Islamic Parenting in the Digital Age Nurturing Faith, Character, and Resilience in the Next Generation

Dr. Syed Hamid Farooq Bukhari

Head, Department of Islamic Studies University of Gujrat

hamid.farooq@uog.edu.pk

Abstract

In the digital era, Muslim parenting faces unique challenges as families strive to preserve Islamic values amidst rapid technological shifts. This article, *"Islamic Parenting in the Digital Age: Nurturing Faith, Character, and Resilience in the Next Generation,"* offers a faith-based framework grounded in the Qur'an, Sunnah, and classical Islamic pedagogy to guide parents in raising spiritually conscious and morally upright children. It examines the psychological and moral impacts of screen time and digital culture on children's identity and values, and presents practical strategies—such as instilling tawheed, setting digital boundaries, and using Islamic storytelling—to nurture iman, akhlaq, and sabr. The article advocates for a mindful integration of technology that supports Islamic ethics, strengthens family ties, and equips children to succeed in both dunya and akhirah.

 Keywords: Islamic Parenting,Digital Age,Faith Development (*Iman*),Moral Character (*Akhlaq*),Resilience (*Sabr*)

Introduction

The digital revolution has fundamentally transformed the dynamics of parenting in the 21st century. Today's children are born into a world saturated with smartphones, tablets, social media platforms, video games, and increasingly pervasive artificial intelligence (AI) technologies. These digital tools, while offering undeniable benefits in terms of education, global connectivity, and information access, also pose significant challenges to healthy development. From early exposure to inappropriate content and digital addiction to reduced real-world social interaction and the erosion of religious and moral values, the risks are both complex and far-reaching.

For Muslim families, these challenges are especially critical. Islamic parenting is not merely about managing behavior—it is a sacred trust (*amanah*) and a form of worship, deeply rooted in

the Qur'an and Sunnah. It demands a proactive role in shaping children's spiritual, emotional, and ethical identities. The Qur'anic commandment:

"O you who believe! Protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones...".[i]

Serves as a divine mandate that underscores the urgency of moral and spiritual guardianship within the family unit.[ii]

This command goes beyond physical protection and calls upon parents to guide their children toward righteousness, shielding them from the moral and spiritual harms of their environment—including those amplified by digital media.

In this context, Islamic parenting must evolve to address the contemporary digital landscape while remaining firmly grounded in timeless Islamic principles. This article explores how Muslim parents can fulfill their spiritual duties while navigating the unique demands of the digital age.

Tawheed as the Core Identity

Tawheed — the belief in the Oneness of Allah — is the cornerstone of Islamic faith. [iii]

In parenting, this principle is not just a theological concept but a **framework for worldview formation**, behaviour regulation, and moral grounding. It shapes the child's sense of purpose, accountability, and relationship with the Creator.

Qur'anic Foundation

The advice of **Luqman the Wise** to his son, as recorded in **Surah Luqman .**[iv]

Highlights the importance of beginning a child's moral and spiritual education with the concept of **Tawheed:**

"O my son, do not associate anything with Allah. Indeed, shirk (associating partners with Allah) is a great injustice.".[v]

This verse reflects a **foundational parenting principle** in Islam**: building the child's identity on Tawheed** to safeguard them from spiritual confusion, moral relativism, and worldly distractions.

Challenges in the Digital Age

Modern digital content — whether through entertainment, social media, or educational platforms — often promotes:

- **Secularism:** Eliminating God from life decisions.
- **Materialism:** Valuing wealth, looks, and fame over morality.
- **Individualism:** Centering desires and self over community and divine guidance.

Children are exposed to **alternative belief systems, atheistic philosophies, and hyper-consumerist ideals** through platforms like YouTube, Netflix, and Instagram.[vi]

Parenting Strategy

Islamic parenting must **counterbalance** these influences by:

- Regularly talking about Allah in daily life (His names, signs, mercy, and justice).
- Encouraging gratitude to Allah for blessings.
- Teaching children to turn to Allah in times of joy and hardship.
- Using stories from the Qur'an that emphasize Allah's power, wisdom, and nearness.
- Integrating **Du'a,** Salah, and Dhikr into the child's routine to keep Tawheed alive in their hearts.

