



Educating and Protecting Children with the Qur'an

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Abstract

This article examines the values of the Qur'an related to the protection of children through the approach of tafsir maudhu'i. This research identifies Qur'anic terms related to children such as ibn, walad, bint, shabi, thifl, and gulam to uncover the concept of child protection in Islam. The Qur'an describes human development through several stages from sulalat min al-thin, nuthfat, alaqa, mudhghat, ikhsa al-lahm, to the period of birth, childhood, adulthood, and old age. From this disclosure, elements related to the basic needs of children were obtained, including physical-biological, psychological, sociological, and religious needs. The research uses the method of maudhu'i interpretation and critical-comparative analysis with a philosophical-qualitative approach. The results of the study show that the Qur'an strongly emphasizes the importance of maintaining children's lives and maintaining their survival through the fulfillment of physical and non-physical needs. The Qur'an provides a progressive view by removing discriminatory practices against girls that occurred during the period of jahiliyah. Girls get their rights on par with boys including the right to inheritance, education, and a decent life. The emphasis of the Qur'an is awareness in the household as the initial environment for children's growth and development, the role of society in nurturing and respecting children, and the responsibility of the state in protecting children's rights as a fulfillment of Allah's commands.

Keywords: Child protection, Qur'an, tafsir maudhu'i, children's rights, Islamic education.

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INTRODUCTION

The issue of child protection is a humanitarian issue that continues to be of concern to the international world. Children as the next generation have the right to grow and develop optimally, but reality shows that many children experience various forms of violence, exploitation, and neglect (UNICEF, 2019). In Indonesia, data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission records thousands of cases of violence against children every year, ranging from physical, psychological, to sexual violence (Setyawan, 2021). This condition shows that there is still a low public understanding of the importance of child protection as part of human rights.

In the context of Islam, the Qur'an as the holy book of Muslims pays special attention to children's problems. Various verses of the Qur'an reveal the values of child protection which include spiritual, moral, social, and physical aspects (Shihab, 2018). However, a comprehensive understanding of the concept of child protection in the Qur'an still needs to



be studied more deeply through a systematic interpretation approach. This is important considering that the Qur'an is revealed in the social context of Arab society which has certain traditions and practices towards children, especially girls.

History records that pre-Islamic Arab societies or the period of jahiliyah had highly discriminatory practices against children, especially girls. The tradition of wa'd al-banat or burying newborn girls alive is clear evidence of low respect for children's right to life (Al-Tabari, 2001). A strong patriarchal system makes girls a burden on the family and has no economic value like boys. The arrival of Islam through the revelation of the Qur'an brought a radical change in the view of the position and rights of children.

The Qur'an uses various terms or terms to refer to children such as *ibn*, *walad*, *bint*, *shabi*, *thifl*, and *glam*. Each term has different nuances of meaning and context of use (Al-Raghib al-Asfahani, 2009). The use of these terms in various verses of the Qur'an shows comprehensive attention to the stages of child development from the womb to adulthood. Understanding these terms is important to reveal the concept of child protection in its entirety from the perspective of the Qur'an.

Several previous studies have examined the theme of children in Islam such as the work of Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah in *Tuhfat al-Maudud bi Ahkam al-Maulud* which discusses the laws related to the birth of children, and the work of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan in *Tarbiyat al-Aulad fi al-Islam* which outlines the responsibility of children's education (Ulwan, 2013). However, studies that specifically use the *maudhu'i tafsir* method to reveal the concept of child protection in the Qur'an are still limited. This research seeks to fill this gap by studying the verses of the Qur'an thematically to find the principles of child protection.

The urgency of this research lies in the importance of building awareness of Muslims towards the values of the Qur'an regarding child protection. In the midst of modernization and globalization that have both positive and negative impacts on children's lives, the values of the Qur'an can be an ethical and spiritual foundation in efforts to protect children (Mujahidin, 2017). This research is also expected to make an academic contribution to the study of Qur'anic interpretation, especially related to social and humanitarian issues. Thus, the purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the values of child protection in the Qur'an through the *tafsir maudhu'i* approach, uncover the periodization of child development according to the Qur'an, explain the influence of social interaction on children, and formulate child protection rights based on the Qur'an.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of library research. The primary data sources are the Qur'an and *mu'tabar tafsir* such as *Tafsir al-Tabari*, *Tafsir Ibn Katsir*, *Tafsir al-Qurthubi*, and contemporary *tafsir* such as *Tafsir al-Misbah* by M. Quraish Shihab. Secondary data sources include hadith books, books on children's education in Islam, scientific journals, and literature related to child protection both from an Islamic and general perspective.

