



Article Information			
Received:	09 December 2024	Accepted	20 February 2025
Revised:	10 April 2025	Published	31 May 2025
Volume & Pages:	3(1) & 21-43		

Religious Influences on Parenting: A Cross-Cultural Examination of Faith-Based Child-Rearing Practices

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Abstract

This study examines the role of religion in shaping parenting practices across different cultural and religious contexts. Focusing on the transmission of moral and spiritual values, it investigates how religious teachings influence parenting approaches in Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism. The research identifies both commonalities and differences in religious parenting, while also considering broader global challenges such as secularization and intergenerational conflict that increasingly impact child-rearing patterns. Employing a cross-cultural perspective, the study reveals how families respond to social change while maintaining religious principles within their parenting strategies. The findings highlight that religion plays a critical role in the moral and character development of children, particularly through the emphasis on compassion, discipline, and virtue. The study argues for a flexible and inclusive framework for integrating religious values into parenting, especially in the context of modern, pluralistic societies. By doing so, it contributes to the development of a religion-based parenting theory that is both culturally responsive and relevant to contemporary family life. This research provides valuable insights into the intersection between religion, culture, and parenting, and expands the academic discourse on how religious values continue to inform child development in diverse societies.

Keywords: Cross-Cultural, Moral, Parenting, Religion, Secularization

INTRODUCTION

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In today's increasingly pluralistic and globalized society, parenting is shaped by a variety of intersecting factors, including religion, culture, and social transformation. Religion, as a deeply rooted belief system, plays a pivotal role in shaping children's values, norms, and behaviors from an early age. In many cultures, religious values are transmitted through parenting practices rooted in spiritual teachings that aim to foster the moral, social, and emotional development of children. Alwin and Felson (2020) emphasize that religion significantly influences parenting, not only shaping the moral values instilled in children but also informing how parents discipline and guide their children in everyday life. They argue that both the cognitive and affective dimensions of religious teachings serve as foundational frameworks for cultivating children's social and moral behavior, while also offering guidance in managing emotional and social challenges across developmental stages.

However, the forces of secularization and modernization pose considerable challenges to the integration of religious principles in parenting, particularly within multicultural and multireligious family settings in the global era. Al Mustaqim et al. (2023) observe that interfaith families often experience tensions between maintaining traditional religious values and adapting to modern secular demands. These tensions also extend into parenting practices, where parents are required to balance the preservation of their religious values with the demands of rapidly changing social norms, interreligious differences, and culturally diverse environments in a globally interconnected world.

The significance of this study lies in its attempt to understand how religious teachings influence parenting practices across diverse cultural contexts, especially in response to global challenges such as technological advancement, migration, and accelerating social change. Although a number of studies have examined religion's influence on child-rearing, most are limited to monolithic religious or cultural contexts and insufficiently address the diversity of parenting shaped by varying religious and cultural backgrounds. Canfield (2020) notes that many existing studies rely on single-culture frameworks and fail to account for the dynamic and diverse nature of parenting within increasingly multicultural societies. This study seeks to address that gap by exploring how families from different religious and cultural traditions integrate religious values into their parenting practices.

The primary aim of this study is to explore and analyze the influence of religious teachings on parenting practices within multicultural family contexts, as well as to identify the

challenges parents face in maintaining their religious traditions in child education amidst ongoing social change. Specifically, this research focuses on comparing parenting approaches among families adhering to major world religions, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism and examining how these differing religious values are translated into concrete actions in everyday life.

A growing body of literature suggests that religion not only provides moral guidance but also significantly shapes how parents discipline, educate, and guide their children. Religion influences parenting styles, as religious teachings often shape parental attitudes toward education, discipline, and children's psychological development, while also providing a value framework that informs parent-child interactions (Saroglou, 2020). For instance, in Islam, the importance of early religious education is strongly emphasized, as it plays a central role in shaping children's character and morality in accordance with the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith (Madyawati et al., 2023). In Christian parenting, parents are tasked with teaching moral values rooted in the teachings of Jesus, such as love, forgiveness, and kindness (Mijah, 2018). Meanwhile, in Eastern religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism, parents are encouraged to instill virtues such as patience, self-control, and compassion as integral components of character formation (Sondhi, 2017). These values are regarded as essential for developing children's emotional and social balance and preparing them to live harmoniously in society.

