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Single Mothers' Parenting Practices in Transmitting Islamic Values to Primary School-Aged Children: A Qualitative Case Study in Kampung Air, Batam, Indonesia

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Abstract

Single mothers negotiate child-rearing responsibilities while providing for household needs. These demands shape how Islamic values are communicated in family life. This study explores how single mothers in Kampung Air, Batam, transmit Islamic values to primary school-aged children and how contextual conditions support or constrain these practices. Using a qualitative case-study approach, data were gathered through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation involving five single mothers and supporting informants, including children, teachers, family members, and religious or community figures. Data were analyzed through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Findings indicate that mothers combine dialogue and explanation with firm rule-setting, adjusting guidance and supervision to children's behavior, developmental needs, work demands, and available support. Faith-related learning is embedded in everyday interactions through prayer, gratitude, religious stories, and interpretations of ordinary experiences. Time constraints, economic pressure, fatigue, and reduced direct supervision emerge as challenges. The findings suggest that parenting practices are context-responsive rather than fixed categories. This interpretation is exploratory and case-bound; fuller empirical detail is needed to substantiate the full range of Islamic values and reported outcomes.

Keywords: Single Mothers, Islamic Values, Parenting Practices, Religious Socialization, Qualitative Case Study

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1. Introduction

Families are important settings in which children encounter everyday expectations, relationships, and practices through which religious and moral orientations are communicated. In single-mother households, caregiving and economic provision may be concentrated in one adult, although the extent of this responsibility varies according to family networks, employment conditions, and the circumstances through which the household was formed. It is therefore important not to treat single motherhood itself as a deficit or to assume that the absence of a father necessarily produces inadequate religious education. A more productive question concerns how mothers organise care, guidance, and religious socialization under particular social and material conditions. Research on parental religiousness likewise suggests that its relationship with parenting and child adjustment is complex rather than uniformly beneficial or harmful (Bornstein et al., 2017; Gale & Dyer, 2023).

Batam provides a relevant setting for examining these questions because family transitions and socioeconomic conditions form part of the wider context in which parenting takes place. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics of Batam Municipality, 2,216 divorce cases were recorded in 2024, comprising 492 divorce applications initiated by husbands (cerai talak) and 1,724 initiated by wives (cerai gugat). The latter represented approximately 77.8% of the recorded cases (Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Batam, 2025). These administrative figures should not be interpreted as a count of single mothers or of households with primary-school-aged children; they provide contextual evidence of marital dissolution only.

The same statistical publication reports that persistent disputes and arguments were the leading recorded reason for divorce in Batam in 2024. BPS also reports the city's poverty indicators: 83,570 residents, or 4.85% of the population, were classified as poor, while the poverty line reached Rp903,960 per capita per month (Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Batam, 2025). These city-level indicators do not describe the circumstances of the participating mothers directly. They nevertheless provide a broader socioeconomic backdrop against which the costs of food, housing, transport, schooling, and religious education may become salient for households with limited resources.

The central issue examined here is not the presumed inadequacy of a family structure with one parent. Rather, it is the practical negotiation through which mothers seek to maintain religious guidance while managing paid work, household responsibilities, emotional demands, and children's changing needs. In such circumstances, time for conversation, supervision, shared worship, and participation in religious learning may be unevenly available. The role of extended family members, teachers, neighbours, mosques, and Qur'anic learning centers may therefore be consequential, although the nature and extent of that support need to be established from participants' accounts rather than assumed from the neighborhood context.

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Studies in Indonesia have examined single-parent parenting in relation to children's character, social values, and religious development. Febriani et al. (2022) considered character formation in single-parent households; Veryawan and Juliati (2022) examined the transmission of social values by single mothers; and Setiyaningrum and Zalfa (2023) explored how single mothers foster children's religiosity. Nugrahani and Fitri (2023) provide a broader account of parenting practices in single-parent households. Other studies have addressed Islamic educational values among adolescents (Purwanti et al., 2024), religious and moral development in early childhood (Yani & Rukiyah, 2025), and the formation of religious and social character among children in the early years of primary school (Hartono et al., 2026). These studies provide relevant points of comparison, but their participants, developmental stages, and local settings differ. Their findings should therefore be compared contextually rather than treated as evidence of a single parenting pattern applicable to all single-mother households.

A useful analytical starting point is Baumrind's (1966) distinction among authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parental control. In Indonesian discussions, authoritative parenting is often described as democratic parenting; however, the terms should not be treated as interchangeable without defining the underlying dimensions of responsiveness, control, explanation, and autonomy. Nor should every instance of firm rule-setting be classified as authoritarian, or every period of reduced supervision as permissive. A mother's limited availability because of paid work or fatigue may reflect structural constraints rather than a deliberate low-demand parenting orientation. This distinction is particularly important when interpreting the everyday transmission of religious values.