The Prophet ﷺ as the Ultimate Role Model

Why the Prophet ﷺ?

Allah says in the Qur'an:

"Indeed in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example to follow."[vii]
The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is the **living embodiment of the Qur'an**, and his character (Akhlaq) offers a timeless blueprint for success in **every role** — as a father, teacher, leader, and community member.

Contrast with Modern Influencers

Today's digital celebrities and influencers often promote:

- Superficial beauty, fashion, and fame.
- Rebellious behavior and anti-authority attitudes.
- Instant gratification and disregard for family and religion.

These can **shape the aspirations, values, and identity** of children, especially when parents are not offering strong Islamic alternatives.

Tarbiyah: Holistic Development

Tarbiyah means **nurturing, rearing, or growth** — not just academic or religious instruction, but the **holistic development** of a child into a balanced, righteous, and socially responsible Muslim.[viii]

It is a **lifelong process** that involves:

1. **Akhlaq (Morals):** Teaching truthfulness, kindness, respect, modesty, and responsibility.
2. **'Ibadah (Worship):** Developing love and consistency in Salah, fasting, Qur'an recitation, and remembrance of Allah.
3. **Discipline:** Setting routines, rules, and expectations with love and firmness.
4. **Emotional Intelligence:** Teaching children how to handle anger, jealousy, fear, or sadness in light of Islamic teachings.
5. **Civic and Social Conduct:** How to treat neighbours, relatives, and the vulnerable in society.

Foundations of Islamic parenting — **Tawheed, the Prophetic model, and holistic tarbiyah** — are more essential today than ever before. In a world where screens shape minds, **faith must shape hearts**.[ix]

By grounding children in strong Islamic identity and values, parents can equip them to **navigate the digital age with wisdom, resilience, and purpose,** always connected to their Creator.

Digital Distractions and Time Wastage

The average child today spends **multiple hours daily** on screens — whether through smartphones, tablets, video games, or television. While some content is educational, most digital interaction involves **passive consumption** or shallow entertainment, leading to serious consequences:

Islamic Perspective

Islam emphasizes **purposeful use of time**. The Qur'an warns:

"By time, indeed mankind is in loss—except those who believe and do righteous deeds..."[x]

Muslim parents must install the **value of time** and **accountability** by encouraging productive routines and prioritizing spiritual and family development over screen time.

Online Morality and Exposure to Inappropriate Content

The internet is a double-edged sword. While it offers useful Islamic content, it also opens doors to **explicit, harmful, or morally corrupt material,** often **unfiltered and algorithmically promoted.**

Common Risks

- **Immodesty and vulgarity:** Many shows, games, music videos, and influencers promote **nudity, sexual content**, and **inappropriate humor**.

- **Disrespect and rebellion:** Characters in youth entertainment often **mock parents**, **undermine religion**, or **glorify disobedience**.
- **False ideologies:** Atheism, liberalism, LGBTQ+, feminism, and other ideological trends are often normalized and even celebrated online.
- **Violence and fear:** Graphic games or videos can desensitize children to aggression and disrupt their psychological peace.

Identity Crisis and Peer Pressure

In a globalized and highly connected digital world, Muslim children are constantly exposed to **non-Islamic lifestyles and value systems**.[xi]

Social media especially puts pressure on children to **conform to secular norms** and **please their peers.**

Reduced Emotional Resilience

Digital platforms, especially social media and gaming apps, promote **instant gratification** — likes, rewards, fast results, entertainment on demand.[xii]

This often **erodes patience, gratitude, and resilience**, leading to:

- **Emotional fragility** (e.g., unable to cope with boredom, loss, or failure).
- **Mood swings** and dissatisfaction with reality.
- **Ingratitude** for blessings due to constant comparison with others' lives online.
- **Low self-esteem** driven by filtered images and unattainable beauty standards.

The digital age poses serious challenges to Islamic parenting, but with **intentionality, knowledge, and spiritual commitment**, parents can help children navigate these obstacles.[xiii]

By fostering Tawheed, promoting the Prophetic model, and practicing holistic tarbiyah, Muslim families can raise children who are **faithful, emotionally resilient, and morally upright**, even in a world filled with distractions and trials.

