

The Role Of Millennial Fathers In Early Childhood Islamic Education: A Phenomenological Study

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the lived experiences of millennial fathers in carrying out the role of Islamic education for early childhood (0–8 years old). Employing an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach, the study involved 12 millennial fathers aged 28–47 years from diverse professional backgrounds, including civil servants, teachers, lecturers, government employees, and security personnel, selected through purposive sampling techniques. Data were collected through in-depth interviews based on a structured online questionnaire consisting of 17 questions across five thematic dimensions. The findings identified six major themes: (1) a holistic understanding of Islamic education encompassing the three pillars of *aqidah* (faith), *akhlak* (morality), and *ibadah* (worship); (2) exemplary conduct (*uswah hasanah*) as the primary approach in daily religious practices; (3) collaborative parenting patterns between fathers and mothers replacing rigid divisions of parental roles; (4) multidimensional challenges involving both fathers' internal pressures and the external forces of digitalization; (5) a shift in paternal identity from an authoritative figure to one emphasizing emotional closeness; and (6) a strong expectation for Islamic parenting programs specifically designed for fathers. The essence of the phenomenon revealed is that being a father who provides religious education in the millennial era represents a conscious and reflective struggle to be fully present amidst the pressures of modernity. These findings carry important implications for the development of father-based Islamic parenting programs and policy formulation in Islamic early childhood education institutions.

Keywords: Millennial Fathers, Islamic Education, Early Childhood, Fatherlessness.

INTRODUCTION

Islam places the father in a central position in the family's educational structure. As a *qawwam* (leader and protector of the family), the father is not only obliged to meet material needs, but also to be the main architect of the formation of children's spiritual and moral values from an early age (Hasanah, 2024). The Qur'an in Surah Luqman verses 12-19 makes the figure of Luqman as the ideal paradigm of a father who educates his children holistically: instilling monotheism, noble morals, and obedience in worship. These verses explicitly illustrate that intimate, loving, and wise dialogue between father and son is the main medium of Islamic education (Darojah et al., 2022).

In an Islamic perspective, fathers should ideally carry out at least three fundamental roles in early childhood religious education. First, as an example (*uswah hasanah*) that shows Islamic practices in daily life so that children can imitate and internalize these values naturally (Tentiasih, 2024). Second, as an imam who leads family worship, creates a religious atmosphere at home, and integrates Islamic values into daily routines. Third, as an active educator who consciously conveys the values of monotheism, morals, and sharia to children through methods that are appropriate for the child's age and development (Rafi et al., 2023). The concept of fathering in Islam emphasizes that the involvement of the father is not enough only physically, but must be present emotionally and spiritually so that the child makes the father a reference figure of values and identity (Zahrotun, 2023).

However, the reality on the ground shows a very deep gap between the ideals of the role of the father in Islam and the practices that occur in Indonesia. Data from the National Socio-Economic Survey (Susenas) of the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in March 2024 noted that of the 79.4 million children under the age of 18 in Indonesia, around 15.9 million children or 20.1 percent have the potential to grow up in a fatherless condition. Of this figure, 4.4 million children live in families without the physical presence of their fathers, while another 11.5 million children live with fathers who work more than 60 hours per week so that emotional involvement is practically very limited (Kompas R&D, 2024). This condition puts Indonesia in third place in the world as the country with the highest number of fatherless (Basir et al., 2021).

This phenomenon is not only physical. Komnas Perlindungan Anak (2021) reports that around 60–70 percent of Indonesian children grow up without the active involvement of their fathers, both physically and psychologically. BPS data in 2023 also recorded more than 447,000 divorce cases per year in Indonesia, and the majority of children live with their mothers so that they lose their father figure in their daily lives (University of Muhammadiyah Jakarta, 2025). The Dean of the Faculty of Psychology, Gadjah Mada University emphasized that the absence of fathers, both physically and emotionally, causes children to lose the main models for identity formation, confidence, self-control, empathy, and healthy social interaction (Gadjah Mada University, 2024).

Indonesia's strong patriarchal culture also reinforces this condition. Reports *State of the World's Fathers* (Rutgers Indonesia, 2015) notes that many Indonesian fathers internalize the norm that their role is limited to earning a living, while childcare and education including religious education are left entirely to the mother. In the realm of Islamic education in particular, the role of fathers is more often reduced to being limited to taking children to religious educational institutions, rather than being the main educator at home (Cahyaningrum, 2021).

