothers regarding the implementation of Islamic religious education within the family setting. The phenomenological method is well-suited for investigating the subjects' lived experiences and how they interpret their religious roles in their daily lives as members of the Muslimat and 'Aisyiyah communities.

According to Kirk and Miller (1986), qualitative research is a tradition within the social sciences that relies on human observation of social environments and interactions in natural settings, as well as the use of language appropriate to the community being studied. Furthermore, Margono (1995) states that qualitative research focusing on the ideas of a specific figure is applicable when the subject is still alive and available for interviews, thereby allowing an understanding of their thoughts and experiences to be gained directly from the source. Accordingly, this study employs a phenomenological qualitative method to capture the essence of the mothers' experiences, particularly within spiritual, social, and cultural contexts.

1. Research Object and Focus

Research Object: The role of mothers in Islamic religious education within the family. Research Focus: Mothers' experiences in carrying out the role of religious education at home; the supporting and inhibiting factors they encounter; and the impact of the mother's role on the formation of the child's character and spirituality.

2. Research Subjects/Informants

The subjects of this study are women who are active members of the Muslimat NU and 'Aisyiyah Muhammadiyah communities in Cepu District. They are women who are actively involved in religious community activities while also fulfilling the role of educators within their families. They have children or grandchildren of school age (early childhood education, elementary school, or junior high school) and are willing and able to provide information openly and reflectively. The target number of informants is 10–15 individuals, selected based on the diversity of their experiences and backgrounds to obtain rich and in-depth data.

3. Research Location and Timeline

This research will be conducted in the Cepu District, Blora Regency, Central Java, an area featuring active Muslimat and 'Aisyiyah communities. This location was selected due to the notable dynamics of religious education within families. The research will span three months, from April to June 2025, encompassing the stages of pre-research, data collection, analysis, and result validation.

4. Data Collection Techniques

Two main factors influence the quality of research data: the quality of the research instrument and the quality of data collection. Instrument quality pertains to the instrument's validity and reliability, while data collection quality relates to the appropriateness of the methods used to gather the data. Consequently, an instrument with proven validity and reliability does not necessarily yield valid and reliable data if it is not employed correctly during the data collection process (Sugiyono, 2013).

1) Semi-Structured Interviews

The researcher employs an open-ended interview guide to explore the mothers' experiences, perceptions, and reflections regarding their roles in religious education. In-depth interviews are conducted to uncover the subjective meanings attached to the roles they fulfill. The study involves 10–15 informants. Information is gathered through pre-prepared questions. The research informants include mothers who are active members of the

Muslimat NU and 'Aisyiyah Muhammadiyah communities in Cepu District, have school-aged children or grandchildren (early childhood education/PAUD, elementary school/SD, or junior high school/SMP), and are willing and able to provide information openly and reflectively.

2) Participant Observation

Observation is a complex process composed of various biological and psychological processes; two of the most critical are the processes of perceiving and remembering (Sutrisno Hadi, 1986). In this study, the researcher directly observes the mothers' activities within family and community contexts—such as family religious study sessions, Qur'an lessons, or joint religious activities with their children—over a period of three months.

3) Documentary Study

The researcher also utilizes documentation techniques, gathering data through personal or community documents such as activity logs, religious study agendas, visual records, and family worship diaries.

4. Data Validity Test

To ensure the validity and authenticity of the data, the following techniques were employed:

1) Source Triangulation: Comparing information obtained from interviews with data derived from observations and documentation.

2) Data Analysis Technique

This study utilizes Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological analysis, which comprises the following steps: Data Transcription: Transcribing all interviews and field notes into written text; Horizontalization: Identifying significant statements related to the informants' experiences; Clustering: Grouping statements into key themes, such as "The Mother's Role as Educator," "Challenges in Religious Education," and "Influence on Children's Character"; Textual and Structural Description: Constructing a

narrative regarding what was experienced and the context in which the experience occurred; and Synthesis of Essence: Formulating the core essence of the mothers' experiences in implementing Islamic religious education within the family.

