

Islamic Parenting Model to Increase Family Literacy: A Mixed Method Study

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History

Received : 21/02/2022

Revised : 05/08/2022

Accepted : 06/09/2022

Keywords:

*Family literacy,
Islamic parenting model,
Parent training program,
Mixed method design,
Triangulation design.*

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ABSTRACT

Low literacy within Muslim families can seriously affect developing individuals and society. This study aims to test the effectiveness of a new model of Islamic parenting based on family religiousness to address the low literacy issue in Muslim families. Using a mixed-method with triangulation design, in Study 1, researchers conducted action research by delivering a six-session parent training program to 10 women with children aged 11 years old, grouped into high and low-literate families. Practice at home, guided by facilitators, followed each session. Data were collected using interviews and parents' reflection journals and were analyzed using content analysis. In Study 2, concurrently with Study 1, a quasi-experimental research was conducted using a one-group pre-test and post-test design to test the model's effectiveness. Before and after the programs, the researchers administered the Family Literacy Questionnaire to the women and the Literacy Activity Questionnaire to their children. The data were analyzed using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test to examine differences between pre-test and post-test scores. The program was perceived as impactful and highly appreciated by the participants, who expected its continuation in the future. The hypothesis test results indicated that the Islamic parenting model improved family literacy ($p=0.043$) and the literacy activities of their children ($p=0.039$). The Islamic parenting model effectively enhanced women's family literacy in low literacy groups and children's literacy activity in both groups. This finding can be widely implemented to provide parents with understanding and skills to support their children's literacy.

Citation:

Purwandari, S., Husna, A. N., & Tawil, T. (2022). Islamic parenting model to increase family literacy: A mixed method study. *International Journal of Islamic Educational Psychology*, 3(2), 111-129. <http://dx.doi.org/10.18196/ijiep.v3i2.14039>

INTRODUCTION

In 2015, a Pew survey reported that Islam had 1.6 billion adherents or 23% of the global population. More youths and high fertility rates characterize the Muslim population compared to other religious groups (The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050, 2015). Muslims' household is the biggest, with an average of 6.4 individuals living in a family. Eight in ten Muslims live in Asia and Africa (Middle East-North Africa regions and Southeast Asia), where people tend to have large households and maintain an extended family. However, the number does not reflect prosperity and well-being. Most Muslims live in developing countries and struggle with economic difficulties (Religion and Living Arrangements Around the World, 2019). The financial issue later implicates education. On average, Muslims have only 5.6 years of schooling (the global median is eight years). Nearly 36% of Muslim adults have no formal schooling, and only 8% have a post-secondary education (Muslim Educational Attainment, 2016).

Lack of education generates literacy issues. The problem of illiteracy is significant in the most populous developing countries, such as Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, and Pakistan (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2008). Using data from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2009, Yusuf (2020) showed that overall average scores of all Muslim-majority countries in reading are lower than the OECD's average (only 395.7). Students from Turkey have the highest score (464), followed by Dubai (UAE, 459), Jordan (405), Tunisia (404), and Indonesia (402). However, the gap is still wide compared to the global average of 493. Low literacy is associated with low higher-order thinking skills. Only 0.07% of Muslim students can reach this level of thinking skills. Most students cannot master fundamental knowledge and skills for the 21st century (Yusuf, 2020), making it harder for young Muslims to compete and improve their well-being.

Low literacy can indicate a school's failure to provide high-quality teaching and to learn to read (Yusuf, 2020). However, improving the literacy of children and young people is not solely the duty of educational institutions but also of the family. Using the framework from Bronfenbrenner's theory of the bio-ecological system, literacy development is thought to be emerging from the interaction of the individual and context. Family plays a crucial role in a child's microsystem in literacy development (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). Interaction among children and family members is part of the proximal processes. According to Bronfenbrenner, proximal processes are considered the primary driving force of development. Proximal processes will have a greater chance of promoting outcomes of developmental competence in more stable and advantageous environments (Rosa & Tudge, 2013).

Based on this notion, improving Muslim children's literacy should be attempted by developing their parent's literacy through a program targeted at the parent and children. Kim and Riley (2014) have widely used this strategy by giving

homework to preschool parents to read to their children using the dialogic reading method. This program emphasized that joint activity between parent and child significantly impacted children's language development. Other programs emphasized family-school and community partnership, connecting home and school (Crawford & Zygouris-Coe, 2006), e.g., the Parents and Learning (PaL) program for Aboriginal Community in Queensland, Australia, which aimed to engage parents as a partner with the school in children's literacy learning (Flückiger, Diamond, & Jones, 2012) and The Family-Centered Literacy Program that focused on language-related literacy and the effort to minimize culture shock experienced by a minority group in the USA (Sink, Parkhill, & Marshall, 2005). Literacy programs aimed to empower marginal groups and support education and academic achievement.