The millennial generation (born between 1981–1996) is now entering the phase of life as parents with early childhood children. As a generation growing up in the midst of a transition of traditional values and modernity, millennial fathers face a unique and unfully mapped challenge: how they interpret, live, and carry out the role of Islamic education amid the pressures of the digital world, job demands, and shifting gender norms. The golden age period (0–8 years) is the most strategic momentum because 80 percent of human brain development takes place

during this period, making it the most sensitive period for the formation of character, values, and spirituality (Hendriani et al., 2024).

Millennials have characteristics that set them apart from previous generations: growing up as digital natives, being more open to changing gender values, having much wider access to parenting information, but also facing career pressures and higher living costs (Farij Al-Kahfi et al., 2026). In the Indonesian context, millennial fathers face tensions between traditional patriarchal norms that are still strong on the one hand, and new social expectations about involved fatherhood on the other (Rutgers Indonesia, 2015).

This paradox creates a unique challenge: many millennial fathers cognitively understand the importance of active involvement in children's religious education, but are practically hampered by time constraints, burnout, and the lack of role models of previous generations (Gussevi & Muhfi, 2021). On the other hand, the accessibility of Islamic parenting content through social media and digital platforms opens up new opportunities for millennial fathers to develop their parenting competencies independently (Fadhila, 2024).

The Qur'an explicitly displays the role of the father as the main educator in the family. The figure of Luqman in Surah Luqman verses 12–19 depicts a father who educates his son through a warm, loving, and oriented dialogue on the values of monotheism, morality, and obedience to worship. Rafi et al. (2023) in their study of Surah Luqman emphasized that the role of the father should ideally include educating in a way that is not patronizing, loving, and oriented towards long-term character building. A similar finding was made by Bahri et al. (2024) who through a reflective analysis of Qur'anic stories found that father figures, such as Prophet Ibrahim, Luqman, and Prophet Ya'qub consistently displayed active involvement in guiding children towards the values of monotheism and noble morals (Nurhasanah, 2023).

But some of these studies, each left gaps. Rafi et al. (2023) examine the role of fathers in the Qur'an normatively-textually. Hendriani et al. (2024) explore the role of fathers in the digital context, but not specifically on the dimensions of Islamic education and early childhood. Bahri et al. (2024) analyze Qur'anic stories reflectively, but have not touched on the reality of contemporary fathers' subjective experiences. There has been no research that specifically examines the lived experience of millennial fathers in early childhood Islamic education using a phenomenological approach and this is the gap that this study aims to fill.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a type of phenomenological research based on the philosophy of Edmund Husserl, returning to direct experience (*zurück zu den Sachen selbst*). The focus of the research is on how millennial fathers experience, interpret, and live their role as religious educators for early childhood in real life (Husserl, 1970; Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach is relevant because the experience of being a religious educator's father is subjective, contextual, and cannot be adequately captured through quantitative instruments. The subject of the study was a millennial father (born 1981–1996) who had at least one child aged 0–8 years, was Muslim, and practiced Islam in the family. The selection of informants was carried out by purposive sampling technique based on these relevance criteria. This research involves 12 informants spread across various professional backgrounds and education levels, this diversity is deliberate so that the research can capture the breadth of millennial fathers' experiences, not limited to one specific social group. The full profile of the informant is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Informant Profile

<i>Code</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Pend.</i>	<i>Jobs</i>	<i>Jml. Children & Age</i>
NH	45 th	S3	ASN	1 child, 5 years old
WKS	33 th	S1	ASN/Teacher	2 children, 1 & 4 years old

MF	31 th	S2	Lecturer	3 children, 8 & 2 years old (twins)
RS	32 th	S2	PNS	2 children (AUD)
BS	—	S3	Private/Freelance	2 children, ±4 years old
FHN	33 th	S1	Teacher	2 children, 6 & 8 years old
AQU	28 th	S1	Teacher	2 children, 2 & 5 years old
TV	47 th	S2	Education	3 children, 5, 9, 12 years old
AD	36 th	S2	Teacher	2 children (AUD)
BFP	32 th	S2	PNS	2 children, 1 & 5 years old
AB	33 th	S2	ASN	2 children (toddler)
DATE	30 years old	High School	Security	2 children, 4 & 6 years old

Source: Research Primary Data, 2025

Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews developed in an online-based written questionnaire format (Google Form). This technique was chosen to allow informants to reflect freely on their experiences without time pressure (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The questions are arranged open-ended so that informants can freely express their experiences, meanings, and perspectives. The interview instrument consisted of 17 main questions grouped in five thematic dimensions: (1) the concept and understanding of religious education; (2) daily religious practice with children; (3) challenges and strategies to overcome them; (4) changes in the role of fathers in the millennial era; and (5) program expectations and recommendations (Patton, 2015).