C. Result and Discussion

1. Spiritual Awareness as the Foundation of the Mother's Role

Spiritual awareness serves as the primary foundation for mothers belonging to the Muslimat NU and 'Aisyiyah Muhammadiyah communities in Cepu District as they fulfill their roles as Islamic religious educators within their families. These mothers perceive this role as a religious trust rooted in Islamic teachings and reinforced by the organizational values they uphold. This understanding shapes their perspective that religious education is not merely an activity of guiding their children, but a transcendental responsibility for which they are accountable not only to their families but also to Allah SWT.

In the lived experience of mothers, the role of imparting Islamic religious education is not viewed as an ancillary task that can be sidelined by domestic or public obligations. Instead, this role is understood as a calling of faith—one inherently bound to the identity of motherhood. Being a mother entails serving as a child's first and foremost educator in Islamic values, encompassing everything from articles of faith (*aqidah*) and acts of worship (*ibadah*) to moral character (*akhlaq*). This awareness develops alongside the internalization of religious teachings gained through study circles, religious gatherings, and guidance provided by religious organizations.

Furthermore, this spiritual awareness fosters an inner commitment within the mother to consistently implement religious education in daily life. Religious education is not viewed merely as the transmission of knowledge, but as an act of worship and devotion. Consequently, activities such as guiding a child in learning to pray, introducing acts of worship, and instilling Islamic etiquette are perceived as expressions of faith that hold value for both this world and the Hereafter. This awareness serves as a

robust foundation for the mother in fulfilling her role as an Islamic religious educator within the family.

Muslimat Participant 1 (PM1) expressed the following regarding spiritual awareness as the foundation of the mother's role: "From the very beginning, I have felt that a child is a trust from God. Therefore, providing religious education is my duty as a mother. If I do not teach prayer and proper conduct, I fear I will not be able to answer for it in the Hereafter." Muslimat Participant 2 (PM2) expressed the following regarding spiritual awareness as the foundation of the mother's role: "In Muslimat, we are often taught that a mother is the first *madrasah* [school]. From that, I realized that educating a child is a lifelong act of worship—not just when they are small, but continuing until they are grown." Muslimat Participant 3 (PM3) expressed the following regarding spiritual awareness as the foundation of the mother's role: "I teach religion to my child not because I am knowledgeable, but out of a responsibility of faith. I fear my child might drift away from religion due to my own negligence as a mother." Muslimat Participant 4 (PM4) expressed the following regarding spiritual awareness as the foundation of the mother's role: "To me, educating a child is part of preserving the faith. What I received from my own parents and from Muslimat study sessions, I pass down to my child. It has become a duty that spans both this world and the Hereafter." Muslimat Participant 5 (PM5) expressed the following regarding spiritual awareness as the foundation of the mother's role: "Sometimes I get tired, but I remember the message from the study sessions: educating a child is a source of spiritual reward. So, I carry it out with the intention of worship. A righteous child represents a continuous flow of blessings."

Aisyiyah Participant 1 (PA1) stated regarding spiritual awareness as the foundation of the mother's role: "From the start, I understood that educating a child is not merely a parental obligation, but a sacred trust from Allah. As an 'Aisyiyah mother, I was taught that the home is the first school and I am the teacher. So, when I provide religious education, I intend it as an act of worship." Aisyiyah Participant 2 (PA2) stated regarding spiritual awareness as the foundation of the mother's role: "For me, educating

a child in religion cannot be postponed or left entirely to the school. It is a responsibility of my faith as a mother. If a child is not introduced to **tauhid** [the oneness of God] and proper etiquette from a young age, I feel I am sinning.” Aisyiyah Participant 3 (PA3) stated regarding spiritual awareness as the foundation of the mother’s role: “In ‘Aisyiyah, we are often reminded that women play a strategic role in shaping a progressive generation. From that, I realized that educating a child is a form of **dakwah** [religious outreach]. So, it is not a burden, but a calling of faith.” Aisyiyah Participant 4 (PA4) stated regarding spiritual awareness as the foundation of the mother’s role: “I feel that the roles of mother and religious educator are intertwined; they cannot be separated. When I pray on time or read the Qur’an, my child observes it. In doing so, I feel I am fulfilling a sacred trust from Allah.” Participant Aisyiyah 5 (PA5) expressed the following regarding spiritual awareness as the foundation of the mother’s role: “When I am tired, I remind myself that educating my child is an investment for the Hereafter. In ‘Aisyiyah, we are taught to think rationally, yet the underlying intention remains an act of worship. Thus, religious education stems from an awareness of faith, not merely routine.”