However, literacy programs are few targeted at Muslim communities and are conducted in collaboration with religious institutions. Many Muslims believe in religion and rely on spiritual guidance to solve problems. Religion is considered the most critical aspect of life and motivates various behaviors, including learning and reading. Command to read is mentioned in the first revelation of the Quran (96: 1), and it is followed by the notion that God teaches humankind by pen (96: 4). These highlight the importance of literacy, or the ability to read and write to gain and spread knowledge. Thus, for Muslims, faith may become the driving factor of behavioral change in parents and reinforce the commitment to literacy programs because it connects to one's sense of morality. A program is transformative if it appeals to participants' higher ideals and moral values to produce fundamental change (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016). Participants will commit to the program if they perceive that improving family literacy is parents' moral duty and obligation toward their children. Given the importance of religion in promoting literacy through family involvement, a family literacy training program based on the Islamic parenting model has been developed (Tawil, Purwandari, & Alawiyah, 2019).

Islamic parenting refers to guidelines based on the Quran and Hadith about managing family life righteously. It is consistent with the belief that Islam is more than a religion but a way of life. Islam regulates everyday practices, social relationships, and world views. Thus, Islamic parenting is more than raising children but transmitting a sense of right and wrong under Islamic doctrine (Franceschelli & O'Brien, 2014). Islam teaches the meaning of human existence, the purpose of marriage and building a family, the parent-child relationship, the rights and responsibilities of parents and children, and methods for parental discipline (Akin, 2012).

Islamic teaching on family matters inspired several scholars to construct various parenting models to suit modern tastes and lifestyles. For example, "prophetic parenting" tries to model Prophet Muhammad's parenting practices as a paradigm of character education (Hairina, 2016; Styawati, 2016). There is also "holistic parenting" as an Islamic method of da'wah to internalize Islamic values

and modify the behavior of youngsters with conduct disorder (Rahmawati, 2016). Meanwhile, Khakim and Munir (2019) conceptualized “Islamic parenting” based on Quran Surah Luqman verses 12-19. Translating religious guidelines into parenting practices is a crucial and creative effort to contextualize Islamic teaching. Still, only a few studies examined the impact of its practice on family and child development.

Tawil et al. (2019) developed a parenting model based on family religiousness to solve literacy issues in Muslim families. Family religiousness is defined as family adherence to three aspects of the Islamic way of life (sharia) regarding how a person must behave in relationship to God (*habl min Allâh*), to fellow human beings (*habl min al-nâs*), and nature (*habl min al âlam*) (Tawil et al., 2019). This conceptualization can be traced back to the Islamic view of human nature. In the Quran, a human is described as *al-insân*, a perfect and comprehensive being possessing physical–psychical, material-immaterial, biological-physiological, and spiritual elements. Humans are created to serve as Allah’s servant (*‘Abdullah*) and *Khalifah* on Earth. Humans have duties to do worship deeds to Allah and manage their social life and environment to be harmonious and prosperous. Hence, education in Islam balances human physical and spiritual aspects through knowledge learning and character building to build a society that has a good relationship with Allah, other humans, and nature (Kodir & Sonjaya, 2015).

Tawil et al. (2019) argued that family plays a crucial role in developing a person to be *Insan Kamil*. Children need literate parents who guide their spiritual development and essential life skills to survive and flourish in the digital era. The parenting model based on family religiousness can be considered a purposeful parenting practice because it targets behavior outcomes in each aspect of religiousness. For example, to build a relationship with God, parents should practice new habits such as reading the Quran and its meanings with children, attending Islamic learning/discussion forums, praying with family members, and fasting. To maintain a relationship with other people, parents must practice some skills in positive communication, apply prophetic parenting at home, and join the parents’ community. Parents and children practice zero waste at home, a healthy lifestyle, and live simplicity to protect the environment.