If you'd like, I can help expand this into a full chapter or an academic paper on **"Digital Challenges in Islamic Parenting."**

Nurturing Faith (Iman) in the Digital Generation

In an age dominated by screens, artificial intelligence, and fleeting online trends, raising a child with strong **Iman (faith)** is both a challenge and an opportunity.[xiv] The digital world often side-lines religion in favour of entertainment, individualism, and materialism. To ensure that faith remains central in the lives of Muslim children, parents must be **intentional, consistent, and spiritually engaged**.

Building Resilience and Emotional Intelligence

In the digital age, where children are bombarded with filtered realities, instant gratification, and social comparisons, emotional intelligence and resilience are more essential than ever.[xv]

Islam offers a rich foundation for nurturing these traits through its teachings on **Sabr (patience), Shukr (gratitude), Tawakkul (trust in Allah),** and the **value of effort** over outcome.

Teaching Sabr (Patience) and Shukr (Gratitude)

Children must learn that life is not always immediate or easy — that rewards come with effort and that patience is a virtue praised by Allah.[xvi]

- **Everyday Lessons:** Use real-life moments — like waiting in line, losing in a game, or sharing toys — to **talk about Sabr**.
- **Delay Gratification:** Teach children to wait, whether it's for screen time, sweets, or outings, to develop **self-control.**
- **Modeling Gratitude:** Thank Allah openly during meals, after Salah, and when good news arrives.
- **Gratitude Journals:** Encourage children to list three blessings daily to build a habit of **Shukr.**

"If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]."[xvii]

Dealing with Failure and Criticism

Social media fosters unrealistic expectations — flawless lives, instant success, and public praise. When children internalize this, they may struggle with **failure, correction, or lack of attention.**[xviii]

- **Normalize Struggle:** Share stories of the Prophets who endured trials (e.g., Yusuf's imprisonment, Musa's rejection).
- **Celebrate Effort Over Results:** Acknowledge your child's sincerity and determination, not just the outcome.
- **Use Qur'anic Reassurance:**

  "Indeed, with hardship comes ease."[xix]

  Constructive Criticism: Teach them to listen, reflect, and improve — not to fear being imperfect.

Instilling a Growth Mindset with Tawakkul (Trust in Allah)

A growth mind-set, when combined with Tawakkul, creates a powerful Islamic approach to facing life with confidence and faith.[xx]

- **Encourage Curiosity and Problem-Solving:** Let children try, fail, and try again — without shame.
- **Remind Them of Allah's Plan:** Not every effort will bring worldly success, but every sincere effort earns **divine reward**.
- **Du'a and Effort:** Teach them that Muslims strive hard **and** make du'a, understanding that **results belong to Allah.**

"And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely [upon Him]."[xxi]

Practical Strategies for Digital Parenting

Islamic parenting in the digital age is not about rejecting technology, but **managing and guiding its use** within the framework of Islamic ethics and discipline.

Set Clear Boundaries and Screen Limits

- **No screens during meals or bedtime:** Preserve real conversation and restful sleep.
- **Parental controls:** Filter inappropriate content and monitor app usage.
- **Technology-free zones/times:** Create moments for reflection, bonding, and prayer without interruption.

Engage in Shared Digital Activities

- **Watch Islamic content together:** Seerah series, Qur'an documentaries, or faith-based stories.
- **Play Islamic or educational games:** Encourage learning through technology in a controlled way.
- **Discuss what they watch:** Ask children what they think, what's right/wrong, and how it relates to Islam.

Provide Real-Life Alternatives

Digital addiction often stems from **boredom or isolation**. Real-life experiences build social skills, creativity, and identity.

- **Outdoor activities:** Family walks, sports, or gardening.
- **Books and hobbies:** Islamic stories, drawing, puzzles, or journaling.
- **Community involvement:** Mosque events, Islamic camps, or family visits.

Teach Digital Responsibility

Children must learn that **online behavior is also accountable before Allah.**

- **Cyber safety:** Teach about privacy, scams, and the dangers of oversharing.
- **Digital Amanah (trust):** Allah watches our actions—even online.
- **Du'a before logging in:** A small reminder that intention and purpose matter.