Conversations among ‘Aisyiyah and Muslimat mothers reveal that spiritual awareness shapes their perspective on their roles. Islamic religious education within the family is understood as a divine trust rather than a personal choice, a calling of faith rather than an administrative task, and an integral part of maternal identity rather than an additional role. The shared understanding that educating children constitutes an act of worship—entailing responsibility for both this world and the Hereafter—underpins the practice of religious education within families across both communities.

2. Leading by Example as a Primary Educational Method

Leading by example serves as the primary method employed by mothers belonging to the ‘Aisyiyah Muhammadiyah and Muslimat NU communities in Cepu District to instill Islamic religious values in their children within the family setting. These mothers consciously position themselves as models of religious behavior that their children directly observe and emulate in daily life. This awareness stems from the

understanding that children learn about religion not merely through explanations or advice, but primarily through concrete experiences gained from intense interaction with their parents—particularly their mothers.

Mothers find that religious education conveyed through real-life examples is more effective than verbal instruction alone. Disciplined observance of acts of worship, the habit of prayer, polite speech, and patient, honest behavior serve as examples consistently demonstrated to their children. Mothers believe that a discrepancy between words and actions can actually undermine the internalization of religious values in their children; therefore, they strive to align their daily behavior with the religious values they wish to instill.

Furthermore, setting an example is understood not as a demand for perfection, but rather as a shared learning process between mother and child. In this process, the mother acts not only as a teacher but also as a learner who continually strives for self-improvement. This experience demonstrates that setting an example not only shapes the child's religious character but also strengthens the mother's spiritual awareness in fulfilling her maternal role. Thus, setting an example serves as a vital bridge for transmitting Islamic values from one generation to the next within the family.

Aisyiyah Participant 1 (PA1) stated regarding the role of setting an example as a primary educational method: "I prefer setting an example over giving a lot of advice. If I tell my child to pray but delay doing so myself, the child will surely be confused. So, I first try to improve myself to serve as a role model." Aisyiyah Participant 2 (PA2) stated regarding the role of setting an example as a primary educational method: "Children are imitators. If I am disciplined about praying and reading the Qur'an, my child follows suit without being told. In my opinion, an example makes a deeper impression than mere words." Aisyiyah Participant 3 (PA3) stated regarding the role of setting an example as a primary educational method: "At 'Aisyiyah, we are often reminded that education must begin with setting an example. Therefore, at home, I strive to demonstrate good character—such as speaking politely and patiently—because that is what my child sees every day." Aisyiyah Participant 4 (PA4) stated regarding the role of

setting an example as a primary educational method: “Sometimes I feel tired, but I realize my child learns from my attitude. So, when I pray, express gratitude, or act honestly, I intend for those actions to serve as education for my child as well.” Aisyiyah Participant 5 (PA5) stated regarding the role of setting an example as a primary educational method: “I rarely scold my child with long lectures. It is better for me to demonstrate the behavior directly—for instance, by praying on time or offering greetings. Over time, the child follows along.”

Muslimat Participant 1 (PM1) stated, regarding the use of setting an example as a primary educational method: “Children observe their parents' behavior. If I am diligent in performing prayers and reciting the Quran, my child will imitate that. So, I feel I must set the example myself before making demands of my child.” Muslimat Participant 2 (PM2) expressed a similar view regarding this method: “At Muslimat study gatherings, it is often emphasized that a mother serves as a role model. Therefore, I am mindful of my conduct at home—from speaking gently to observing proper daily etiquette—because those are the behaviors children most easily imitate.”