This model has some advantages compared to other types of Islamic parenting (Tawil et al., 2019). First, it has greater flexibility to solve various family issues because it primarily teaches skills. For example, to solve literacy issues, the model can be adjusted to cover literacy-related topics during the Quran reading session and learning forum and to teach how parents and children should communicate during a book reading at home. A well-known ritual within Islamic tradition can be the entry point to developing family literacy, i.e., reading/reciting the Quran. In Indonesia, this activity is called *mengaji*, usually carried on under the supervision of parents (Riany, Meredith, & Cuskelly, 2017). Second, it integrates religion’s practical/experiential aspect with parenting practice. Religion is known to be linked with many positive and adaptive parenting practices. For

example, religion promotes parents' involvement in their children's daily lives, warmth, and emotional connectedness (Goeke-Morey & Cummings, 2017). Emotional connectedness is among the goals of this model through the joint activity of parents and children in religious and literacy activities.

This study first aims to test the effectiveness of the Islamic parenting model based on family religiousness in increasing Muslim family literacy. There is a difference in literacy rate among parents (mothers) and children before and after the training program and between low and high-literate groups. The literacy rate will be significantly higher after training, and there is a significant difference in the low-literate group. Second, this program aims not only to discover empirical knowledge regarding the effectiveness of the Islamic parenting model but also to empower disadvantaged families and improve their conditions. To explore the impact of this program on families, the researchers also dug into their experiences during the program and follow-up activities. For those purposes, a mixed methods approach was used. The mixed methods approach is not new in literacy studies. However, the approach is rarely used to study Islamic parenting models' effectiveness. Knowledge from this study will undoubtedly make a unique contribution to science regarding its subject matter, theoretical framework, and methodology.

METHODS

This research tried to solve the literacy problem by implementing the Islamic parenting model and validating the model based on empirical research for future uses. The researchers required information from quantitative and qualitative research to examine the model's effectiveness. The researchers used a mixed-method approach, applied a triangulation design, collected both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously, and compared findings in each type of research (Creswell & Creswell, 2005). In this triangulation design, the researchers gave more weight to quantitative data because the primary purpose was empirically examining model effectiveness. Qualitative data would explain the dynamic regarding how the training program could affect family literacy. The procedures are detailed in Figure 1.

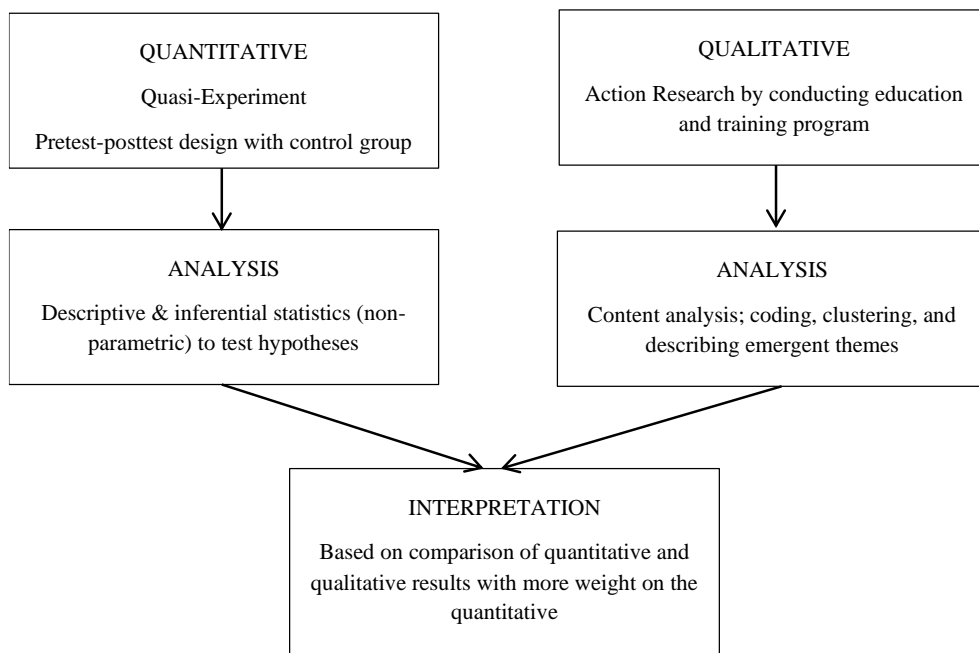


Figure 1. Triangulation design procedure of this research

Study 1: Action Research

Participants. Action research was conducted in a training program. A sample of 10 married women was recruited purposively to participate in the program. The participants were grouped into two groups. The first group (N = 5) were married women in Yogyakarta who were members of the Literacy Club in Akar Tumbuh Melati, an Early Childhood Education and Kindergarten in Yogyakarta. Due to their membership, they already have experience implementing family literacy, joined a parenting class, and built a small library at home. The second group (N = 5) were married women with little literacy experience. They lived in a rural area in Magelang and were recruited through an acquaintance. Before the program began, each participant agreed to participate by signing informed consent. Their profiles are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Profile of women, participants of action research