"Verily, hearing, sight, and the heart — all will be questioned about."[xxii]

Role of Schools and Islamic Centres

Parenting is a collective effort. **Islamic institutions must collaborate** with families to reinforce Islamic values in the digital context.

How Institutions Can Help:

- **Workshops and Seminars:** On digital ethics, emotional intelligence, and Islamic parenting.
- **Youth Mentorship Programs:** Help children and teens form **Islamic identities** in peer-supported settings.
- **Halal Alternatives:** Promote Islamic apps, streaming services, and gaming platforms.
- **Faith-Integrated Curriculum:** Use Qur'an, Hadith, and Islamic history to shape moral lessons.

When mosques, schools, and families work together, children receive **consistent and meaningful guidance** in every sphere of life.

Conclusion

Parenting in the digital age is undeniably complex — screens are everywhere, ideologies are shifting, and distractions are constant. But this era also presents an opportunity: to raise a generation of Muslims who are spiritually grounded**,** ethically conscious**,** and digitally wise**.**

Islamic parenting does not mean rejecting modern tools — it means **engaging with them purposefully,** guided by the **Qur'an,** the **Seerah of the Prophet ﷺ**, and the **timeless principles of Islam.**

Through sincere effort, dua, and trust in Allah, Muslim parents can raise children who not only succeed in this life — but are also prepared for the **ultimate success of the Akhirah.**

References

[i] . Quran *66:6*

[ii] . Elisha, Omri. "Moral ambitions of grace: The paradox of compassion and accountability in Evangelical faith-based activism." *Cultural Anthropology* 23, no. 1 (2008): 154-189.

iii . Philips, Abu Ameenah Bilaal, and Abu Aminah. *The fundamentals of tawheed (Islamic monotheism)*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: International Islamic publishing house, 1994.

iv . **Quran 31:13**

v . *Qur'an 31:13*

vi . Brooks, Michael. *Against the web: A cosmopolitan answer to the new right*. John Hunt Publishing, 2020.

vii .Quran *33:21*

viii . Risnawaty, Rattry. "The Concept of Forming Shaleh Children According to Islamic Education." *International Journal Education and Computer Studies (IJECS)* 3, no. 2 (2023): 42-51.

ix . Gambari, Yusuph Dauda, and Fahm Abdulgafar Olawale. "Qur'anic Model for Parenting in the 21st Century." *Jurnal Adabiyah* 23, no. 2 (2023): 263-285.

x .Quran *103:1–3*

xi . Al Dwakat, Mohammad Kamel, Muneer Kamel Al Dwaikat, and Yousef Ahmad Alolabi. "The educational role of the Arab family: Challenges of cultural globalization." *International Journal of Business and Society* 24, no. 3 (2023): 1118-1142.

xii . Ribeiro, João F., and D. Peeters. "The Relationship Between Instant Gratification and Actual Social Media Use." (2021).

xiii . Alkouatli, Claire. ""We're Trying to Raise Muslim Kids, Right?" Muslim Educators' Narratives of Human Development." *Cognition and Instruction* 41, no. 1 (2023): 32-60.

xiv . Ehsani, Mohammad. "Cyberspace and Religious Education in Family: Challenges and Solutions." *AL-MUSTAFA In Contemporary Islamic Thought* 4, no. 1 (2022): 59-96.

xv . Tracey, Burns, and Gottschalk Francesca, eds. *Educational Research and Innovation Educating 21st Century Children Emotional Well-being in the Digital Age*. OECD publishing, 2019.

xvi . Rama, Bahaking, Andi Abdul Hamzah, and Syarifuddin Ondeng. "Children's Character Education Values in the Qur'an." *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education* 12, no. 14 (2021): 2358-2366.

xvii . Quran *14:7*

xviii . Bowers, Ellen. *The everything guide to coping with perfectionism: Overcome toxic perfectionism, learn to embrace your mistakes, and discover the potential for positive change*. Simon and Schuster, 2012.

xix . Quran *94:6*

xx . Abu-Rabi, Ibrahim M. *Intellectual origins of Islamic resurgence in the modern Arab world*. State University of New York Press, 1995.

xxi . Quran *3:159*

xxii . Quran *17:36*