



## Exemplary Parenting as a Method of Family Education: An Exegesis Approach to QS. As-Shaff [61]:2

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### Abstract

This study examines exemplary parenting as a method of family education based on the Qur'anic perspective through an exegesis of QS. As-Shaff [61]: 2. Unlike previous studies that generally discuss role modeling (*uswah ḥasanah*) in Islamic education, this research specifically analyzes exemplary parenting by grounding it in the Qur'an's explicit critique of inconsistency between speech and action. This clarifies the research gap by showing what earlier studies did not address and establishes the novelty of this study. Using a qualitative library research design, this study analyzes primary sources, including classical and contemporary tafsir such as Tafsir al-Tabari, Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Maraghi, and Tafsir al-Misbah, along with a thematic-exegetical analytical approach and secondary literature on Islamic family education. The findings indicate that exemplary parenting serves as the study's theoretical contribution by linking Qur'anic integrity principles with contemporary family education, showing that parental consistency significantly strengthens the internalization of values, while inconsistencies may lead to moral dissonance in children. The study concludes that exemplary parenting integrates moral, spiritual, and social dimensions and holds practical significance for strengthening contemporary family education amid digital-era challenges. This highlights the study's conceptual and practical implications and reinforces parents' roles as primary moral exemplars.

### Keywords:

Exemplary Parenting; Family Education Method; QS. As-Shaff Verse 2; Islamic Education; *Uswah Hasanah*

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## A. INTRODUCTION

Family education is the primary foundation in the formation of a child's character. The family is often described as the first school, where a child begins to learn about values, norms, and religion through daily interactions with parents and other family members. From an Islamic perspective, the role of the family is crucial as it serves as the basis for the continuity of a child's faith, morals, and manners. Ulwan (1981) emphasizes that the family is the first environment most responsible for the moral, spiritual, and intellectual development of a child. In line with this, a study by Yohana et al. (2025) states that the family has an irreplaceable educational function compared to other educational institutions due to the strong emotional relationship between parents and children.

However, modern social reality reveals a crisis of role modeling within families. A common phenomenon is the inconsistency between what parents say and what they do when educating their children. For example, parents may ask their children to pray on time, but they themselves delay or even neglect this obligation. This mismatch between words and actions weakens the internalization of values because children are more likely to observe and imitate real behavior rather than just follow verbal instructions. This aligns with Bandura's social learning theory (1977), which explains that much of a child's learning occurs through

observation and imitation of significant figures, in this case, the parents. Therefore, the crisis of role modeling can lead to a loss of trust in parents and a failure to form a strong character.

The Qur'an itself highlights the issue of inconsistency between words and actions through the words of Allah in Q.S. As-Shaff [61]:2: "O you who have believed, why do you say what you do not do?" (As-Shaff/61:2). This verse is a stern warning to the believers to avoid falling into hypocritical behavior, i.e., speaking without taking concrete actions. According to Ibn Kathir in his exegesis, this verse was revealed as a form of condemnation by Allah towards those who are good at speaking but fail to implement what they say. The exegesis of al-Misbah by Quraish Shihab (2012) also explains that this verse emphasizes the importance of integrity, consistency, and high moral commitment, as inconsistency between words and actions will undermine a person's credibility, including in the context of family education.

In relation to family education, Q.S. As-Shaff verse 2 can serve as the basis for the view that the method of role modeling (*uswah hasanah*) is the most effective. Role modeling is not only normative but also practical, as children learn more quickly from the real behavior displayed by their parents. Education based on role modeling demands parents to be consistent in carrying out religious duties and good morals, so that the moral message conveyed through words is legitimized by everyday behavior. Therefore, parental role modeling serves a dual function: as direct instruction and also as a behavioral model that can be imitated.

Several previous studies emphasize the importance of role modeling in Islamic education. Syofrianisda (2019) examined the principle of role modeling in family education based on Q.S. Al-Ahzab [33]:59, and found that role modeling plays a central role as a method of *da'wah* (Islamic preaching) that can be implemented in stages of family education. Sulaiman and Ismail (2024) added practical steps for implementing parental role modeling, including the implementation of daily behavior, consistent advice, and habituation from an early age. Haryanti (2021) in her research stated that the role modeling method is the most effective way of educating children, not only in moral aspects but also in spiritual and social aspects. This is supported by Sukardi (2025), who emphasized that in Islam, parental role modeling is very influential because children are easily influenced by the religious practices and habits displayed by their parents. In line with this, Suheili (2017) in his thesis presented five family character education methods according to Abdullah Nashih Ulwan, namely role modeling, habituation, advice, attention, and punishment, and stated the relevance of these methods to the realities of today's families.