Group	High Literate	Low Literate
Age (Means)	40 y.o	42 y.o
Education		
Elementary	-	2
Junior High School	-	1
Senior High School	1	1
Vocational School	1	1
Undergraduate	3	-

Training Procedure. The training was conducted in six sessions, each with experts in parenting (counselor, doctor, health care provider, psychologist) and

literacy activists, followed by parent activities at home. Each session had different topics but could be categorized into two main themes: implementing the Islamic parenting model based on family religiousness and the strategy for family literacy for parents. The detailed issue was the introduction of family religiousness in parenting, mental and physical health for mothers, strategy to promote family literacy, strategy to handle problematic smartphone use on children, psychological characteristics of late children (9-13 years old), and orientation of family's purpose based on Islamic teachings.

The training was organized by a team of three researchers and three training facilitators. It lasted from October to November 2020, every Wednesday and Friday, for approximately three hours via Zoom meeting. The training went online because this research was done during the COVID-19 pandemic, limiting direct face-to-face interaction with participants. Training materials included a module (pocketbook) and a parenting journal (logbook). In brief, the plan of each session was carried out as follows: introduction of the session, education and training delivery by the expert, discussion and self-reflection, and follow-up after the session. At home, parents were instructed to apply parenting guidelines in the pocketbook and document activities with their children in the logbook. Activities at home were supervised and monitored by training facilitators either remotely or face-to-face. Facilitators did a home visit for the low literate group who lived in a rural area, mainly did not possess electronic devices to communicate, and had low education. Documentation of activities was done through gathering in the house of one participant. Supervision was done personally for the highly literate group, and monitoring was conducted online through chat messaging. Most participants from this group were busy career women.

Data Collections and Analysis. The researchers collected qualitative data through an interview, observation, and documentation in a logbook. Each method served a different purpose. The researchers interviewed participants in an early stage of training to assess their family situation and parenting difficulties regarding literacy at home. The facilitators observed the participants during each session for their responses in discussions and self-reflection and produced field notes on how well participants understood and were aware. Parents' experiences and joint activities with children at home were self-documented in the logbook. Documentation was conducted for about a month (from October to mid-November 2020).

Qualitative data from the interview were analyzed using the content analysis method, while data from observation and logbook were described in narration. Initially, the researchers intended to quantitatively analyze data in the logbook (by counting frequencies and kinds of activities). Still, participants faced difficulties making notes regularly, so the data were unsatisfactory and inadequate for quantitative analysis.

Study 2: Quasi-Experiment

Participants. The experiment involved the women from the previous study with one of their children, so they made a pairing. The researchers had children from highly literate families as part of the highly literate group and children from low-literate families as part of the low-literate group. The children's mean age was 11, and they were in grades 3 - 6 in elementary school. So, in this study, the researchers took data from four groups of samples, i.e., high-literate women (N = 5), low-literate women (N = 5), children from high-literate women (N = 5), and children from low-literate women (N = 5).

Experiment Procedure. The researchers conducted two quasi-experiments, i.e., for mothers and their children, to examine the program's effect on women's family literacy and children's literacy activity. Generally, these quasi-experiments used the one-group pretest-posttest design but with a different kind of treatment. The experiments were divided into two stages. The stage 1 experiment involved women with six-session parenting training as treatment 1 (X1). A single pre-test observation was taken on both groups of high literate (a) and low literate (b) women (Oa1 and Ob1), then treatment in parenting training (X1) occurred, and a single post-test observation on the same measure (Ob2 and Oa2) followed. The stage 2 experiment involved children of those women with a parenting program at home by their mothers as the treatment 2 (X2). A single pre-test observation was taken on both children groups from high literate (c) and low literate (d) women (Oc1 and Od1). Treatment at home (X2) occurred, and a single post-test observation on the same measure (Oc2 and Od2) followed. The experimental designs were diagrammed as follows.



Data Collections and Analysis. The researchers administered the Family Literacy Questionnaire for women in Experiment 1 and the Literacy Activity Questionnaire for their children in Experiment 2. The instruments were developed in previous research in 2019 by Tawil et al. (2019). The questionnaires were transformed into a Google Form. The researchers faced difficulty interacting with all participants face-to-face due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Questionnaires for women were given directly through a chat group application. Meanwhile, the questionnaire for children was provided by the mediation of the women as their mothers. The questionnaire for the pre-test was administered before training began (in early October 2020), while the post-test was after training and implementation at home (in mid-November 2020).