Muslimat Participant 3 (PM3) stated, regarding leading by example as a primary educational method: “It is difficult for a child if I simply issue commands without setting an example. I prefer inviting them to pray and study the Quran together; that way, the child learns on their own.” Muslimat Participant 4 (PM4) stated, regarding leading by example as a primary educational method: “I do not give many orders. Instead, I make an effort to consistently pray on time, say prayers before meals, and remain patient. My child observes this and follows suit.” Muslimat Participant 5 (PM5) stated, regarding leading by example as a primary educational method: “Leading by example is important. Children observe how their parents conduct themselves. Therefore, I am mindful of my behavior, because my child will imitate what I do.”

Conversations among mothers from the ‘Aisyiyah and Muslimat communities reveal that leading by example is understood as the most effective method of religious education. Religious education does not stop at verbal instruction but is instead embodied in tangible practices consistently demonstrated in daily life. For these

mothers, setting an example means positioning themselves as the primary medium of education for their children.

3. Cultivating Religious Observance in Family Life

Cultivating religious observance within the family serves as a tangible manifestation of the mother's role as an Islamic religious educator in the domestic sphere. Experiences shared by mothers belonging to the Muslimat NU and 'Aisyiyah Muhammadiyah communities in Cepu District demonstrate that religious education extends beyond the mere transmission of normative knowledge; rather, it is realized through religious activities performed routinely and consistently at home. In this context, the home is understood as the primary space for shaping a child's religious character through acts of worship integrated into daily life.

Mothers view the practice of establishing religious habits as a process of integrating religious values into family routines, allowing children to grow up in a natural, religious atmosphere. Daily prayers, congregational prayers, Quranic study sessions, and the application of Islamic ethics in family interactions are seen as primary means of instilling faith from an early age. These activities are not necessarily conducted in a formal or rigid manner; instead, they are adapted to the family's circumstances so that children can embrace them comfortably and without pressure.

Furthermore, cultivating the habit of worship is understood as an effort to integrate religious practice into a child's daily life and behavior. Through consistent repetition and patient guidance, mothers seek to gradually foster the child's religious awareness. Mothers have found this approach to be more effective because the child does not merely grasp religious teachings intellectually but also experiences and practices them firsthand within the family setting. Thus, establishing the habit of worship serves as a crucial foundation for building a child's enduring religious character.

Aisyiyah Participant 1 (PA1) shared the following regarding the practice of worship in family life: "At home, I make it a habit for my child to pray from the moment they wake up until they go to sleep. Initially, I had to keep reminding them, but

eventually, they memorized the prayers on their own. I don't want religion to be something studied only at school; I want it to be truly alive in my child's daily life." Aisyiyah Participant 2 (PA2) shared the following regarding the practice of worship in family life: "I prefer inviting rather than commanding. For instance, regarding prayer, I invite my child to join me for congregational prayer at home. They see me and stand beside me. Through this, I feel that religion becomes a habit rather than a forced obligation." Aisyiyah Participant 3 (PA3) shared the following regarding the practice of worship in family life: "We make Quran recitation a routine, even if it is brief. It doesn't have to take a long time; consistency is what matters. I want my child to feel that the Quran is a part of their life, not something burdensome or intimidating." Aisyiyah Participant 4 (PA4) shared the following regarding the practice of worship in family life: "In 'Aisyiyah, we are taught about progressive education that remains rooted in worship. So, at home, I cultivate Islamic ethics—such as offering greetings, speaking politely, and respecting parents. I consider all of that to be part of worship." Aisyiyah Participant 5 (PA5) shared the following regarding the practice of worship in family life: "Sometimes my child feels reluctant; that is natural. But I don't get angry. I guide them gently. To me, the important thing is for the child to get into the habit first. Once the habit is established, religious values will naturally take root."