The comparative analysis of methods shows that role modeling occupies a special position compared to other methods. The method of advice, for example, is indeed effective for giving direct instructions, but without real-life role models, children may struggle to be motivated to internalize them. Similarly, the habituation method can form good routines, but it becomes weak if not accompanied by consistent examples from parents. In contrast, role modeling integrates verbal instructions and real practices, thereby presenting integrity as the core of family education. However, the implementation of role modeling is often hindered by the lack of awareness among parents regarding their role as primary models, as well as the interference of modern culture and technology that often weakens religious practices at home.

Based on this review, this study offers a clear research novelty. While prior studies have widely examined parenting and role modeling, this research specifically positions Q.S. As-Shaff [61]:2 as the methodological foundation for family education, highlighting the Qur'an's explicit critique of the gap between words and actions, an aspect that has not been elaborated in earlier works. Thus, what distinguishes this study is its thematic integration of Qur'anic exegesis with contemporary family education, demonstrating why Q.S. As-Shaff [61]:2 is particularly relevant for addressing modern moral challenges, especially in an era where digital exposure increases inconsistencies in role models.

Based on the background, this study formulates two main questions. First, how is the exegesis of Q.S. As-Shaff verse 2 understood in the context of family education? Second, how can role modeling be used as a method of family education according to the Qur'an? These questions

are important because they help explore the relevance between Qur'anic values and family education practices in facing the increasingly complex challenges of modern times.

The objectives of this research are as follows: first, to reveal the meaning of Q.S. As-Shaff verse 2 by examining both classical and contemporary exegeses and relating it to the context of family education. Second, this study aims to analyze the relevance of role modeling as a method of family education by highlighting its implications in modern life. With this analysis, this research is expected to make a theoretical contribution to enriching the literature on Qur'an-based Islamic education and provide practical solutions for Muslim families in educating their children.

The urgency of this research becomes more evident when viewed within contemporary family dynamics. By grounding educational methodology in Q.S. As-Shaff [61]:2, this study highlights practical implications namely reinforcing parental integrity and consistent behavior as essential protection against value disruptions caused by global media and digital influences, which resulting in children being more frequently exposed to role models from outside the home that do not always align with Islamic teachings. Therefore, this study aims to reaffirm the strategic role of parents as the primary role models within the family. Q.S. As-Shaff verse 2 provides a theological foundation that the consistency between words and actions is a prerequisite for the success of family education. By making role modeling the primary method, it is hoped that Muslim families can build a generation with strong character, integrity, and noble morals in accordance with the guidance of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

## B. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research design with a library research approach. This method was chosen because the focus of the study is directed towards the exploration, analysis, and interpretation of literature related to family education from the Qur'anic perspective, specifically Q.S. As-Shaff [61]:2. The *maudhu'i* (thematic) approach is selected because it enables the researcher to synthesize explanations from multiple tafsir sources under a unified theme, making it more relevant and effective for analyzing a single conceptual issue namely the consistency between words and actions, compared to the *tahlili* or *ijmali* approaches, which focus on verse-by-verse explanation without thematic integration. The approach used is thematic exegesis (*maudhu'i*) by compiling interpretations from both classical and contemporary scholars, such as Tafsir al-Tabari, Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Maraghi, and Tafsir al-Misbah, which are then contextually analyzed by linking exegetical findings with contemporary theories of family education and social learning, ensuring that the textual meaning of the verse can be interpreted within the framework of modern educational challenges.

The data sources consist of three categories: primary data in the form of the Qur'an and exegesis books; secondary data including books on Islamic education, role modeling theory, as well as scholarly works such as journal articles and theses (e.g., Syofrianisda, 2019; Sulaiman & Ismail, 2024; Haryanti, 2021; Sutinah, 2019; Suheili, 2017). Data collection was carried out using documentation methods, while data analysis was conducted with a descriptive-analytic approach involving the stages of (1) textual interpretation of Q.S. As-Shaff [61]:2 based on classical and modern tafsir; (2) thematic synthesis of recurring concepts related to consistency, integrity, and role modeling; and (3) derivation of educational implications by relating the synthesized meaning of the verse to contemporary family education theories. Through this analytical logic, the movement from text to theme to implication becomes systematically structured.