The method used in this study is the *maudhu'i tafsir* or thematic interpretation method. The *maudhu'i tafsir* method is a method of interpreting the Qur'an by collecting Qur'anic verses that have the same theme or topic, then analyzing them comprehensively to find the

Qur'an's view on the theme (Farmawi, 1977). The steps taken in this study include: first, determining the theme or topic of research, namely child protection in the Qur'an. Second, compile verses related to the theme using Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfazh al-Qur'an al-Karim. Third, arrange the verses based on the chronology of their descent (tartib nuzuli). Fourth, understand the asbab al-nuzul of these verses if any. Fifth, study the verses comprehensively by referring to the tafsir of mu'tabar. Sixth, analyze the correlation of these verses to find a complete conclusion about the Qur'an's view on child protection.

In addition to the maudhu'i tafsir method, this study also uses a critical-comparative analysis method with a philosophical approach. Critical analysis is carried out to examine in depth the meaning of the Qur'anic verses on child protection by considering the historical, sociological, and cultural context. A comparative method is used to compare the views of various mufassir on the verses studied, as well as to compare the concept of child protection in the Qur'an with the concept that develops in contemporary society. A philosophical approach is used to explore the philosophical values and principles contained in the verses of the Qur'an about child protection.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Children's Terms in the Qur'an

The Qur'an uses various terms to refer to children, each of which has different nuances of meaning and context of use. These terms are ibn, walad, bint, shabi, thifl, and gulam. The use of these diverse terms shows the Qur'an's comprehensive attention to various aspects of children's lives from various perspectives.

The terms ibn and bint etymologically come from the same root word, namely banaya which means to build (Al-Asfahani, 2009). The term ibn is used for boys while bint is for girls. The use of the root word meaning constructive implies that the child in the view of the Qur'an is an asset that will build the future of the family and society. In various verses, the terms ibn and bint are often associated with the relationship of descent or descent, rights in inheritance, and parental responsibility towards the child.

The term walad is the most commonly used term in the Qur'an to refer to a child. The word walad is mentioned 72 times in various forms and contexts (Baqi, 1987). Etymologically, walad means something that is born both male and female. The use of the term walad in the Qur'an shows the concept of children as a gift of Allah that must be appreciated and well maintained. Some verses use the term walad in the context of the prohibition of killing children for fear of poverty, which shows the guarantee of sustenance from Allah for every child born.

The term shabi comes from the word shabawa which means inclined or inclined (Munawwir, 1997). This term is used to refer to children who are still in the early stages of development and are highly dependent on adults. The use of the term shabi in the Qur'an describes the condition of a child who is weak, vulnerable, and in need of special protection. This word emphasizes the aspect of children's dependence on adult care for their survival.

The term thifl comes from the root word thaful which means soft, smooth, or light. The word thifl is mentioned four times in the Qur'an (Baqi, 1987). The use of this term describes the physical condition of children who are still soft, light, and immature. In the context of

verses that use the term *thifl*, the Qur'an pays special attention to the aspect of protecting children from exposure that is not in accordance with their level of development, such as in the rule of closing the *awrah* and the rule of asking permission to enter the parents' room.

The term *gulam* comes from the word *galima* which means strong emotional turmoil. This term is used to refer to boys who have reached adolescence or approaching adulthood. The word *gulam* is mentioned 11 times in the Qur'an (Baqi, 1987). The use of the term *gulam* is often associated with the context of the good news of the birth of a child who will be the bearer of a mission of goodness, as in the story of the prophets. This shows the hope of the Qur'an for the young generation who are pious and able to bring positive change to society.

Periodization of Child Development in the Qur'an

The Qur'an describes the stages of human development from the beginning of creation to adulthood in great detail. In several verses, the Qur'an explains that man was created from *sulalat min al-thin*, which is the essence of the land (QS. Al-Mu'minun: 12). Furthermore, humans experience stages of development in the womb which include *nuthfah* (semen), *alaqah* (a clot of blood), *mudhghah* (a lump of meat), bone formation, and wrapping bones with meat (QS. Al-Mu'minun: 13-14). The Qur'an's explanation of this stage of creation is in line with the discovery of modern embryology that reveals the stages of fetal development in the womb (Moore, 2003).

After birth, the child enters a developmental phase that requires intensive attention and maintenance from parents and family. The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of breastfeeding for two full years for children (QS. Al-Baqarah: 233). This breastfeeding period is a critical period in the physical and psychological development of children. Modern research shows that breast milk contains the complete nutrients that babies need as well as antibodies that protect children from various diseases (Ballard & Morrow, 2013). In addition, the breastfeeding process also builds a strong emotional bond between mother and child which is important for the child's psychological development.