Muslimat Participant 1 (PM1) shared the following regarding the habituation of worship in family life: "Since my child was young, I have accustomed them to praying before meals, before leaving for school, and before going to sleep. It has become a family habit; if I forget, the child is the one who remembers. I am happy because religion has become a part of their life." Muslimat Participant 2 (PM2) shared the following regarding the habituation of worship in family life: "I make it a habit to perform congregational prayers at home, even if we aren't always all present. At the very least, we pray Maghrib and Isha together. Through this, the child learns time discipline and the sense of togetherness in worship." Muslimat Participant 3 (PM3) shared the following regarding the habituation of worship in family life: "I have made Quran recitation a routine—sometimes after Maghrib, sometimes after Fajr. It doesn't

have to be for a long time; consistency is what matters. From a young age, the child has become accustomed to being close to the Quran." Muslimat Participant 4 (PM4) shared the following regarding the habituation of worship in family life: "In Muslimat, we are often taught that proper etiquette (*adab*) is part of the religion. So, I accustom my child to speaking gently, respecting elders, and being polite to guests. I explain to them that this, too, is an act of worship." Muslimat Participant 5 (PM5) shared the following regarding the habituation of worship in family life: "I want my child to practice the religion with ease and joy. Therefore, I create a comfortable atmosphere for worship at home. Once the child is used to it, I am confident they will continue to practice it even when they grow up."

The narratives from the 'Aisyiyah and Muslimat mothers demonstrate that the habituation of worship serves as a primary strategy for Islamic religious education within the family. Worship is not positioned merely as a formal obligation, but as a way of life integrated into the family's daily routine. Through daily prayers, congregational prayers, Quran recitation, and the practice of Islamic ethics, religion becomes a tangible part of the child's everyday experience, allowing Islamic values to be internalized naturally and sustainably.

Discussion

1. Spiritual Awareness as the Foundation of the Mother's Role

Spiritual awareness serves as the primary foundation shaping a mother's perspective and practices in fulfilling her role as an Islamic religious educator within the family. From the perspective of contemporary Islamic education, spiritual awareness is understood as an inner state that frames the act of educating children as an act of devotion to Allah (SWT), rather than merely the fulfillment of a social role or domestic obligation (Suyadi & Sutrisno, 2021). This awareness leads mothers to view religious education as a transcendental trust that carries both worldly and Hereafter-related consequences.

Numerous studies confirm that mothers with a strong sense of spiritual awareness tend to view their children's religious education as a moral and religious responsibility intrinsic to their maternal identity. Rohman and Nisa (2022) state that in Muslim families, mothers serve as primary religious educators who shape the initial foundation of their children's faith, acts of worship, and moral character. This spiritual awareness motivates mothers to consistently fulfill this educational role, even when faced with time constraints, physical exhaustion, or social challenges.

In the context of "lived religion," a mother's spiritual awareness is reflected not only in her beliefs but also in daily practices imbued with religious significance. Ammerman (2020) explains that religiosity lived out in everyday life shapes how individuals interpret their social roles, including the role of motherhood. Consequently, activities such as guiding a child in prayer, introducing acts of worship, and instilling Islamic etiquette are perceived as expressions of faith that constitute acts of worship, rather than merely technical pedagogical activities.

Spiritual awareness also serves as a source of intrinsic motivation for mothers in the ongoing religious education of their children. Research by Latifah et al. (2020) indicates that parents with a strong spiritual orientation tend to be more patient, reflective, and consistent in instilling religious values in their children. This patience and sincerity stem from viewing religious education as a responsibility toward Allah SWT, rather than merely a demand for their child's social success.

Furthermore, the mothers' spiritual awareness is reinforced through the internalization of religious values acquired from religious communities and organizations. Burhani (2020) emphasizes that religious organizations such as Muslimat NU and 'Aisyiyah Muhammadiyah play a pivotal role in shaping the religious consciousness of Muslim women through religious study sessions, ideological guidance, and socio-religious activities. This process helps mothers construct an understanding that their role as religious educators within the family constitutes a form of cultural *da'wah* (religious outreach) and socio-religious service.