Religious socialization also involves more than the transmission of formal knowledge. It may take place through parental modeling, shared routines, dialogue, participation in worship, and the interpretation of ordinary experiences. Existing research indicates that parental religiousness can be associated with both supportive and controlling dimensions of parenting, underscoring the need to examine how religious commitments are enacted in particular relationships (Bornstein et al., 2017; Gale & Dyer, 2023). In addition, parental mediation of children's digital media use has become an important consideration in family guidance, although its role in the present case requires direct empirical evidence (Fam et al., 2023).

The Kampung Air case offers an opportunity to examine how these processes are negotiated within a specific urban neighborhood. Children's religious and moral learning may be shaped not only by interactions at home but also by school, peers, religious learning institutions, neighborhood relationships, and digital content. The study's contribution therefore lies in examining how mothers describe and enact religious guidance in relation to their actual circumstances, rather than presuming that single-mother status determines children's religious development.

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Against this background, the study addresses three questions: (1) How do single mothers in Kampung Air organise and adapt their parenting practices when transmitting Islamic values to primary school-aged children? (2) What forms of Islamic values and everyday practices are communicated through maternal guidance? and (3) What family, socioeconomic, and institutional conditions support or constrain these practices? The study aims to provide a context-sensitive account of parenting practices and religious socialization in the participating households.

2. Research Methods

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive case-study design to examine the parenting practices through which single mothers communicate Islamic values to primary school-aged children in Kampung Air, Batam. A case-study approach is appropriate because the inquiry concerns a bounded social setting and seeks to understand parenting practices in relation to the family, neighborhood, and institutional contexts in which they occur (Yin, 2018). The case is bounded geographically by the Kampung Air area and substantively by the everyday parenting and religious-socialization practices of participating single-mother households. This design is consistent with the case was examined through field-based interviews, observation, and documentation.

Five single mothers served as the primary participants. Supporting perspectives were obtained from children and adults familiar with the children's upbringing, including teachers, family members, and religious or community figures. Participants were recruited purposively because of their direct experience of the phenomenon under study. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The researcher served as the principal research instrument and was responsible for participant selection, data collection, interpretation, and the verification of findings. Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020), comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Credibility was addressed through source and method triangulation, while transferability, dependability, and confirmability were considered as additional criteria for assessing trustworthiness. The privacy and safety of participating families were protected by omitting home addresses from the report.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Characteristics of Single Mother

The study involved five single mothers with primary-school-aged children who lived in the Kampung Air neighborhood. The table records three mothers whose single-mother status followed the death of a spouse and two whose status followed divorce. Their

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occupations include domestic work, casual work, cleaning, and shop assistance. The households also differ in the number of children and the recorded school grade levels. These characteristics provide context for interpreting the mothers' accounts; they should not be treated as independent explanations of parenting differences in a sample of this size.

Table 1. Identifying the Characteristics of Single Mother

Code	Single-mother status	Occupation	Children (n)	Grade level(s)	Duration (years)
1	Death	Housekeeper	3	2	2
2	Divorce	Odd Jobs Worker	2	2	3
3	Divorce	Cleaning Staff	3	1	4
4	Death	Housekeeper	2	4	2
5	Death	Shop assistant	3	3	3

The participant profiles indicate variation in employment arrangements, household size, and the circumstances through which each mother became the primary caregiver. Such variation matters because parenting practices are enacted within particular time and resource constraints. The accounts suggest that mothers with more regular work schedules may have greater opportunities to accompany children in religious activities, whereas mothers with less predictable schedules may rely more heavily on routines, reminders, relatives, and religious educational institutions. This pattern should be interpreted cautiously: the small, purposively selected sample supports a contextual account rather than a causal explanation or a claim about all single-mother households in Batam.

3.2. Context-Responsive Parenting Practices

The mothers' accounts suggest that the participating mothers do not rely on one uniform approach to child-rearing. Instead, their practices vary according to children's behavior, developmental needs, the importance of a particular rule, and the mothers' own work and emotional circumstances. Dialogic practices are evident when mothers explain religious expectations, listen to children's reasons, and discuss daily schedules. More directive practices appear when mothers establish expectations concerning prayer, Qur'anic learning, manners, and social interaction. Mothers also described periods of reduced direct supervision when mothers are working or experiencing fatigue.