To reinforce methodological rigor, the study applies source triangulation by comparing explanations across multiple tafsir works and cross-checking interpretive consistency with contemporary educational literature. Through this approach, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of role modeling as a method of family education based on Q.S. As-Shaff [61]:2, while also strengthening the literature on Islamic education and offering practical contributions for Muslim families.

## C. RESULT & DISCUSSION

### Family Education in the Islamic Perspective

In the realm of Islamic education, the family is positioned as the first and most important educational institution because it is here that the process of instilling faith, morals, and manners takes place strongly through daily parent-child interactions. The principle of educational responsibility within the family is emphasized by the hadith "kullukum rā'in wa kullukum mas'ul" (Everyone is a leader and will be held accountable for what they lead; a father is a leader in his family, a mother is a leader in her husband's house and over her children) (Bukhārī, no. 7138) (Sunnah.com). On the other hand, the Qur'an places the role model (uswah ḥasanah) of the Prophet as the reference for guidance (Q.S. al-Aḥzāb: 21) (Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia, 2023), while also condemning the inconsistency between words and actions (Q.S. aṣ-Ṣaff: 2) (Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia, 2023), thus making integrity the foundation of family education. Therefore, the Qur'an-Hadith argument structure leads to the understanding that family education requires consistent role modeling, not just verbal instruction (Ulwan, 1981).

The methods of family education in classical and contemporary tarbiyah literature can be summarized into four pillars: (1) mau'izhah (advice), which is the delivery of values clearly, persuasively, and according to the child's developmental stage; (2) ta'wīd/ta'wīl 'ādah (habituation), which is the building of good routines through structured repetition; (3) uswah ḥasanah (role modeling), which is the real behavior model that aligns words and actions; and (4) ri'āyah (supervision/attention), which involves monitoring, correction, and emotional support to ensure the internalization of values. Abdullah Nashih Ulwan formulated these four methods as an integrated approach: advice gives direction, habituation forms habits, role modeling provides moral legitimacy, and supervision ensures sustainability (Ulwan, 1981). Empirical studies in Indonesia affirm this package of methods. Haryanti (2021) shows the effectiveness of role modeling and habituation in the family; Suheili (2017) maps the methods according to Ulwan (role modeling, habituation, advice, supervision, and in certain contexts, educational punishment); and Sutinah (2019) (quoting Sayyid Quthb) emphasizes the combination of role modeling, advice, habituation, and punishment as a family education framework based on Islamic values.

The framework of these four pillars aligns with Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT). The core of SLT is observational learning: children learn by observing models they deem significant (parents), then imitating the observed behaviors that are reinforced through direct reinforcement or vicarious reinforcement (seeing others receive consequences) (Bandura, 1977). In the family context, SLT predicts that instructions without a consistent model result in an intention-behavior gap, whereas role modeling, coupled with emotional reinforcement and monitoring, increases the chances of internalizing values. In other words, uswah ḥasanah reduces the gap between "what is said" and "what is done," as mandated in Q.S. aṣ-Ṣaff: 2. Operationally, mau'izhah provides the cognitive script (what and why), ta'wīd supplies repetitive practice (how), ri'āyah gives feedback (to what extent), and uswah offers living evidence (it can be done), so these four methods are not partial but rather form a cohesive social learning system in the family (Nurhakim & Wasehudin, 2024).

The implication is that an effective family education design should integrate: (i) dialogical affirmation of values (mau'izhah) that is specific, brief, and repetitive; (ii) structured family routines (ta'wīd) such as prayer schedules, eating manners, Qur'anic literacy with measurable indicators; (iii) explicit daily role modeling (uswah) where parents "show" first before "instructing"; (iv) friendly monitoring-reflection (ri'āyah) with light evaluations, appreciation, and corrections without humiliation. These four components strengthen the ecology of role modeling at home: children witness the consistency between words and actions and receive positive feedback, thus ensuring that good behavior can persist. From a normative perspective, Q.S. al-Aḥzāb: 21 becomes a reference for the ideal role model, translated into family praxis; and Q.S. aṣ-Ṣaff: 2 serves as a conceptual boundary preventing moral dissonance between words and actions. Therefore, the synergy between nash (Qur'an-Hadith), tarbiyah methods (Ulwan), and

learning psychology evidence (Bandura) provides a robust theoretical-practical framework for contemporary Islamic family education.

### Exegesis of QS. As-Shaff: 2

The second verse of Surah As-Shaff reads:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ ۚ (الصَّافَّ/61:2)

“O you who have believed, why do you say what you do not do?” (As-Saff/61:2) (Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia, 2023)

This verse contains a stern warning to the believers to avoid falling into the behavior of speaking without demonstrating real actions. From the perspective of family education, the moral message of this verse becomes the foundation of integrity: children will assess their parents' honesty not just from advice, but from the consistency between words and actions.

