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# Parenting, Spiritual Attachment, and Child Development: An Integrative Framework for Islamic Family Psychology

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**ABSTRACT**

This study critically examines the interrelationships between Islamic parenting principles, spiritual attachment, and contemporary developmental psychology to develop an integrative framework for understanding child development within Muslim families. Employing a qualitative library research approach, the study synthesises scholarly literature through thematic analysis, critical interpretation, and conceptual integration. The findings identify three interconnected dimensions: Islamic parenting ethics, caregiver–child attachment, and spiritual attachment, which collectively provide a theoretical foundation for understanding children's emotional, psychological, moral, and social development. Islamic ethical principles, particularly rahmah, amanah, 'adl, and ihsan, emerge as normative foundations for compassionate, responsible, and developmentally responsive parenting. The study proposes an ethical–relational–spiritual framework integrating parental responsiveness, emotional security, religious meaning-making, and multidimensional developmental outcomes. This framework distinguishes supportive spiritual guidance from coercive religious socialisation while recognising the influence of sociocultural contexts and developmental stages. Theoretically, the research advances Islamic family psychology by connecting spiritual and relational mechanisms with contemporary developmental perspectives. Furthermore, it contributes to the sociology of Islamic family law by reconceptualising parental authority as an ethically accountable responsibility that prioritises children's psychological dignity and developmental rights. The proposed framework provides a foundation for future empirical investigation and culturally responsive parenting interventions across diverse Muslim family contexts.

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## INTRODUCTION

The growing international concern regarding children's psychological well-being, emotional vulnerability, and moral development has intensified scholarly debates about the capacity of contemporary parenting frameworks to accommodate the cultural and spiritual dimensions of family life (Rich et al., 2024; Mohd Arifin et al., 2024). Although developmental psychology has extensively addressed parental responsiveness, emotional security, and attachment relationships, religiously informed parenting introduces additional questions concerning how spiritual beliefs shape children's perceptions of security, identity, and relational belonging (McLean et al., 2026; Astuti & Nurjannah, 2024). Within Muslim families, parenting constitutes more than the transmission of behavioural expectations, as it encompasses the cultivation of compassion, moral responsibility, religious consciousness, and emotionally supportive relationships grounded in Islamic ethical principles (Dwinandita, 2024; Zur Raffar et al., 2025). Nevertheless, religious beliefs do not necessarily produce beneficial developmental outcomes, since their influence depends substantially on how religious commitments are translated into parental expectations, emotional interactions, and disciplinary practices (Rich et al., 2024). This complexity becomes particularly significant when spiritual attachment is conceptualised not merely as religious adherence but as a potentially meaningful psychological relationship involving perceived divine security, spiritual connectedness, and emotional reassurance (Shoshan et al., 2024; Astuti & Nurjannah, 2024). Consequently, developing an integrative understanding of Islamic parenting and child development requires theoretical engagement with both contemporary attachment scholarship and the ethical foundations of Muslim family relationships (McLean et al., 2026; Dwinandita, 2024).

Recent international scholarship has generated important but differentiated insights into the relationships between parenting, religiosity, attachment, and developmental well-being (Rich et al., 2024; McLean et al., 2026). In South Africa, Rich et al. (2024) systematically demonstrated that religious beliefs may influence parenting in both constructive and potentially harmful ways, challenging interpretations that presume an inherently positive relationship between religiosity and family functioning. Research conducted in Malaysia by Mohd Arifin et al. (2024) identified significant associations between authoritarian parenting and adolescent mental health difficulties, reinforcing the importance of distinguishing ethical parental guidance from psychologically restrictive control. Across Malaysia and Indonesia, Zur Raffar et al. (2025) examined spirituality-oriented parental practices, highlighting the relevance of religious education and family environments to adolescent upbringing. Meanwhile, Dwinandita (2024) synthesised Southeast Asian literature on Islamic parenting and family resilience, identifying religious values and parenting practices as interrelated dimensions of Muslim family functioning.

Astuti and Nurjannah (2024) subsequently proposed ruhiyah attachment as a theoretical extension of attachment perspectives, suggesting that caregivers may facilitate children's spiritual connectedness through religiously meaningful relationships. Beyond Southeast Asia, Shoshan et al. (2024) investigated insecure attachment to God, religious coping, and psychological well-being among Muslims and Jews in Israel, whilst McLean et al. (2026) explored parental and divine attachment across Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism in the United States and India. Collectively, these studies substantiate the importance of family relationships and religious experience, although their theoretical orientations, populations, and developmental outcomes remain heterogeneous (Dwinandita, 2024; McLean et al., 2026).