Family Literacy Questionnaire (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.884$) is a 5-point Likert scale comprising 20 items. It measures how often parents engaged in literacy activities at home with/ for their children, ranging from 1 = never to 5 = always. For example: “I provide books for our house reading corner,” “I direct my child to save money for buying books,” and “I help my child to set a reading schedule.” Literacy Activities Questionnaire (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.851$) is a 5-point Likert scale comprising 20 items. It also measures how often children engaged in literacy activities at home, ranging from 1 = never to 5 = always. For example: “I retell what I read to friends and families,” “I get inspired from books I read,” and “I have some favorite books.” Quantitative data were analyzed using non-parametric statistics Wilcoxon signed-rank test to examine differences between pre-test and post-test scores. The analysis was run using SPSS.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Study 1: Action Research

Family’s Condition Before Program. An interview was conducted at the beginning of the program to understand the problems faced by the family. The results of the qualitative analysis showed several emerging themes as follows (see Table 2).

Table 2. Emerging themes and sub-themes from parents’ interview

Themes	Sub-themes
Children literacy activities	Children’s interest in reading Variety of children’s Reading
Family literacy activities	Activities in a highly literate family <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Visiting public libraries and bookstore – Joining literacy club/ parent community – Parent as a model at home – Reading time at home – Building family library Activities in a low literate family <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No activity
Obstacles of Reading	Lacking family time at home Playing activity outside the home during a pandemic Children’s online activity (smartphone use) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Influencing factors of smartphone use – Parent’s efforts to prevent excessive smartphone use – Reading and physical activity as an alternative pleasure source

Generally, according to parents, their children were interested in reading and could read various kinds such as Islamic stories, child magazines (“Bobo”), short stories, and particularly, school materials. Mrs. P from the highly literate group

said, *“My kid has a long interest in reading. Her most liked reading is school materials. When we traveled, she looked for books.”*

Parents supported children’s interest in reading from the first place for the highly literate group. Their parents joined literacy clubs and regularly did literacy activities, such as going to a bookstore and public library and building a small library at home. Parents’ awareness of literacy’s importance is shown by actions like enacting reading time at home and making themselves the literacy model. Mrs. P said, *“I read books for my kid before bedtime. I read for her the translation of the Quran and Quranic stories. I invite them to borrow books and buy them at a bookstore. I make a small bookshelf at home.”*

However, the situation was different in the low-literate group. Even though their children liked books too, they could not afford to buy books for them. Living in a rural area, a public library was far away. Thus, the source of literacy was only at school. During the COVID-19 pandemic, all schools were closed, so instantly, their children could not access books and read school materials only. Reading books for them was connoted with reading school materials. The reading book had one sole purpose, i.e., to do school homework. The most important book for them was school-related books. They read to study, not to enjoy reading or broaden ideas.

Literacy activities at home did not always go smoothly. At least there were three obstacles, i.e., busy parents, children’s play, and online activities. Some mothers from high-literate groups said they have little time with their children due to work. Children’s literacy activities depend highly on their mothers because they still cannot read independently without their parents’ initiation. Mrs. I said, *“If I read her book, she is very spirited. But I am not always there; sometimes, I am lazy after working all day. There are also many works at home. So, the time to read is reduced.”*

Besides the parents’ sides, obstacles also came from children who happened to be a low-literate group where children’s pleasure activities were minimal. Playing outside the house or online was the favorite, and they could not read while playing actively. During the COVID-19 pandemic, smartphone use was drastically rising. Almost all children’s activity was done through mobile phones, such as online school, interacting with friends, and accessing YouTube videos. Even though children loved to read in the first place, smartphone use became a new dilemma for parents from both groups.

However, each group had a different response to the problem above. Women from high-literate groups tended to be more educated. Thus, they practiced smartphone use regulation at home. They were also more proactive in limiting its use and finding a way to divert children’s attention, e.g., by reading a book. Women from low-literate families tended to feel more helpless. Mrs. Yu, from a low-literate family, reported that her kid suffered from gaming addiction. This problem troubled her so much, making her powerless. This situation became her primary motivation to join the program.