Thus, spiritual awareness serves as the foundation integrating the dimensions of faith, maternal identity, and the practice of Islamic religious education within the family. This awareness shapes a mother's inner commitment to fulfilling her educational role consistently, sincerely, and reflectively. Religious education is no longer viewed merely as an additional task or a burden of domestic life, but rather as a manifestation of faith that reinforces the mother's role as the primary educator and guardian of Islamic values within the family environment.

2. Leading by Example as a Primary Educational Method

Leading by example is the most fundamental and effective method of Islamic religious education within the family setting. From the perspective of Islamic pedagogy, this practice—known as **uswah hasanah** (an exemplary model)—is understood as a process of values education that unfolds through tangible examples demonstrated by the educator; consequently, the learner—in this case, the child—learns by observing and imitating behaviors (Rohman & Nisa, 2022). Within the family context, the mother holds a strategic position as the primary role model due to the intensity of her interaction and emotional closeness with the child.

Various studies indicate that children internalize religious values more easily through concrete experiences than through verbal instruction alone. Latifah et al. (2020) emphasize that parental role modeling significantly influences the formation of a child's religious character, particularly regarding moral conduct, discipline in worship, and social attitudes. When parents—especially mothers—demonstrate consistency between their words and actions, religious values become easier for children to understand and internalize.

In the study of educational psychology, leading by example is closely linked to social learning theory, which emphasizes learning through observation and imitation. Bandura (within the context of contemporary research) highlights that figures possessing emotional closeness and moral authority serve as the most effective role models for children (Santrock, 2021). In Muslim families, a mother who demonstrates

religious behaviors—such as prayer discipline, Quran recitation, patience, and polite speech—indirectly transmits Islamic values to her child in their most authentic form.

In Islamic religious education, leading by example is not interpreted as a demand for moral perfection, but rather as a reflective process and a form of continuous learning. Suyadi and Sutrisno (2021) emphasize the dialectical nature of religious education within the family, noting that both parents and children are engaged in a shared learning process. In this context, the role of setting an example encourages mothers to continually improve the quality of their religiosity and character, as every attitude and action carries pedagogical implications for the child.

Furthermore, leading by example serves as a means to foster a religious atmosphere within the family. Mahmudi and Afandi (2021) explain that religious practices consistently modeled by parents cultivate religious habits in children without the need for coercion. Such examples transform religion into a lived reality rather than mere instructional material. Consequently, religious education extends beyond the cognitive level, deeply engaging the child's affective and moral dimensions.

In the Indonesian socio-religious context, the exemplary role of mothers is reinforced by values acquired through religious communities and organizations. Burhani (2020) asserts that women's religious organizations—such as Muslimat NU and 'Aisyiyah Muhammadiyah—play a role in shaping the religious **habitus** of their members. This **habitus** is subsequently reproduced within family life through sustained practices of setting an example. Thus, a mother's exemplary conduct not only reflects personal piety but also constitutes a form of domestic **da'wah** (religious outreach) rooted in the values of religious organizations.

Overall, leading by example is regarded as the most effective method of religious education because it operates naturally, consistently, and contextually within family life. Through this approach, a mother becomes the primary educational medium, transforming Islamic values from one generation to the next. Thus, Islamic religious education within the family takes place not merely through commands and prohibitions, but through living examples consistently demonstrated in daily life.

3. Cultivating Religious Observance in Family Life

Cultivating the habit of religious observance within the family is a fundamental strategy in Islamic religious education, aimed at the sustained development of a child's religious character. From the perspective of contemporary Islamic education, this practice is understood as a process of internalizing values through the consistent and contextual repetition of religious acts within the family environment (Mahmudi & Afandi, 2021). Through this process of habituation, acts of worship are not merely learned as normative knowledge but are experienced as an integral part of daily life.

Numerous studies confirm that the family plays a central role in shaping a child's religious habits from an early age. Suyadi and Sutrisno (2021) state that routine acts of worship performed at home—such as daily prayers, congregational prayers, and Quran recitation—contribute significantly to the development of a child's religiosity. A family environment that consistently incorporates these practices fosters a religious atmosphere, enabling children to learn about religion through direct experience (experiential learning).