In general, this verse contains a firm prohibition against hypocritical behavior, namely those who frequently speak well but never manifest it in actions. Allah condemns this inconsistency because it leads to the loss of credibility, undermines trust, and fosters a culture of pretense in social life. In the context of family, parents' words that are inconsistent with their actions can create confusion, even moral skepticism, in children (Quraish, 2012). Therefore, this verse is not only normative but also has significant psychological and social impacts in the family education process.

Classical interpretations emphasize the moral and spiritual dimensions of this verse. According to al-Tabari (d. 923 CE), this verse was revealed to criticize a group of companions who claimed to be ready for battle in the cause of Allah, yet failed to fulfill that promise (Tabari, 2001). He interprets this verse as a prohibition against saying things that contradict actual actions because Allah despises inconsistency. Ibn Kathir (d. 1373 CE) affirms the same: this verse contains a strong rebuke for those who make promises but fail to keep them, with the central message being honesty, commitment, and alignment between words and actions (Kathir, 1999). In the context of family education, this classical interpretation is relevant because it emphasizes the importance of parents being consistent figures, so their words gain moral legitimacy in the eyes of their children.

Modern interpretations attempt to expand the meaning of this verse into social and educational contexts. Quraish Shihab in *Tafsir al-Misbah* (2003) interprets this verse as a universal admonition against anyone who speaks but does not act, including in family, societal, and educational settings. He stresses that a consistent personality is the main requirement for successful education because inconsistency will undermine the authority of an educator in front of the learner. In line with this, al-Maraghi (1946) interprets this verse as not only applying to the conditions of war during the Prophet's time but also as a universal ethical guideline: honesty is the foundation of social relationships, and every educator must be careful to ensure that their words align with their actions.

In the context of family, this contemporary exegesis has practical implications. Parents who merely instruct their children to pray or read the Qur'an without doing so themselves will lose their moral authority. On the other hand, when parents demonstrate these behaviors directly, children will internalize those values more easily. In line with Bandura's social learning theory, observing consistent role models reinforces the process of value internalization. Therefore, this verse can be understood as a Qur'anic call for every family to implement education based on role modeling.

When applied to family education, Q.S. As-Shaff verse 2 can be seen as an ethical principle for building family integrity. This verse requires parents to be careful with their words while encouraging them to exhibit behavior that aligns with their speech. Consistency between words and actions will foster trust in children, whereas inconsistency will erode parental authority and damage the internalization of values. In other words, this verse emphasizes that role modeling is the primary method of family education: parents are living models, and their integrity is the main curriculum for children.

### **Exemplary Parenting as a Method of Family Education**

In Islamic education, parents are seen as the primary role models for their children. This role cannot be replaced by formal educational institutions, as children first absorb values, norms, and behaviors from their family environment. Role modeling (*uswah hasanah*) requires alignment between parents' words and actions. As emphasized in Q.S. As-Shaff verse 2, Allah condemns those who say something but fail to do it. This verse sends a strong message that education through role modeling is only effective if parents demonstrate consistency between advice and real-life practice (Quraish, 2012).

Children tend to imitate their parents in everyday behaviors, both positive and negative. Abdullah Nashih Ulwan (1981) emphasizes that every behavior of the parents (words, attitudes, and life decisions) becomes a lesson for children. This aligns with Bandura's social learning theory (1977), which explains that children learn through observation, imitation, and modeling of figures they deem significant. Therefore, parents who are inconsistent between words and actions will lose their moral authority, while aligned role modeling strengthens the internalization of values in children.

There are several concrete examples of how role modeling is applied in family life:

- a. **Timely Prayer**  
When parents consistently perform prayers on time, children will naturally adopt this pattern. Pulungan's study (2023) shows that parental role modeling has a significant impact on children's religious habits. Therefore, consistent religious practice becomes an effective means of instilling spiritual values.
- b. **Everyday Honesty**  
Honesty is the foundational pillar of integrity. Children learn honesty not just from advice, but from the honest behavior demonstrated by parents in their daily lives. Novita (2015) found that a family environment rich in parental role modeling (especially in terms of honesty) positively influences the character formation of teenagers.
- c. **Discipline and Responsibility**  
Children are more likely to internalize the value of discipline if parents themselves exhibit it, such as in punctuality, managing tasks, or keeping promises. Hikmatullah (2020) mentions that parents' discipline in managing household matters provides a real example for children, so the value of responsibility is instilled without coercion.