Despite these advances, three interconnected limitations remain evident within the selected literature (Rich et al., 2024; Dwinandita, 2024; Astuti & Nurjannah, 2024). First, studies of Islamic parenting frequently concentrate on religious socialisation, family resilience, or particular developmental outcomes without fully specifying the relational mechanisms through which parental ethical practices might influence emotional security and psychological adjustment (Dwinandita, 2024; Zur Raffar et al., 2025). Second, emerging scholarship concerning spiritual attachment has not yet sufficiently integrated distinctions between attachment to caregivers, perceived attachment to God, and religious socialisation into a unified, developmentally sensitive explanatory structure (Astuti & Nurjannah, 2024; McLean et al., 2026). Third, research addressing parenting styles and mental health often prioritises observable psychological associations, whereas religiously situated developmental studies frequently emphasise spiritual or moral formation, leaving the intersections between these domains insufficiently elaborated (Mohd Arifin et al., 2024; Shoshan et al., 2024). A further conceptual concern is that religious guidance and authoritarian control may be treated as interchangeable despite evidence that religiously influenced parenting can generate divergent outcomes depending on relational context and parental behaviour (Rich et al., 2024; Mohd Arifin et al., 2024). Accordingly, the central research gap concerns the absence, within the reviewed literature, of a sufficiently articulated framework explaining how Islamic parenting ethics and distinct forms of attachment might interact across children's emotional, psychological, moral, and social development (Astuti & Nurjannah, 2024; Dwinandita, 2024; McLean et al., 2026).

To address these limitations, the present study proposes an integrative conceptual framework that positions Islamic parenting ethics, caregiver–child attachment, and spiritual attachment as analytically distinguishable yet potentially interconnected dimensions of developmental experience (Astuti & Nurjannah, 2024; McLean et al., 2026). Its principal theoretical innovation lies in translating Islamic ethical principles, including rahmah (compassion), amanah (responsibility), ʻadl (justice), and ihsan (benevolence), into candidate relational mechanisms that can be critically examined alongside contemporary developmental concepts (Dwinandita, 2024; Astuti & Nurjannah, 2024). Operationally, the proposed framework identifies parental warmth, emotional responsiveness, non-coercive moral guidance, spiritual communication, and

relational consistency as potentially observable parenting practices, whilst distinguishing emotional regulation, psychological security, moral reasoning, and social competence as developmental outcome domains (Rich et al., 2024; Mohd Arifin et al., 2024; Dwinandita, 2024). Rather than assuming that religious commitment automatically produces favourable outcomes, the framework incorporates developmental stage, family context, and potentially coercive religious socialisation as conditions that may qualify these relationships (Rich et al., 2024; McLean et al., 2026). This approach therefore advances a theoretically testable model without presenting its proposed pathways as already established causal findings (Astuti & Nurjannah, 2024; Shoshan et al., 2024).

Building upon these theoretical considerations, this study aims to advance Islamic family psychology through a critical synthesis of Islamic parenting principles, spiritual attachment perspectives, and contemporary developmental theories (Dwinandita, 2024; Astuti & Nurjannah, 2024). The first research objective is to critically examine and synthesise these perspectives to elucidate their interconnected roles and proposed psychological, spiritual, and relational mechanisms in children's emotional, psychological, moral, and social development within Muslim families (McLean et al., 2026; Mohd Arifin et al., 2024). The second objective is to develop an integrative conceptual framework that combines Islamic parenting ethics, spiritual attachment theory, and contemporary child development perspectives into a holistic, spiritually grounded, ethically informed, and psychologically responsive developmental model (Astuti & Nurjannah, 2024; Dwinandita, 2024). Accordingly, the study addresses two questions: how can Islamic parenting principles and spiritual attachment be critically synthesised with developmental psychology to explain their proposed influence on multidimensional child development, and how can these perspectives be integrated into a coherent conceptual model of Islamic family psychology (Rich et al., 2024; McLean et al., 2026)? By addressing these questions, the article seeks to provide an explicit theoretical foundation for subsequent empirical validation and culturally responsive family research rather than claiming to establish developmental causality through conceptual synthesis alone (Astuti & Nurjannah, 2024; Dwinandita, 2024).

## METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative research approach employing library research and an integrative literature review to critically examine the relationships between Islamic parenting principles, spiritual attachment, and multidimensional child development within Muslim families (Snyder, 2019; Torraco, 2016). The integrative approach is particularly appropriate for synthesising heterogeneous theoretical and empirical perspectives while facilitating the development of an interdisciplinary conceptual framework (Snyder, 2019; Flemming & Noyes, 2021). Epistemologically, the study combines interpretative and critical-analytical perspectives to investigate how Islamic family ethics, attachment theory, and contemporary developmental psychology conceptualise children's emotional, psychological, moral, and social development (Torraco, 2016; Carroll et al., 2013). From the perspective of Islamic family law sociology, the analysis considers

parenting as a socially situated practice shaped by religious norms, family relationships, and socio-cultural circumstances rather than exclusively by individual psychological characteristics (Snyder, 2019; Torraco, 2016). Accordingly, the methodological design emphasises conceptual integration, theoretical comparison, and interpretative synthesis rather than statistical hypothesis testing or causal estimation (Flemming & Noyes, 2021; Shaw et al., 2021).

Data collection is designed through structured documentary searches of Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, and Google Scholar, supplemented by relevant scholarly books, classical Islamic sources, and authoritative family-related documents (Snyder, 2019; Page et al., 2021). Searches prioritise peer-reviewed publications from 2021 to October 2026, while foundational theoretical literature may be included when necessary to clarify established conceptual traditions (Snyder, 2019; Torraco, 2016). The proposed search strategy combines the keywords "Islamic parenting", "Muslim family", "spiritual attachment", "attachment to God", "parent–child attachment", "child development", "Islamic family ethics", and "developmental psychology" using Boolean operators AND and OR (Page et al., 2021). Eligible publications must address at least one principal construct and provide identifiable theoretical, empirical, or normative contributions to the research questions (Snyder, 2019; Page et al., 2021). Publications lacking substantive relevance, methodological transparency, or sufficient bibliographical information are excluded, whilst duplicates are removed before title, abstract, and full-text screening (Page et al., 2021). The selection process is documented through a screening log recording database sources, search dates, search strings, eligibility decisions, and reasons for exclusion to support transparency and replicability (Page et al., 2021). Selected documents are subsequently organised within a structured extraction matrix containing author, publication year, research context, theoretical orientation, methodology, principal findings, and implications for Islamic family psychology (Snyder, 2019; Carroll et al., 2013).

Data analysis employs qualitative thematic synthesis combined with critical conceptual analysis and a best-fit framework synthesis strategy to integrate heterogeneous evidence into a theoretically coherent model (Flemming & Noyes, 2021; Carroll et al., 2013). Initially, deductive coding categorises the literature into Islamic parenting ethics, caregiver–child attachment, spiritual attachment, developmental outcomes, and socio-cultural or normative contextual factors (Carroll et al., 2013; Shaw et al., 2021). Subsequently, inductive coding identifies emergent themes, contradictions, and conceptual relationships not adequately represented within the preliminary analytical categories (Flemming & Noyes, 2021; Shaw et al., 2021). Cross-study comparison then examines convergences and divergences between Islamic ethical principles and contemporary psychological explanations, explicitly distinguishing normative propositions from empirical findings (Snyder, 2019; Torraco, 2016). The emerging framework is constructed by mapping proposed relationships between parental compassion, ethical responsibility, emotional responsiveness, attachment security, spiritual connectedness, and developmental outcomes (Carroll et al., 2013; Torraco, 2016).

Methodological trustworthiness is strengthened through source triangulation, transparent coding records, critical assessment of contradictory evidence, and documentation of interpretative decisions (Snyder, 2019; Flemming & Noyes, 2021). Finally, the resulting conceptual framework is evaluated for theoretical coherence, contextual applicability, and potential empirical testability, thereby providing an analytical foundation for advancing Islamic family psychology and the sociology of Islamic family law (Torraco, 2016; Shaw et al., 2021).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

### Islamic Parenting Principles, Spiritual Attachment, and Multidimensional Child Development

The synthesis of the selected literature identifies three interconnected conceptual domains underlying child development within Muslim families: Islamic parenting ethics, caregiver–child attachment, and spiritual attachment. Islamic parenting emphasises moral responsibility, compassion (rahmah), justice (‘adl), and benevolence (ihsan), providing a normative foundation for parental behaviour and children's moral socialisation (Dwinandita, 2024). These principles acquire developmental relevance when translated into observable practices, including emotional responsiveness, supportive communication, consistent guidance, and non-coercive discipline. Research on religiously influenced parenting indicates that religious beliefs can support family relationships but may also contribute to restrictive practices, demonstrating that religious orientation alone does not guarantee positive developmental outcomes (Rich et al., 2024).