Data analysis used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) developed by Smith (1996), through five stages: (1) thorough and repeated reading (immersion); (2) inductive initial coding; (3) the development of emergent themes; (4) identification of patterns across cases; and (5) the formulation of the essence of the phenomenon. The validity of the data is ensured through four strategies: *member checking* (confirmation of the results of the analysis to the informant), source triangulation (comparison of answers between informants), *thick description* (presentation of rich and contextual findings), and trail audit (transparent documentation of the entire analysis process).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Results

Twelve study informants ranged in age from 28 to 47 years, with the majority aged 30–36 reflecting on the productive life phase of early childhood parents. In terms of education, seven people have S2/S3 education and four S1 education, and one person has a high school education. Profiles that reflect the diversity of academic literacy levels. Professional backgrounds are very diverse: civil servants, teachers, lecturers, civil servants, private/freelance, to *security*. This diversity provides a wealth of perspective that is important because the experience of educating a child's religion is significantly influenced by the context of each father's work and time availability. The number of informant children ranged from one to five children, with the age of majority being in the range of 1–8 years.

a. Father's Holistic Understanding of Early Childhood Islamic Education

All informants showed a relatively deep understanding of Islamic education, albeit with varying emphasis. There is a strong common thread: religious education is understood not just as a transfer of ritual knowledge, but as a process of internalizing comprehensive values, touching the dimensions of belief, morals, and worship at the same time. Informant NH (S3, ASN, 45 years old) defines religious education as "education that must be given to children by parents directly or through others for the basis of their faith and piety." Informant AB (S2, ASN, 33 years old) gave a more systematic definition:

"Pendidikan agama adalah sebuah proses bimbingan yang sistematis dan terencana untuk mengembangkan potensi spiritual, intelektual, dan moral manusia agar dapat memahami, menghayati, dan mengamalkan ajaran agamanya dalam kehidupan sehari-hari."

Informant PW (S2, Educator, 47 years old) provided the most comprehensive elaboration by mentioning eight main values that are important to instill from an early age: the recognition of the names and attributes of Allah, the habit of daily worship (prayer, prayer, dhikr), the morality of karimah (honesty, responsibility, help), love for others and living beings, Islamic manners in communicating, sharing and giving alms, love of the Qur'an and the story of the prophet, and love of mosques and Islamic environments. While BS informants (S3, Private) have a more inclusive perspective, emphasizing values such as honesty, tolerance, respect for others, and non-violence, not just formal ritual practices.

Almost all informants mentioned the three pillars of values that are considered the most important to be instilled from an early age: tauhid/aqidah (knowing Allah and His oneness), akhlak/adab (noble character and behavior), and worship (habituation of the practice of prayer, prayer, and recitation). These findings are in line with the hierarchy of Islamic educational goals that place monotheism as a foundation, morality as a manifestation, and worship as an expression of Islam (Rafi et al., 2023; Bahri et al., 2024).

b. Daily Religious Practice through Example and Habituation

All informants reported that there were religious practices carried out with children on a regular basis. Congregational prayers and reciting were mentioned by all 12 informants. In addition, praying together before and after activities, reading the stories of the prophet, memorizing short letters and asmaul husna, and giving alms together are also common practices. The most prominent of the data is the dominance of modeling methods as the main approach. Fathers intuitively understand that early childhood learns mainly through imitation, so the practice of worship that fathers carry out consistently in front of children is the most effective medium of religious education. The AQU informant (Teacher, 28 years old) expressed this principle very succinctly: *"This one, do it, and it will follow you."*

Informant MF (Lecturer, 31 years old) recounts an experience that illustrates the effectiveness of this example in life:

"Disaat waktu sholat tiba, anak pasti mengingatkan saya bahwa telah masuk waktu dan menyuruh mengerjakan. Ketika sedang mengerjakan anak ikut dan bersemangat, malah mendului di tempat sholat dan tidak mau di belakang. Menariknya juga ketika sholat anak terus mengikuti tiap gerakan... semisal pakai sajadah maka dia harus juga ada sajadahnya."