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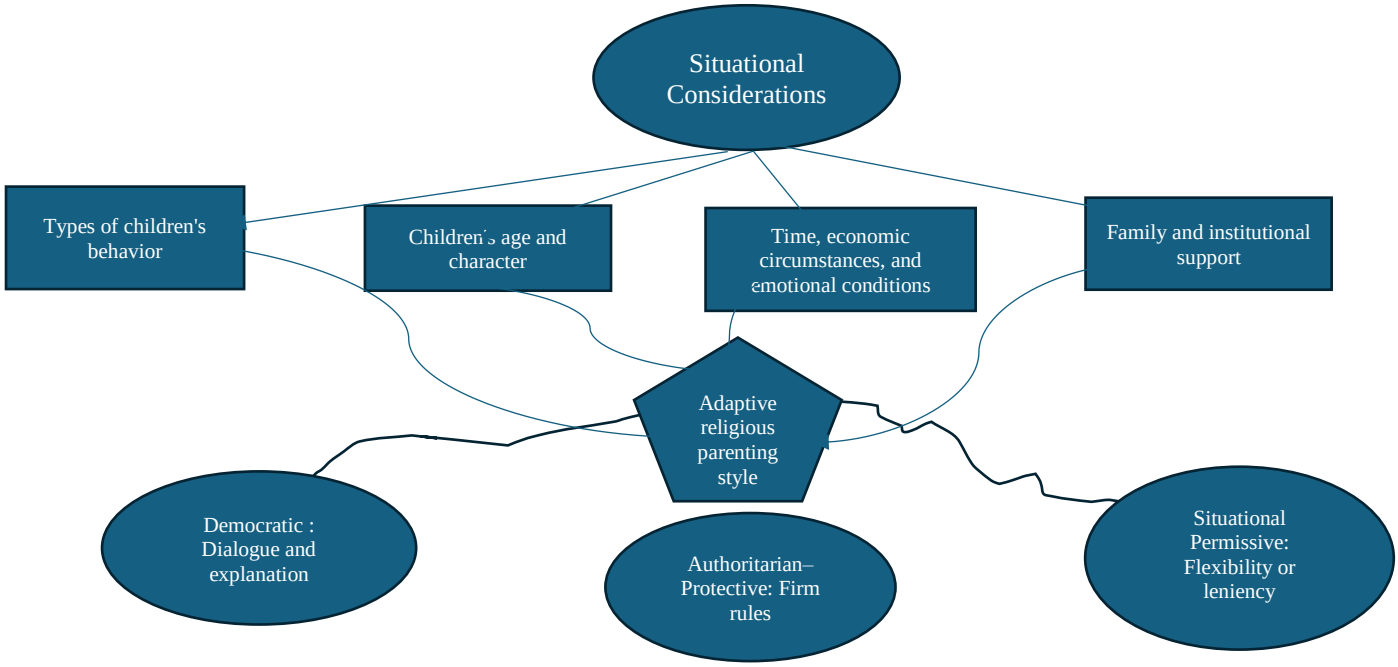


Figure 1. Figure of Research Findings

Thus, the parenting style of single mothers in this study is more appropriately described as an adaptive-religious parenting style. Adaptive means that mothers adjust their parenting approaches to the conditions of their families. Religious means that parenting rules, habits, and goals are guided by the values of faith (aqidah), worship (ibadah), and moral character (akhlak).

3.3. Instilling Aqidah Values Through Daily Conversation and Experiences

The instillation of religious values does not always take place through formal religious education. Mothers more often introduce faith in God through prayer, gratitude, religious stories, and explanations of everyday events. Field findings can be grouped into three categories. First, mothers encourage children to associate success with gratitude to God. Second, mothers teach children to pray when facing difficulties. Third, mothers introduce the concept of moral consequences by explaining that God is aware of every human action.

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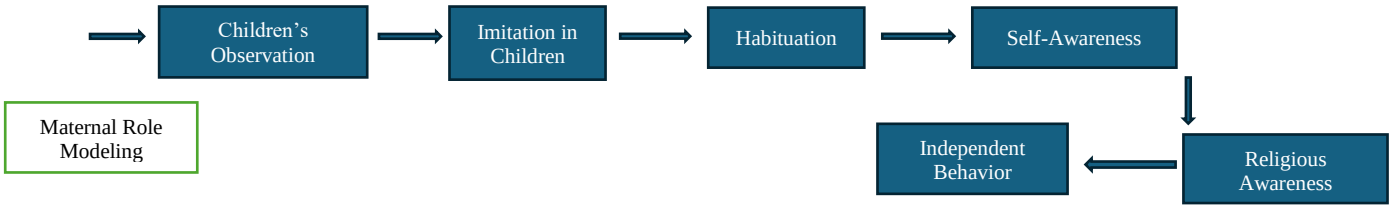


Figure 3.1 Figure of the Process of Internalizing

Analytically speaking, the instillation of religious beliefs becomes stronger when mothers connect those beliefs to their children's concrete experiences. Children are not merely asked to memorize concepts of faith but are encouraged to understand the presence of religious values in learning, accepting family circumstances, earning a living, and facing difficulties. However, it is important to distinguish between spiritual awareness and the use of religion as a threat. Statements that place too much emphasis on punishment can lead to compliance born of fear. Conversely, explanations about compassion, responsibility, and gratitude can help children develop an internal sense of religious awareness.