A second finding concerns the conceptual distinction between interpersonal attachment and spiritual attachment. Whereas caregiver–child attachment concerns children's emotional security within relationships with significant caregivers, spiritual attachment involves perceived connectedness with God and the meanings associated with divine protection and reassurance. Astuti and Nurjannah (2024) conceptualise ruhiyah attachment as a spiritually oriented extension of attachment theory, positioning caregivers as facilitators of children's relationships with Allah. This perspective suggests that emotionally supportive parenting and religious socialisation may operate as interconnected, rather than interchangeable, developmental processes.

The synthesis further identifies four proposed developmental pathways: emotional regulation through parental responsiveness, psychological security through relational consistency, moral development through ethical modelling, and social competence through compassion and interpersonal responsibility. Evidence associating parenting styles with adolescent mental health supports the relevance of parenting practices to psychological adjustment, although it does not establish the causal effects of spiritual attachment (Mohd Arifin et al., 2024). Accordingly, these pathways represent theoretically grounded propositions rather than independently verified causal mechanisms.

### Development of an Integrative Framework for Islamic Family Psychology

The second synthesis produces a proposed integrative conceptual framework comprising four interacting components: normative foundations,

relational parenting mechanisms, spiritual attachment processes, and multidimensional developmental outcomes. The normative component incorporates Islamic ethical principles, particularly rahmah, amanah, ‘adl, and ihsan, as guiding standards for parental responsibilities. The relational component translates these principles into parental warmth, psychological availability, emotional validation, consistent boundaries, and constructive moral communication. The spiritual component incorporates religious meaning-making, perceived divine connectedness, and spiritually supportive family interactions, drawing conceptually upon ruhiyah attachment (Astuti & Nurjannah, 2024).
The framework identifies developmental stage, family relationships, sociocultural expectations, and religious socialisation practices as contextual conditions that may shape these proposed relationships. From the sociology of Islamic family law perspective, parental responsibility is conceptualised as simultaneously ethical, relational, and socially situated rather than exclusively disciplinary or legally prescribed. The framework consequently distinguishes legitimate parental guidance from potentially coercive practices, acknowledging the divergent outcomes identified in religious parenting research (Rich et al., 2024).

Overall, the conceptual synthesis establishes a model in which Islamic ethical commitments provide normative direction, responsive parenting supports relational security, and spiritual attachment offers an additional domain of meaning-making potentially relevant to child development. Its principal contribution is an explicit structure for investigating the relationships between Islamic family ethics, attachment processes, and developmental outcomes across diverse Muslim family contexts. Nevertheless, the proposed mechanisms and their relative contributions require empirical validation before conclusions concerning developmental effectiveness can be established.

## Discussion

### Reconstructing Islamic Parenting and Spiritual Attachment within Contemporary Developmental Psychology

The findings of this study suggest that Islamic parenting and spiritual attachment should be understood as interconnected yet conceptually distinct dimensions of child development rather than as independent religious and psychological practices. This interpretation challenges the tendency to conceptualise parenting exclusively through behavioural control, parental authority, or religious socialisation by demonstrating the theoretical importance of emotional responsiveness, psychological security, and ethical relationality within Muslim family environments. The synthesis particularly indicates that Islamic parenting principles, including rahmah (compassion), amanah (responsibility), ‘adl (justice), and ihsan (benevolence), may function as normative foundations for developmentally responsive parenting when translated into supportive family interactions. This interpretation is consistent with Dwinandita (2024), who identifies Islamic values and parenting practices as interrelated elements of Muslim family resilience, but extends that discussion by identifying relational processes through which these principles may contribute to children's multidimensional development.