In the context of the digital era, family challenges are becoming more complex. Children are often more exposed to role models from outside the family, whether through social media or peer environments. Therefore, parents' consistency in providing role models becomes even more crucial to ensure that Islamic values are not replaced by external influences. Role modeling in prayer, honesty, and discipline not only shapes the child's character but also strengthens the moral fortitude of the Muslim family amidst the tides of globalization.

### **Practical Implications in Modern Life**

Education based on role modeling has become one of the main solutions to address the growing moral crisis in today's modern era. The moral crisis in society, particularly among teenagers and children, is often caused by the inconsistency between the words and actions of adults, especially parents. Role modeling, which is central to Islamic education in the family, is not just about giving advice, but also clearly demonstrating what should be done through real-life examples in daily life. Therefore, role modeling-based education can help address the developing moral crisis, especially when children are more likely to imitate real behaviors rather than merely listen to advice.

In the family context, parents play a very important role as role models. Ulwan (1981) explains that parents are not only responsible for giving advice but also serve as the first example that children observe and imitate. The family is the place where moral values and character are shaped, and parental role modeling becomes a highly effective instrument in this process. Parental role modeling in terms of honesty, discipline, and steadfastness in worship

forms the foundation for building a strong character in children. In this challenging era, where children are frequently exposed to the influences of social media and technology, parental role modeling becomes the only fortress that can protect children from these negative influences. Bandura (1977) emphasizes that children learn through observation of figures they deem important, and in this context, parents are the primary figures who must demonstrate behaviors worthy of imitation.

Forming a Strong Islamic Family Culture is also one of the practical implications of role modeling-based education. In an Islamic family, parents who demonstrate role modeling in their daily lives will inspire their children to live according to Islamic principles. As explained by Shihab (2012), a father or mother who sincerely follows religious teachings will instill the awareness in their children to follow suit, thereby creating a religious culture within the family. In a family with an Islamic culture, not only are religious teachings conveyed through books or words, but they are also applied in every aspect of life, from how to interact with others to how to maintain a relationship with God. Role modeling in an Islamic family encompasses spiritual, moral, and social aspects rooted in the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith.

However, the greatest challenge in applying role modeling in the digital era is the overwhelming influence of social media and technology, which exposes children to many figures who are not always positive role models. Children are more easily exposed to behavioral models that do not align with the values taught in religion. This is where the importance of parental role modeling as a moral safeguard becomes crucial. Research by Angelita (2025) shows that the moral crisis among Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students is largely influenced by social media, which often introduces figures who do not provide positive examples. This research underscores that parental role modeling in maintaining ethics and morals is key to preventing these negative influences. Therefore, parents must play a more active role in guiding and directing children to imitate positive behaviors.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

This study explores the role of role modeling as a method of family education in the Islamic perspective, with a focus on the exegesis of Q.S. As-Shaff [61]:2. The findings demonstrate that exemplary parenting (expressed through the alignment of parental guidance and daily conduct) plays a decisive role in shaping children's moral, spiritual, and social character. When parental behavior reflects the values they teach, children internalize these values more effectively, whereas behavioral contradictions tend to create moral confusion.

From the exegetical analysis to its educational interpretation, the verse highlights that integrity is a Qur'anic foundation for effective family education. Thematically, Q.S. As-Shaff [61]:2 underscores the ethical necessity of coherence between belief, speech, and action, which directly strengthens the authority of parents as primary educators. Practically, this reinforces the relevance of exemplary parenting for contemporary Muslim families, especially amid digital-era influences that expose children to alternative value models.

This study provides a significant contribution to enriching the literature on Islamic education, particularly Qur'an-based education, by highlighting role modeling as the primary method in family education. Additionally, this research offers practical solutions for Muslim families in educating their children, emphasizing the importance of consistency between parents' words and actions.

Despite its contributions, this study acknowledges limitations, particularly in its reliance on library data and textual analysis without empirical validation. Future research is encouraged to explore parental modeling within broader social ecosystems (including schools, peer groups, and digital environments) to provide a more comprehensive understanding of children's character formation. Empirical and interdisciplinary studies that examine how Qur'anic values operate within real family structures will further strengthen this field. Ultimately, Q.S. As-Shaff [61]:2 reaffirms that the credibility of Islamic education begins within the family, where integrity between belief, speech, and action becomes the cornerstone of a child's moral formation.

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