Research findings indicate that single mothers in the Kampung Air area of Batam City do not adhere to a single, fixed parenting style. They blend democratic, authoritarian, and permissive styles depending on the situation at hand. A democratic style is evident when mothers give children the opportunity to express their opinions, explain the reasons behind a rule, and discuss the consequences of their behaviour. An authoritarian style emerges in the practice of prayer, reciting the Quran, maintaining proper manners, and restricting social interactions. Meanwhile, a permissive tendency emerges when mothers are working, feeling exhausted, or unable to supervise their children directly.

These findings correct the rigid application of Baumrind's theory. Baumrind's classification helps identify levels of parental warmth and control, but parenting practices in single-mother families are more dynamic. A mother may adopt a democratic approach regarding academic matters but be stricter regarding religious practices. Such shifts do not necessarily indicate inconsistency. Under certain conditions, these changes represent an adaptation to the child's age, the nature of the behaviour, environmental risks, and the mother's limitations.

These findings align with the research by Hartono et al. (2026), which found that single-parent parenting styles are a combination of democratic, authoritarian, and permissive styles. The democratic style dominates in fostering responsibility, honesty, and independence. The authoritarian style is used in fostering religious character and discipline. Permissive tendencies arise due to limitations in parental supervision. These common findings suggest that single-parent parenting styles are situational in nature, rather than absolute categories. However, this study expands upon these findings by

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demonstrating that parenting style choices are also influenced by the mother's work hours, the availability of extended family, the use of electronic devices, and the child's access to a TPQ or religious school (Hartono et al., 2026).

Critically, adaptive parenting does not always yield positive results. Adaptation can turn into inconsistency if rules change easily based on the mother's emotional state. Children may become confused when a certain behavior is prohibited at one time but allowed at another. Therefore, the key factor determining the quality of parenting is not firmness alone, but consistency between rules, explanations, modeling, and consequences.

3.4. Supporting Conditions and Parenting Constraints

The study identifies limited time, economic pressure, fatigue, and reduced direct supervision as constraints on mothers' ability to accompany children consistently. Extended family members, teachers, religious learning institutions, mosques, and community figures are identified as potential sources of support. These conditions form part of the social organization of care rather than merely the background to individual parenting decisions. The evidence reported here does not yet establish how frequently each form of support is mobilized or whether mothers and children experience that support in similar ways. The findings should therefore be interpreted as an account of perceived enabling conditions, not as an assessment of the effectiveness of support networks.

3.5. Limitations and Implications

The findings are bounded by the purposive selection of five mothers in one neighborhood and should be interpreted as context-specific rather than statistically generalizable. The empirical account provides more detailed discussion of parenting variation and faith-related conversations than of ibadah, akhlak, digital mediation, and the practical operation of support networks. These dimensions require fuller presentation of the underlying interview and observation material before the article can sustain broad claims about the transmission of Islamic values. Practically, the findings point to the value of coordinated support among families, schools, Qur'anic learning centers, mosques, and community organizations. Such support should complement, rather than replace, mothers' own agency and should be responsive to their work schedules and household circumstances.

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4. Conclusion

This study examined how five single mothers in Kampung Air, Batam, organise parenting practices through which Islamic values are communicated to primary school-aged children. The findings presented in the study indicate that maternal guidance is not enacted through one fixed approach. Mothers combine dialogue and explanation with firm rule-setting and adjust their supervision to children's behavior, developmental needs, and household circumstances. Religious learning is embedded in everyday interactions through prayer, gratitude, religious stories, and the interpretation of ordinary experiences. The study also identifies work demands, economic pressure, fatigue, and limited direct supervision as challenges, while family and religious institutions are described as potential sources of support.

The term context-responsive religious parenting is offered as a provisional analytical description of this negotiation between religious commitments, children's needs, and the practical conditions of family life. It should not be treated as a validated typology or as evidence that children have necessarily internalized the values being communicated. The study's contribution is therefore exploratory and context-bound. Further research should include fuller accounts from children, more detailed observation of everyday practices, and comparative cases across different household and neighborhood settings. Such work would clarify how religious guidance is sustained, adapted, and understood within single-mother families.

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