A particularly significant implication concerns the distinction between

religiously informed parenting and authoritarian parental control. Although Islamic family ethics emphasise parental responsibilities and moral guidance, these principles should not automatically be interpreted as legitimising coercive disciplinary practices or unconditional obedience. Rich et al. (2024) demonstrate that religious beliefs can influence parenting in both constructive and harmful directions, indicating that religious commitment does not independently guarantee emotionally supportive family environments. Similarly, Mohd Arifin et al. (2024) identify associations between parenting styles and adolescent mental health difficulties, thereby reinforcing the importance of examining the psychological consequences of parental authority.

The present study extends these findings by proposing that the developmental significance of Islamic parenting depends not simply on the presence of religious instruction but on whether religious values are communicated through compassion, fairness, emotional validation, and age-appropriate guidance. Consequently, Islamic parental authority may be understood as an ethically accountable responsibility rather than an unrestricted entitlement to regulate children's behaviour.

The integration of spiritual attachment further develops this argument by recognising that children's developmental experiences may involve relationships with both human caregivers and spiritually meaningful representations of divine connectedness. Astuti and Nurjannah (2024) propose ruhiyah attachment as a conceptual extension of attachment theory, emphasising the potential role of caregivers in facilitating children's spiritual relationships with Allah.

Building upon this perspective, the present study distinguishes caregiver–child attachment from spiritual attachment while proposing that emotionally secure parenting may provide a relational environment in which children develop constructive religious meanings. Such an interpretation does not imply that the quality of parental attachment mechanically determines children's spiritual experiences. Rather, it suggests that the emotional characteristics of family interactions may influence how children interpret religious guidance, divine compassion, moral responsibility, and spiritual reassurance.

Nevertheless, the relationship between spiritual attachment and psychological well-being requires critical consideration. Shoshan et al. (2024), examining Muslim and Jewish participants in Israel, found that insecure attachment to God was indirectly associated with depressive symptoms through divine struggles, while direct associations with happiness and depressive symptoms were not significant.

Although these findings cannot be generalised directly to children because the study involved adults, they challenge the assumption that spiritual attachment is inherently protective. The present framework therefore conceptualises spiritual attachment as a potentially supportive developmental resource whose psychological implications may depend on the quality of religious meaning-making, family communication, and children's experiences of spiritual security.

These considerations provide a more differentiated explanation of the relationships between Islamic parenting, spiritual attachment, and multidimensional development. Emotional development may be supported through parental responsiveness and affective validation; psychological

development through consistency and perceived security; moral development through ethical modelling and reflective guidance; and social development through compassion, cooperation, and respect for others. Importantly, these proposed pathways should be interpreted as theoretically plausible relationships derived from interdisciplinary synthesis rather than causal effects established by the present literature-based study. The analytical contribution of RQ1 thus lies in connecting Islamic ethical norms with identifiable developmental mechanisms while maintaining conceptual distinctions between religious values, parenting practices, spiritual experiences, and developmental outcomes.

**Developing an Integrative Ethical–Relational–Spiritual Framework for Islamic Family Psychology**

The second major contribution of this study is the development of an integrative framework that systematically connects Islamic parenting ethics, relational attachment processes, spiritual attachment, and developmental outcomes. Rather than treating Islamic spirituality as an additional variable within conventional psychological models, the proposed framework positions Islamic ethical principles as normative orientations that may influence how family relationships are structured and experienced. This distinction is theoretically important because religious norms, psychological mechanisms, and developmental consequences operate at different analytical levels. Islamic principles articulate expectations concerning morally responsible parental conduct, attachment concepts explain patterns of relational security and emotional interaction, and developmental psychology provides categories for examining children's adjustment and competence.

The framework therefore proposes an ethical–relational–spiritual structure comprising four analytically connected dimensions. The first dimension concerns normative parental responsibilities grounded in compassion, justice, benevolence, and accountability. The second concerns relational practices through which these principles may become observable, including parental warmth, responsiveness, constructive communication, and consistent boundaries. The third concerns spiritual processes involving religious meaning-making, perceived divine connectedness, and spiritually supportive interactions. The fourth concerns developmental outcomes encompassing emotional regulation, psychological adjustment, moral reasoning, and social competence. These dimensions are not conceptualised as a fixed linear sequence; rather, reciprocal relationships are theoretically possible, since children's developmental characteristics may also influence parental behaviour and family communication.