Cultivating the habit of worship is also closely linked to the development of a child's discipline and spiritual awareness. Latifah et al. (2020) found that children raised in families with structured worship routines tend to exhibit higher levels of religious discipline and self-control. In this context, the mother's role is pivotal, as she sets the rhythm of family life and serves as the child's primary guide in carrying out acts of worship.

In the study of developmental psychology, habituation is understood as a crucial mechanism in the formation of long-term behavior. Santrock (2021) explains that habits established through repetition within a safe and supportive environment become internalized as part of an individual's value system. When acts of worship are consistently practiced within the family without coercion, children tend to develop a positive relationship with religion and perceive worship as an inner need rather than a burdensome obligation.

Furthermore, the cultivation of worship habits within the family cannot be separated from affective and relational dimensions. Ammerman (2020) emphasizes that religious practices shared within the domestic sphere strengthen emotional bonds while shaping a living religious meaning (*lived religion*). In the context of Muslim families, congregational prayer, joint supplication, and Quranic study serve as mediums for fostering a sense of togetherness, modeling exemplary behavior, and cultivating collective spirituality.

In the Indonesian socio-religious context, the practice of cultivating religious observance within the family is also influenced by values fostered by religious organizations. Burhani (2020) explains that religious organizations such as Muslimat NU and 'Aisyiyah Muhammadiyah play a role in transmitting religious practices to the domestic sphere through guidance and religious study sessions. Mothers then internalize these values within family life by establishing habits of religious observance that are both contextual and sustained.

Overall, the practice of making acts of worship a habit within family life is understood as a pedagogical and spiritual process that integrates cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. Through consistent practice, a mother not only instills skills related to worship in her child but also shapes a religious consciousness and an Islamic character that become deeply ingrained in the child. Thus, cultivating the habit of worship serves as a crucial foundation in Islamic religious education within the family, aimed at shaping a Muslim individual who possesses faith, good morals, and an Islamic personality.



Figure 1. and 2 The roles of Aisyiyah and Muslimat in religious activities involving children

D. Conclusion

This study concludes that the mother's role in Islamic religious education within the family is a holistic and dynamic process, deeply rooted in spiritual awareness and socio-religious support. Mothers do not merely perform domestic duties or teach normative religious values; rather, they act as primary agents of education, actively shaping their children's character, spirituality, and Islamic identity through daily life practices.

First, spiritual awareness serves as the fundamental basis shaping how mothers perceive their role as Islamic religious educators within the family. Mothers view religious education as a divine trust and a path of devotion to Allah (SWT), rather than merely a social obligation. This awareness fosters an inner commitment, sincerity, and patience as they guide their children's growth and development. Religious education is understood as a process of self-formation that unfolds alongside the mother's own spiritual maturation

Secondly, leading by example emerges as the most dominant and effective method of religious education within family life. Mothers recognize that religious values are more easily transmitted through tangible examples than through verbal instruction alone. A mother's consistent religious conduct—such as discipline in worship, patience, honesty, and social concern—serves as the most authentic means for a child to internalize Islamic values. At the same time, this role-modeling requires the mother to engage in continuous self-reflection and self-improvement.

Third, the habitual practice of worship within family life serves as a primary mechanism for internalizing religious values. Routine and contextual acts of worship—such as daily prayers, ritual prayers (*salat*), and Quran recitation—foster a religious family atmosphere that supports the development of a child's religious consciousness.

This habituation impacts not only the child's cognitive aspects and religious behaviors but also strengthens their affective dimensions, discipline, and self-control. Ultimately, the essence of the mothers' experiences lies in the understanding that Islamic religious education within the family is an integrative life process combining

devotion, self-development, and daily *da'wah* (religious outreach). The Muslimat NU and 'Aisyiyah Muhammadiyah communities in Cepu District serve not merely as religious organizations but also as spaces for the transformation of religious motherhood, reinforcing the mother's role as the primary educator and an agent in shaping a Muslim generation characterized by faith, moral integrity, and an Islamic identity.

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