A similar experience was experienced by informant AB (ASN, 33 years old) who noted that his son who was not fluent in speech was able to imitate the tone of the call to prayer and takbir prayer because he was used to watching and participating in prayers with his father. The PW informant shared a very touching story: his daughter who suddenly woke up before Fajr and asked to join in the prayer, became a turning point in the habit of praying together in her family. The AD informant (Teacher, 36 years old) told how moved he was when his son spontaneously led a prayer before eating in front of a large family, something that he had previously only been accustomed to casually at home. Informant RA (Security, 30 years old) reported that his children were always excited and cheerful when reciting prayers before bed.

In terms of media and methods, millennial fathers show diverse creativity. The BS informant developed a unique *role play method*: he played the role of an early childhood teacher with the child as a student, integrating prayer and reciting in a fun simulation classroom format. Army informants use Islamic storybooks, Islamic children's videos and

songs, and Islamic educational applications. The informant of the hospital (civil servant, 32 years old) relies on the method of telling stories and telling the stories of the prophet, he specifically tells how the story about the importance of apologising and forgiving is effective in mediating quarrels between children. FHN informant (teacher, 33 years old) developed an independent family program: inviting children to pray, writing Arabic letters, telling stories of the Qur'an, and getting used to the introduction of religious diversity. The diversity of this method illustrates the adaptability of millennial fathers who utilize the various resources available, a characteristic of a generation that grows with technology and information.

c. The Dynamics of the Role of Fathers and Mothers through Collaboration, Not Sharing

One of the most interesting findings was the way the informants viewed the division of roles between fathers and mothers in children's religious education. Instead of a rigid task-sharing model, almost all informants describe a flexible and complementary pattern of collaboration. AQU informants explicitly rejected the concept of 'division of duties' and replaced it with the principle of collaboration:

"Kalau untuk pembagian peran sih nggak ada ya, cuman saling mengisi saja... lebih tepatnya saling kolaborasi antara suami dan istri. Karena kalau disebut sebagai pembagian tugas, nanti takutnya ketika bukan porsinya dia tidak mau bergerak, sedangkan ini kan anak kita bersama."

However, some informants describe roles that naturally tend to be different. The NH informant described the relationship as 'mutual support and mutual strengthening between husband and wife'. MF informants position fathers as controlling in educating and mothers as leaders who are in contact with children every second. The WKS informant uses an interesting metaphor: even though the mother is the 'first madrasah', the father must be the 'manager of the madrasah' and teach the mother. The richest metaphor comes from the AB informant who positions the mother as the 'first madrasah' that instills love and tenderness, while the father is the 'principal as well as the architect' who builds the framework, vision, and firmness in the family faith structure.

These findings represent a complementary rather than hierarchical or competitive division of roles that seems to characterize relatively more educated and reflective millennial fathers. More importantly, these findings challenge the common stereotypes that place religious education entirely as the responsibility of the mother. The millennial fathers in this study are actively redefining their role not only as breadwinners, but as active partners in children's spiritual education.

d. Millennial Fathers' Challenges Between Internal and External Pressures

All informants admitted to facing challenges in carrying out the role of religious education for children. Challenges can be categorized in two dimensions: internal (from within the father) and external (from the environment). From the internal dimension, the biggest challenges mentioned include time constraints due to work, physical and mental fatigue, difficulty maintaining consistency, and personal ego. PW informant raises this internal dimension very honestly and profoundly:

"Tantangan terbesar seorang ayah bukanlah anak yang sulit diatur, waktu yang sempit, atau lingkungan yang kurang mendukung. Tapi justru, tantangan itu ada pada dirinya sendiri. Kelelahan fisik dan mental setelah bekerja sering membuat ayah kehabisan energi untuk hadir sepenuhnya di rumah. Ego dan gengsi sebagai laki-laki kadang menghalangi ayah untuk bersikap lembut, padahal kelembutan itulah yang mendekatkan hati anak."

From the external dimension, the biggest challenge is the flow of digitalization and the influence of the social environment. MF informants mentioned digitalization as the biggest challenge children are exposed to gadgets too often, disrupting the habituation of

religious values. Army informants described the challenge of maintaining consistency in the midst of exposure to digital content that is not always in harmony with Islamic values instilled in the home. The WKS informant expressly stated that he tried to maximize time with his children so that they would not be fatherless.