This conceptualisation advances the scholarship of Astuti and Nurjannah (2024) by situating ruhiyah attachment within a broader structure that explicitly includes ethical parenting practices and multidimensional developmental outcomes. It also extends Dwinandita's (2024) discussion of Islamic parenting and family resilience by proposing more specific relational constructs that could be operationalised in subsequent empirical research.

The framework's proposed originality is therefore not the assertion that religion, parenting, and child development are related, but the specification of how

their conceptual components might be connected through identifiable relational mechanisms and contextual conditions.

Another important feature is its recognition of contextual variability. Islamic parenting practices cannot be separated from socioeconomic circumstances, parental educational experiences, gender expectations, intergenerational relationships, and culturally embedded interpretations of religious authority. Consequently, the same religious principle may be expressed through different parenting behaviours across Muslim societies and family settings. The proposed framework accommodates this complexity by treating sociocultural context and developmental stage as potential moderators rather than assuming that Islamic parenting constitutes a universally homogeneous practice. Such contextual sensitivity is particularly relevant to interdisciplinary research involving Islamic family psychology, sociology, and family law.

From a methodological perspective, the framework also provides a foundation for empirical investigation. Parental compassion and ethical responsibility could be examined through measures of supportive communication, perceived fairness, and emotional availability; caregiver attachment through developmentally appropriate measures of relational security; and spiritual attachment through carefully adapted measures of religious connectedness and perceived divine security. These constructs could subsequently be examined alongside indicators of emotional regulation, psychological well-being, prosocial behaviour, and moral reasoning. However, the conceptual distinctions and measurement equivalence of spiritual attachment constructs must be established before cross-cultural or causal comparisons are attempted.

**Implications for the Sociology of Islamic Family Law and Child Protection**

Beyond its psychological contribution, the proposed framework offers important theoretical implications for the sociology of Islamic family law by reconceptualising parenting as an intersection of normative obligations, social relationships, and children's developmental interests. Within Islamic family jurisprudence, parental responsibilities are commonly discussed through concepts such as hadanah (child custody and care), wilayah (guardianship), and tarbiyah (education and moral cultivation). These concepts establish a normative foundation for parental responsibility, yet their social implementation requires consideration of children's emotional needs, developmental capacities, and lived experiences. The present framework consequently proposes that the fulfilment of parental obligations should be examined not only through the provision of material support, religious education, and behavioural supervision but also through the quality of emotional relationships and the protection of children's psychological dignity.

This interpretation offers an interdisciplinary bridge between Islamic legal ethics and contemporary developmental psychology. In particular, the objectives of Maqasid al-Shariah, including the protection of life (hifz al-nafs), intellect (hifz al-'aql), and family or lineage (hifz al-nasl), can be interpreted as complementary ethical considerations when evaluating the developmental implications of parenting. However, applying these principles to children's psychological well-

being represents a contemporary interpretative extension rather than a claim that classical jurisprudence directly employed modern developmental constructs. Accordingly, a maqasid-oriented understanding of parental responsibility can be developed through critical engagement between Islamic normative reasoning and contemporary evidence concerning child development.

A further implication concerns the relationship between parental authority and children's developmental rights. In some family contexts, religiously justified disciplinary practices may create tensions between expectations of obedience and children's need for psychological autonomy. Rich et al. (2024) provide an important basis for this critical distinction by demonstrating the diverse consequences of religiously influenced parenting practices. From a sociological perspective, parental legitimacy should therefore be examined through the ethical quality of authority, including proportionality, non-violence, fairness, and respect for children's developmental capacities. This approach does not diminish the significance of parental guidance but repositions it within a model of relational accountability.

The framework also has practical implications for Islamic family counselling, parenting education, religious institutions, and community-based child protection programmes. Parenting interventions informed by the proposed model could integrate Islamic ethical education with psychological literacy, emotionally responsive communication, and non-coercive religious socialisation. Such interventions should be sensitive to variations in Muslim family structures and avoid assuming that spiritually oriented parenting will generate uniform developmental benefits. Their effectiveness must be evaluated empirically rather than inferred from normative compatibility alone.

**Theoretical Contributions, Research Limitations, and Future Directions**

The principal theoretical contribution of this study lies in proposing an integrative model that distinguishes and connects three dimensions frequently discussed through separate disciplinary perspectives: Islamic normative ethics, psychological attachment processes, and sociocultural family relations. This integration provides a conceptual basis for examining how parental religious commitments might become developmentally significant through specific patterns of emotional communication, moral guidance, and spiritually meaningful interaction.