The Qur'an also describes the stages of child development from childhood to adulthood. In QS. Al-Nur: 59, mentions children who have not yet reached puberty (*thifl*) and children who have reached the age of puberty (*balaghū al-hulm*). The attainment of puberty marks the transition from childhood to adulthood accompanied by physical maturity and the imposition of sharia responsibilities. This periodization shows that the Qur'an recognizes the existence of different stages of development in children that require treatment and education that are appropriate to their level of development.

In the context of child development, the Qur'an also emphasizes the importance of paying attention to aspects of children's cognitive, emotional, and spiritual development. The story of Luqman in QS. Luqman: 13-19 describes a holistic education that includes aspects of faith, worship, and morals. Luqman taught his son about monotheism as the foundation of faith, then taught about the obligation to worship and serve parents, as well as noble moral values such as not boasting and being humble. This pattern of education shows the importance of a comprehensive approach in educating children that not only focuses on the cognitive aspect but also builds the child's character and spirituality.

Social Interaction and Its Impact on Children

The Qur'an pays special attention to the influence of the social environment on children's development. The family as the first social environment has a very important role in shaping children's personalities. In QS. At-Tahrim: 6, Allah commands the believers to protect themselves and their families from the fires of Hell. This order hints at the responsibility of parents to provide education and protection to children to avoid engaging in behavior. Research in the field of developmental psychology shows that parental parenting has a significant influence on the development of children's personality, emotional intelligence, and social behavior (Baumrind, 1991).

In addition to the family, the community also has an important role in the protection and development of children's potential. The Qur'an teaches the concept of collective responsibility in protecting children, especially orphans. In various verses, the Qur'an warns about the prohibition of eating the property of orphans unjustly (QS. An-Nisa: 10), the commandment to treat orphans well (QS. Al-Baqarah: 220), and the recommendation to take care of the property of orphans until they are adults and able to manage them themselves (QS. Al-Isra: 34). This special attention to orphans shows that the Qur'an teaches the values of social solidarity and shared responsibility in protecting vulnerable children.

The Qur'an also criticizes social practices that are detrimental to children. The practice of wa'd al-banat or burying a girl alive during the period of jahiliyah is strongly condemned by the Qur'an (QS. At-Takwir: 8-9). This practice is a form of extreme gender discrimination that ignores girls' right to life. The arrival of Islam brought about a paradigm shift by placing girls on an equal footing with boys in the right to live, grow and develop, and get an education. The Qur'an emphasizes that the giving of children both male and female is the will of Allah and both have the same value (QS. Ash-Shura: 49-50).

Child Protection Rights in the Qur'an

Based on the study of the verses of the Qur'an, it can be identified that several basic rights of children must be protected. The first is the right to life. The Qur'an prohibits the killing of children for any reason, including for fear of poverty (QS. Al-Isra: 31). Allah guarantees sustenance for every child born, so there is no reason to end the child's life. This right to life is the most basic right that is a prerequisite for other rights.

The second is the right to proper maintenance and nurturing. The Qur'an obliges parents to provide support for their children (QS. Al-Baqarah: 233). This alimony includes physical needs such as food, clothing, shelter, as well as educational and health needs. This maintenance obligation applies to the father as the head of the family, but if the father is unable to afford it, the responsibility shifts to the relatives who are able. This social security system shows Islam's concern for the fulfillment of basic needs of children.

The third is the right to education. The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of education as a provision for children's lives. The story of Luqman who educated his son with wisdom shows the ideal educational model (QS. Luqman: 13-19). The education provided is not only intellectual but also includes education of faith, morals, and life skills. The Prophet PBUH in

several hadiths also emphasized the obligation of parents to provide education to their children, including religious education, ethics, and skills (Ulwan, 2013).

The fourth is the right to get an identity. The Qur'an stipulates the obligation to give a clear nasab to the child (QS. Al-Ahzab: 5). This identity is important for the child in his social life and is related to other rights such as inheritance rights and guardianship rights. Islam strongly maintains the purity of nasab as part of the protection of children's rights. The practice of adopting children in Islam does not change the child's fate but still respects the identity of the child's origin.

The fifth is the right to justice and equal treatment. The Qur'an prohibits discrimination between boys and girls in various aspects of life (Shihab, 2018). In terms of inheritance, although there is a difference in the portion between boys and girls, this does not indicate discrimination but is based on considerations of economic responsibility in the family. The most important thing is that both sexes have the right to inheritance, which was a major breakthrough in its time because before Islam girls did not get inheritance at all.