Parents' Reflection. After training sessions and implementing the activities with children at home, every participant did reflections. Facilitators accompanied them to write parent's journals regarding what they felt and experienced. All participants agreed, saying that the program was beneficial and that they understood the meaning of companionship in the family. Mrs. Yu, from a low-literate family, said, *"My kid is getting closer to us, his father and mother. It is because eventually, we have time to sit together and do discussion after Quran reading or praying."* Mrs. P from the highly literate group said, *"I corrected myself to have more interest in reading because so far, I have failed to be exemplary to my children."*

The training emphasized repairing one's relationship with God and instilled the belief that by repairing a relationship with God, one will improve one's relationship with others. Therefore, among parenting practices, the researchers instructed women in the family to revive congregational praying and joint home activities and put meaning in their role as mothers, that becoming a mother belonged to worship. Typical activities at home that previously were neglected are now reminded again. Mrs. P from the high-literate group said, *"I am being reminded to give more attention to my children, especially in using smartphones. Today, if I have spare time, I use it to have activities with my children. I try to have more quality time with them after work."*

This program was mind-changing for women, so they adopted a new mindset. After one month and a half of the program, they formed a new community. This positive group became a source of support and motivation to implement the Islamic parenting model based on family religiousness. Mrs. Yu said this program helped her to fix her kid's problematic smartphone use. Her kid was also reported to suffer from conduct disorder, e.g., harsh speaking to parents, running away from home, being absent from school, lying, and staying awake to play online games. She did not expect reading books to be an effective activity for her son to spend time. Now, she started to read before bed and was regularly inspired by the book.

Women from the highly literate group also experienced similar changes. Reading books reduced the time for smartphones. Overall, they expressed the same conclusion regarding the relational benefit of the program. *"I now understand how to treat my children well, to raise them to have a good relationship with Allah, with other people, and to nature."* (Mrs. Y). *"I believe every child has a great opportunity to have a positive character. It is a matter of our commitment, my husband and me, to dig deeper, be consistent in guiding them, and do everything to realize the family purpose."* (Mrs. I) *"My husband and I, after this program, understand that the concept of family religiousness is not an instant matter. A child can't be pious at an instant, but it is a root to the parents that raise them."* (Mrs. Yu)

Study 2: Quasi-Experiment

The program's effect on family literacy on women as mothers and their children was tested by comparing the conditions of high and low-literate groups before

and after the program. The researchers ran two non-parametric statistics to test two hypotheses: 1) Differences in women’s family literacy between pre-test and post-test scores in each group, and 2) Differences in children’s literacy activity between pre-test and post-test scores in each group. To test the hypotheses, the researchers ran a Wilcoxon signed-rank test. The hypotheses testing showed exciting findings (see Tables 3 and 4). The Islamic parenting model based on family religiousness effectively increased the family literacy of women from the low literacy group ($p=0.043$) and their children’s literacy activity ($p=0.039$). There was no difference in family literacy among women in the high literacy group between pre-test and post-test scores. However, after implementing the program with their children at home, they also showed significant differences in literacy activity ($p=0,042$).

Table 3. Descriptive statistics

	High literacy group			Low literacy group		
	Min	Max	Mean (SD)	Min	Max	Mean (SD)
Women’s family literacy						
Pre-test	36	63	47 (±10,9)	37	47	43,6 (±4,1)
Posttest	46	66	54,2 (±8,4)	49	70	57,6 (±7,9)
Children’s literacy activity						
Pre-test	35	70	52,2 (±12,5)	45	69	54,2 (±9,1)
Posttest	52	73	60 (±7,9)	48	72	58,6 (±8,7)

Table 4. Inferential statistics

H ₀	z	Sig.	r
The median differences between pre-test and post-test scores of women’s family literacy in the high literate group = 0	1.625	0.104	0.726
The median differences between pre-test and post-test scores of women’s family literacy in the low literate group = 0	2.023	0.043*	0.904
The median differences between pre-test and post-test scores of children’s literacy activity in the high literate group = 0	2.032	0.042*	0.908
The median differences between pre-test and post-test scores of children’s literacy activity in the low literate group = 0	2.060	0.039*	0.921

Note. z = standardized test statistics, r = effect size (z/\sqrt{N}), where $r > 0.5$ means large effect
*significant in $p < 0.05$

The treatment had different effects on each group. No significant difference in women’s high-literate group was caused by their favorable precondition (before the program). Due to participation in the literacy club, they have had a basic family literacy understanding and practiced it at home. Therefore, their pre-test scores were relatively higher, and the program did not give them much new

knowledge. In contrast with the low literate group, women from this group lacked initial knowledge and experience in literacy. Therefore, this program was perceived as an eye-opening experience about how to be a better mother. Even though they scored lower on the pre-test, they had higher scores than the highly literate group on the post-test.