A more unique challenge was raised by the AB informant (ASN): the biggest challenge actually comes from the people around the child, not from technology. When he taught children to only fear Allah, the people around him actually scared children when they were alone in a dark place. When he taught honesty, the people around him joked about lying to his son. This is an ecological challenge that has rarely been raised in previous research.

In responding to challenges, the informants showed creative and pragmatic strategies. The main strategies include: maximizing the small moments available (quality time), managing children's time intelligently, involving partners to the maximum, using intrinsic motivation (trust to Allah), using digital Islamic content selectively, and continuing to learn through online parenting studies. Informant AB even regulates his child's sleep pattern specifically so that time with his father after work is still available with quality. BFP informant (civil servant, 32 years old) emphasized the importance of sharing stories and seeking support from your partner as a way to manage energy limitations (Darajah et al., 2023).

e. The Shift in Father's Role Identity from Authority to Proximity

All informants are aware of the shift in the role of fathers between the previous generation and their generation. This shift is not seen as a setback, but rather as a necessary positive evolution. The following table 2 summarizes these shifts based on the informants' narratives.

Table 2. Comparison of the Role of Older Generation Fathers vs. Millennial Fathers

<i>Aspects</i>	<i>The Old Generation Father</i>	<i>Millennial Fathers</i>
<i>Role Focus</i>	Primary breadwinner	Breadwinners & active educators
<i>Peng's involvement.</i>	Limited, financial & discipline	Active in parenting & emotional
<i>Pend. Religion</i>	Submitted to the mother/teacher	Directly involved: prayer, prophetic stories, memorization
<i>Communication Style</i>	Authoritarian and formal	Dialogical, open, warm
<i>Emotional Presence</i>	Minimal—children closer to the mother	Actively building inner bonds
<i>Social Perception</i>	Dad = respected leader	Father = leader as well as a child's best friend

Source: Adapted from PW's informant's narrative, 2025

PW's informant summed up this shift with a very meaningful sentence: *"In the past, fathers were respected for their authority. Now, father is loved for his closeness."* AQU informants identified a key factor driving this shift: diminished prestige. According to him, it used to be taboo for fathers to be directly involved in parenting, but now with the increasing number of parenting literacy, fathers are again following in Luqman's footsteps in advising and educating their children. MF informants argue that fathers in the past taught more by setting an example and thinking deeply for the future, but many fathers today do less so due to digital distractions.

It is interesting that the BS informant has a somewhat different perspective: he emphasizes universal religious values (tolerance, honesty, inclusivity) rather than formal

religious activities such as memorization and recitation. She even consciously chose not to send her children to PAUD, because she believed that early childhood is an initiation period that must be fully fulfilled by parents. This perspective is a variation that enriches the diversity of the phenomenon studied and shows that there is also a diverse spectrum of approaches among millennial fathers (Al Adawiyah & Priyanti, 2021).

f. Program Expectations and Recommendations

The fifth dimension of the interviews produced very rich data on the informants' expectations of Islamic PAUD institutions and their proposed program recommendations. Two major patterns emerge consistently: the expectation of synergy between school and family, and the need for a father's capacity-building program in particular. Regarding Islamic PAUD teachers, the informants hope that teachers will not only teach religious knowledge, but also become real examples of faith and morals for children. PW informants hope that teachers will be able to bring divine nuances in every activity, educate gently but firmly, and actively synergize with parents. The AD informant emphasized the importance of a fun approach: for children to love religion, not to feel afraid or forced. BS informant emphasized the value of inclusivity and tolerance in religious education in early childhood education.

The most innovative program recommendations came from PW informants who proposed the 'READY One Hour of Meaningful Fatherhood': a weekly program in which fathers accompany children for an hour to do light, fun, and emotionally charged spiritual activities together, facilitated by the school through weekly activity guidebooks, regular motivation via social media, and appreciation for active families. The WKS informant proposed 'One Day with Daddy' which focuses on strengthening father-son bonding. The FHN informant proposed 'KIAS SAJA' (The Story of Islam, Religion, and Sunnah after Congregational Prayer) which integrates literacy and religious habituation, where PAUD prepares a collection of stories and observation sheets for worship together. The AQU informant proposed the formation of a father's community that focuses on sharia and Islamic ukhuwah as a space for mutual discussion.