The sixth is the right to be protected from violence and exploitation. The Qur'an prohibits all forms of actions that hurt children, both physically and psychologically. The prohibition of eating the property of orphans unjustly (QS. An-Nisa: 10) shows the protection of children from economic exploitation. An injunction to treat orphans well indicates protection from violence and neglect. The Qur'an also teaches a pattern of good communication with children as reflected in the story of Prophet Ibrahim with his son Ismail (QS. Ash-Shaffat: 102) which shows the importance of respecting children's opinions and involving them in decision-making that concerns them.

The seventh is the right to grow up in an Islamic environment. The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of creating a family and community environment that is conducive to children's spiritual development. Parents are instructed to teach their children about faith, worship, and noble morals from an early age. An Islamic environment will shape the personality of children who are faithful, devout, and have noble character which will be a provision for life in this world and the hereafter (Daradjat, 2015).

Relevance to the Contemporary Context

The concept of child protection in the Qur'an has strong relevance to various international conventions and regulations on children's rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the United Nations in 1989 sets out four basic principles, namely non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, the right to life and development, and respect for the views of the child (UNICEF, 2019). These principles are in line with the values contained in the Qur'an on child protection.

In the Indonesian context, Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection regulates various aspects of child protection which include the right to life, the right to growth and development, the right to protection, and the right to participation. The implementation of this law requires a strong foundation of values so that it is not only normative but also rooted in public awareness. The Qur'anic values regarding child protection can be a spiritual and

moral basis in the implementation of child protection regulations in Indonesia, where the majority of the population is Muslim (Setyawan, 2021).

Contemporary challenges in child protection are increasingly complex with the development of technology and social change. Children are now exposed to digital media that have both positive and negative impacts. On the one hand, technology opens up wide access to information and learning, but on the other hand, it also brings risks such as cyberbullying, pornographic content, and online exploitation. The principles of child protection in the Qur'an, such as the importance of parental supervision, moral values education, and the creation of a conducive environment, have become very relevant in facing the challenges of this digital age (Livingstone & Haddon, 2009).

The problem of poverty and economic inequality is also still a threat to child protection. Many children are forced to work to help the family economy so they lose the right to play and get a proper education. The concept of collective responsibility in child protection as taught by the Qur'an through special attention to orphans and vulnerable children, can be an inspiration for the development of a more comprehensive social security system to protect children from the effects of poverty.

CONCLUSION

This study found that the Qur'an has a comprehensive concept of child protection that covers various aspects of children's lives. The use of various terms such as *ibn*, *walad*, *bint*, *shabi*, *thifl*, and *gulam* shows the Qur'an's attention to the various dimensions and stages of child development. Each term has a different nuance of meaning that indicates certain aspects of the child's life and protection.

The Qur'an describes the periodization of child development from the womb to adulthood in great detail. These stages of development include the prenatal phase, birth, infancy, childhood, to adolescence and adulthood. Each stage has different characteristics and needs that require appropriate attention and treatment. Understanding this periodization is important for parents and educators in providing appropriate parenting and education according to the child's developmental stage.

Social interaction has a huge influence on children's development. The Qur'an emphasizes the role of the family as the first social environment that shapes the child's personality. In addition, the community also has a collective responsibility to protect and facilitate the development of children, especially vulnerable children such as orphans. The values of social solidarity and shared responsibility in the protection of children are important teachings of the Qur'an that are relevant to the context of contemporary social life.

The rights to protection of children in the Qur'an include the right to life, the right to maintenance and upbringing, the right to education, the right to identity, the right to justice and equal treatment, the right to protection from violence and exploitation, and the right to grow up in an Islamic environment. These rights are in line with the principles of universal human rights and can be the spiritual-moral foundation in the implementation of the child protection system.

The concept of child protection in the Qur'an has strong relevance to contemporary challenges. Principles such as parental responsibility, collective responsibility of society, prohibition of discrimination, and the importance of holistic education, can be an inspiration in dealing with various child protection issues in the modern era. The implementation of Qur'anic values in the child protection system requires a deep understanding and appropriate contextualization in order to respond to the challenges of the times.

This study recommends the need for a more specific follow-up study on certain aspects of child protection in the Qur'an such as the protection of children in conflict situations, the education of children with special needs, and the protection of children in the digital age. In addition, it is also necessary to develop practical models for the implementation of Qur'anic values regarding child protection in the context of family life, educational institutions, and public policies. Thus, the noble values of the Qur'an can be grounded and make a real contribution to efforts to protect and develop children's potential as the next generation of the people.

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