Another interesting finding is that when both groups implemented the program at home, children of both groups shared the same benefit. Children from high and low-literate groups experienced significant positive changes, and the differences between groups were only slight. Even though the children came from different backgrounds, they showed a similar inclination toward literacy activities, as indicated by equal means in the pre-test and post-test. A slightly higher mean of children from high-literate groups might suggest that their parents implement the program better. They have already built reading habits at home compared to the other group. For better future results, low-literate families needed more supervision and facilitation from the facilitators of the programs. The change in scores can be seen in Figures 2 to 5.

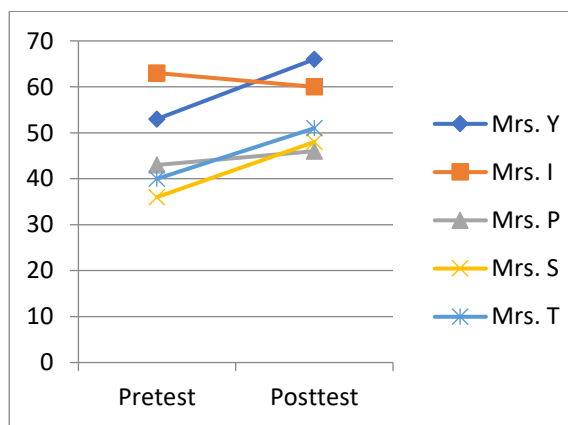


Figure 1. Change in scores of family literacy on women in the high literate group

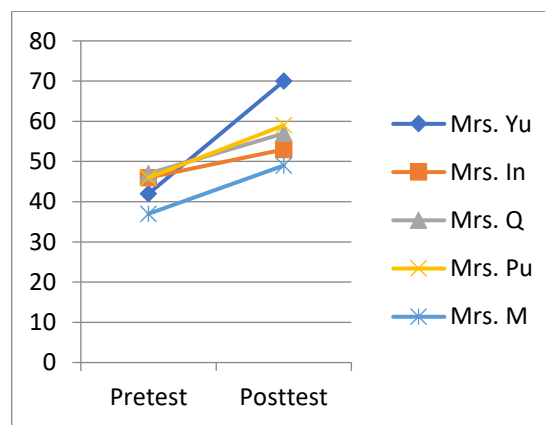


Figure 2. Change in scores of family literacy on women in the low literate group

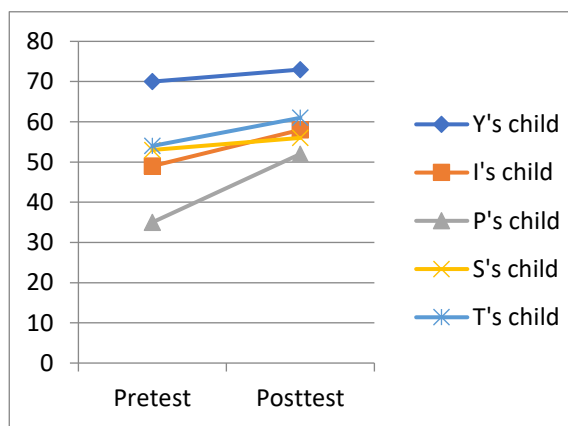


Figure 3. Change in scores of children's literacy activity in the high literate group

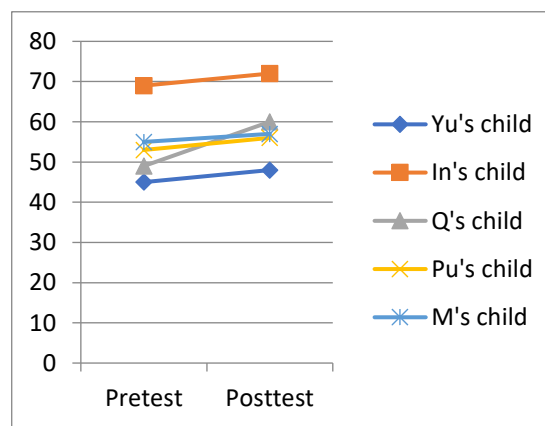


Figure 4. Change in scores of children's literacy activity in the low literate group

In this mixed-method study, the researchers examined the effectiveness of a parenting training program based on the Islamic parenting model in increasing Muslim family literacy. As a preliminary effort to validate the model based on a new conceptualization of Islamic parenting in the literature (Tawil et al., 2019), this research produced satisfying results. In Study 1, the researchers successfully delivered a training program based on the model to Muslim families. The program was well-received because it was beneficial in two ways: it is more practical and oriented to implementing parenting skills while integrating religious/ spiritual into parenting practice. This program taught participants “how to do” and “why to do” parents. In Study 2, although some methodological limitations undermined the experiment’s validity (e.g., limited sample size, purposive sampling, and extraneous variance due to online situations), the researchers could prove the effectiveness of the training program. It was quite a new way to test the Islamic parenting model through empirical research. The program’s effectiveness was found to be statistically significant to low-literate families and able to bring positive changes to children of both groups.