One very consistent voice from all informants is the need for an Islamic parenting program that specifically targets fathers rather than parents in general. The BS informant emphasized that data shows that 80 percent of Indonesian children lack a father figure. The BFP informant asked for special parenting studies for fathers. BS informants also propose simple programs such as pocket books or short videos containing tips on short prayers with children and how to answer children's religious questions in simple language.

2. Discussion

a. Role Awareness as a Starting Point for Transformation

The findings of this study reveal that millennial fathers in general have a strong awareness of the importance of their role in children's Islamic education, a significant shift from previous generations who tended to delegate religious education entirely to mothers or formal institutions. This awareness is evident in how they define religious education holistically and how they actively create educational moments in everyday life. These findings are in line with the research of Rafi et al. (2023) which affirms the role of fathers in the Qur'an as active and dialogical educators. The fathers in this study not only read the role normatively, but brought it to life in daily practice albeit in a way that was contextualized in the realities of modern life (Suryadi et al., 2021).

b. Exemplary as the Core of the Method

The most consistent finding among all informants was the dominance of the exemplary method (*uswah hasanah*) in the practice of religious education. Fathers intuitively understand that early childhood learns primarily through imitation. The

phenomenological stories they tell, the child who reminds the father to pray, the child who imitates the call to prayer before being able to speak fluently, the child who spontaneously leads the prayer, are all clear evidence of the effectiveness of the example. This confirms Hendriani et al.'s (2024) view of the role of the father as a mentor and mediator, as well as reinforces the argument of Bahri et al. (2024) that the pattern of Islamic education in the Qur'an, such as the Prophet Ibrahim and Luqman, is always based on direct example. From a psychological point of view, this phenomenon confirms Bandura's social learning theory of observational learning (Suri, 2020).

c. Selective Adaptation to Digitalization

Digitalization has emerged as the biggest challenge felt by almost all informants. However, interestingly, the response of millennial fathers is not total rejection, but selective adaptation, using technology as a tool for religious education (Islamic applications, murotal, educational videos) while limiting excessive use (Ilham, 2024). Informant AB even emphasized that he was 'not anti-technology', but still prioritized physical toys and books as the main medium. This adaptive-selective attitude reflects the character of the millennial generation who grew up with technology but have developed a critical attitude towards it, especially in the context of Islamic values. These findings are relevant to the research of Hendriani et al. (2024) who found the role of fathers as mediators and controllers in children's digital ecosystems.

d. Father-Mother Collaboration: A Contemporary Islamic Parenting Model

The pattern of collaboration rather than rigid division of tasks found in this study represents a more egalitarian contemporary Islamic parenting model. The informants reject the dichotomy that religious education is a 'mother's business', while not claiming that fathers should dominate. They find a balance point that is functional, flexible, and mutually reinforcing. This has important implications for Islamic PAUD institutions: programs that only target mothers in children's religious education will lose the moment to strengthen the involvement of fathers who are actually very ready and willing to be involved (Farruqi et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

This phenomenological research succeeded in identifying six main themes that describe the life experiences of millennial fathers in carrying out the role of early childhood Islamic education. From all the findings, the essence of the phenomenon that can be formulated is: being a millennial father in early childhood Islamic education is a conscious, reflective, and continuous struggle to be present wholeheartedly in the midst of a world that continues to attract attention in other directions. These fathers do not claim perfection; Instead, they realize their limitations and choose to fight for the sake of their children.

This awareness is manifested in three core patterns that form the 'millennial father's religious education model': first, interpreting roles as worship and trust (not just social obligations); second, to carry out example as the main method (not just verbal instruction); and third, building collaboration with partners as the main support system. These three patterns together form a model that is contextual, adaptive, and firmly rooted in Islamic values.

This research has significant practical implications. For Islamic PAUD institutions, these findings encourage the development of programs that specifically involve and empower fathers, not only mothers, in children's religious education, such as the SIAP, One Day with Daddy, or KIAS SAJA programs proposed by the informants. For the Muslim community, this research is the foundation for developing contextual Islamic parenting programs for millennial fathers. For policymakers, these findings support the importance of programs to strengthen family resilience based on Islamic values that pay attention to the active role of fathers.

The limitations of this study are the relatively small number of informants (12 people) and online writing-based data collection methods that may not fully capture the nuances of non-verbal communication. Follow-up research with more intensive face-to-face interviews, as well as involving informants from different regions and broader socio-economic backgrounds, is strongly recommended to enrich and validate the findings of this study.

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