A second contribution is the reconstruction of spiritual attachment as a distinct analytical construct rather than an automatic consequence of religious observance. The findings of Shoshan et al. (2024) underline the importance of this distinction by indicating that insecure attachment to God and religious struggles can be associated with psychological difficulties in adult populations.
Consequently, future models should differentiate religious participation, spiritual connectedness, secure attachment representations, and potentially distressing religious experiences rather than treating these constructs as equivalent.

Nevertheless, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the library research design does not permit causal conclusions regarding the effects of Islamic parenting or spiritual attachment on child development. Second, the heterogeneity

of religious, cultural, and developmental contexts limits the generalisability of the proposed conceptual relationships. Third, much of the available evidence concerning attachment to God is drawn from adult or adolescent populations, necessitating caution when applying these findings to early childhood. Finally, the proposed framework has not yet undergone psychometric validation or empirical testing.

Future research should therefore employ longitudinal, mixed-methods, and comparative designs to investigate the proposed mechanisms across different developmental stages and Muslim family contexts. Particular attention should be given to evaluating whether emotional responsiveness mediates relationships between Islamic parenting practices and developmental outcomes, whether spiritual attachment contributes independently to psychological security, and how gender norms, socioeconomic conditions, and interpretations of parental authority influence these associations. Comparative research involving diverse Muslim communities may also clarify which dimensions of the model reflect broader developmental processes and which are contextually specific expressions of Islamic family ethics.

Taken together, this discussion positions Islamic family psychology as an interdisciplinary field in which religious ethics, developmental mechanisms, and sociological realities can be examined within a coherent yet critically differentiated framework. The proposed model contributes to theoretical development by articulating testable relationships among Islamic parenting principles, relational security, spiritual attachment, and multidimensional child development. Its significance for the sociology of Islamic family law lies in advancing a child-centred interpretation of parental responsibility that integrates ethical accountability, psychological well-being, and socially responsive family relationships.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that Islamic parenting principles and spiritual attachment constitute interconnected yet conceptually distinct dimensions of child development that can be meaningfully integrated with contemporary developmental psychology. The critical synthesis demonstrates that Islamic ethical principles, particularly rahmah (compassion), amanah (responsibility), ‘adl (justice), and ihsan (benevolence), provide a normative foundation for parenting practices that prioritise emotional responsiveness, psychological security, moral responsibility, and supportive family relationships. Spiritual attachment emerges as a complementary developmental construct through which religious meaning-making, perceived divine connectedness, and spiritual reassurance may contribute to children's psychological and moral development. However, the developmental significance of these principles depends on their practical expression within family relationships rather than religious commitment alone. The findings therefore challenge reductionist approaches that equate Islamic parenting with behavioural control or religious socialisation, instead emphasising the importance of ethical accountability, relational security, and developmentally appropriate guidance. From the perspective of Islamic family law sociology, this

synthesis reconceptualises parental authority as a socially situated and ethically accountable responsibility that must accommodate children's emotional needs, psychological dignity, and developmental rights.

The principal contribution of this research lies in developing an integrative ethical–relational–spiritual framework that connects Islamic parenting ethics, caregiver–child attachment, spiritual attachment processes, and multidimensional developmental outcomes within a coherent theoretical structure. This framework advances Islamic family psychology by positioning children's emotional, psychological, moral, and social development within the dynamic interaction of normative Islamic values, responsive parenting practices, spiritual experiences, and sociocultural family contexts. Its theoretical novelty resides in distinguishing these dimensions while identifying their proposed relational mechanisms and contextual conditions, thereby providing a foundation for culturally responsive and empirically testable models of Muslim family development. Furthermore, the framework contributes to the sociology of Islamic family law by extending the interpretation of parental responsibility beyond formal guardianship and religious instruction towards psychological well-being, ethical relationality, and child-centred family protection. Nevertheless, as this research employs a qualitative literature-based approach, its conclusions remain conceptual and do not establish causal relationships between Islamic parenting, spiritual attachment, and developmental outcomes. Future investigations should employ longitudinal, comparative, and mixed-methods designs to validate the proposed mechanisms across diverse Muslim communities and developmental stages. Ultimately, this study offers an interdisciplinary foundation for reconstructing Islamic family psychology as a holistic, ethically grounded, spiritually informed, and developmentally responsive field of scholarship.

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