Bronfenbrenner (in Rosa & Tudge, 2013) has highlighted the crucial role of family/parent in child development because parents are part of a child’s microsystem and highly influential in a child’s proximal processes. Thus, positive change in parents is predicted to cause a change in children. A strategy to improve children’s development would require improvement in parents. Evidence from this research supports this theory. The researchers also strengthened the children’s literacy by targeting the parents’ literacy. However, in literacy development, significant others of a child are not limited to parents, especially the mother, but also involve other members of the family, i.e., father, sibling, other relatives, and caregivers at home (Anderson, Streelasky, & Anderson, 2007). Other family members are outside this parenting model’s scope, which can be its potential limitation. This model is best suited to solve problems in which parents are the most influential element in the dynamic of the situation, e.g., child development and problematic behaviors. It is still unknown whether this model is generalizable to solve other family matters, e.g., marital problems, child’s academic difficulties, work-related issues, or to achieve new/ multi-literacies (Anderson, Anderson, Friedrich, & Kim, 2010). Increasing the model’s generalizability would be the primary concern of future research.

Family literacy programs worldwide are usually conducted to extend and improve children’s literacy experience outside school and to prevent delays in literacy development (van Steensel, McElvany, Kurvers, & Herppich, 2011). It can be designed concerning two dimensions: type of intervention (direct or indirect) and type of participant (adult or child), and program related to school goals or purely as an intergenerational program (van Steensel et al., 2011). The family literacy program designed in this research is characterized by providing parents with direct instruction and indirectly targeting children. The training is an adult education that facilitates parents by doing home visits and is purposed to improve the literacy development of parents and children under study

(intergenerational program). Family literacy programs could set higher purposes, targeting improving children's reading skills in coding or comprehension (van Steensel et al., 2011).

This research focuses on increasing family knowledge and awareness of literacy issues and teaching basic literacy activities at home, e.g., through dialogic/shared/interactive reading (Debruin-Parecki, 2009). In addition, due to limited resources, the program cannot provide book provision and center-based activities, e.g., library visits. The increasing family literacy in both groups can be considered mainly as the effect of knowledge given during training and facilitators' support at home. However, the researchers did not measure the potential mediating variables such as the quantity and quality of support received by the family and the level of parents' motivation and adherence to model guidelines (Doyle & Zhang, 2011). The researchers also did not control potential confounding variables such as involvement of one or both parents (Baker, 2013), children's age and grade, type of school (one child is a homeschooler), parents' education status, and so on (van Steensel et al., 2011).

Despite satisfying results, it is still too early to claim the model's generalizability (external validity). The researchers recommend further research to pursue external validity as the next agenda by improving the research design in several areas: Sampling method, sample size, and sample characteristics. The second is in the training design and execution in the actual situation by increasing the number of facilitators and monitoring progress. Lastly, the experimental design should adopt a control group or time series design. Researchers recommend this effort to various stakeholders in education and general society, especially in Indonesia and other Muslim-majority countries. Islamic parenting model based on family religiousness can potentially be translated into an empowerment program, especially for disadvantaged groups.

CONCLUSIONS

In this research, the researchers implemented a training program based on the Islamic parenting model to solve literacy issues in Muslim families. This research pointed out that by integrating religiousness into family practices, parents had greater motivation to implement their knowledge at home as religiousness was the source of meaning. The program's success was reflected in the results of the quasi-experiment, showing significance in most of the hypotheses tested. Despite several methodological limitations that limited its generalizability, future research can try to improve findings by using alternative research designs or targeting other populations and other family problems. This research supported the notion that parent has a significant role in child development. Thus, more attention should be given to improving parents' knowledge and skills in parenting.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This work was funded by the Ministry of Research Technology and Higher Education, Republic of Indonesia, scheme *Penelitian Dasar Unggulan Perguruan Tinggi* (PDUPT), grant year 2020. This work was also supported by Pimpinan Daerah Muhammadiyah in Magelang, Yogyakarta Homeschooling Community, and Early Childhood Education and Kindergarten, Akar Tumbuh Melati, Yogyakarta.

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