Despite this, there is limited research explicitly comparing how religiously based parenting practices are applied in multicultural settings in today's globalized world. This study seeks to enrich our understanding of the role of religion in character development through parenting and to provide new insights for educators, psychology practitioners, and policymakers in designing educational programs that are more sensitive to religious and cultural diversity in increasingly pluralistic societies. Thus, this research distinguishes itself from previous studies by employing a cross-cultural and interfaith approach that is attentive to contemporary social dynamics in the era of globalization.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a dual methodological approach: one addressing empirical research results and the other focusing on conceptual ideas. This integrated strategy encompasses both the procedural design for data collection and analysis, and the analytical steps used to discuss and develop conceptual frameworks. For the empirical component, a qualitative method is employed, specifically a cross-cultural and interfaith case study approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Data collection was conducted through participatory observation. The observations focused on parent-child interactions in everyday settings, including family activities, religious worship, and religious education sessions. The goal of these observations was to identify religiously grounded parenting practices and to understand how parents implement religious values in daily life (Flick, 2022).

Data analysis was carried out using thematic analysis. This process began with transcription and field notes, followed by coding to identify emerging themes within the collected data. These themes were further analyzed to uncover patterns related to the influence of religious teachings on parenting practices. Additionally, a comparative analysis was conducted to examine parenting practices among families from different religious backgrounds, aiming to identify both similarities and differences in how religious values are translated into child-rearing practices (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

For the conceptual component of the article, the following steps were undertaken. First, **problem identification**: this involved framing issues relevant to religiously-based parenting in multicultural and multireligious contexts, specifically focusing on how major world religions influence parenting and the challenges families face in maintaining religious teachings amid social transformation. Second, **conceptual framework development**: a theoretical framework was constructed by integrating theories from parenting studies, the psychology of religion, and cultural sociology to explain the relationship between religious teachings and parenting practices. This framework also included theories on the role of religious values in shaping children's moral and emotional development. Third, **conceptual analysis**: through this stage, the author explored key concepts such as morality, religious values, and cultural identity in child-rearing. This process involved a literature review and an analysis of how various religions teach parenting principles and how these principles are applied within different cultural contexts. Fourth, **synthesis and critical reflection**: the ideas generated from the conceptual analysis were synthesized to provide new insights into the influence of religion on parenting. Critical

reflection on the role of religion in today's multicultural world was used to formulate practical recommendations for parents, educators, and policymakers (Patton, 2014).

The methodological approach in this article emphasizes an interdisciplinary framework, combining the psychology of religion, social sciences, and parenting theories to explain the influence of religion in child-rearing. By integrating qualitative and conceptual analysis, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how religious values shape parenting practices amid cultural and religious diversity. Through this approach, the research aspires to contribute to the development of religion-based parenting theories that are relevant to increasingly plural and complex social contexts.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Traditional and Modern Paradigms in Parenting: A Theoretical Perspective

Parenting in the context of religion is an increasingly important topic for understanding character formation in children across various cultures. As social and cultural changes unfold, many families face challenges in integrating religious teachings into their parenting approaches. The theoretical framework used in this study comprises several key components that analyze the relationship between religious values and parenting styles.

Traditional vs. Modern Parenting Theories

Most families who rely on religious teachings in parenting tend to adhere to more traditional parenting styles, which emphasize obedience, discipline, and the transmission of moral values derived from their religion. Such approaches not only strengthen the child's spiritual bond with religious teachings but also prepare them to become individuals of strong character and integrity (Fahham, 2020). In contrast, modern parenting styles often emphasize developmental psychology approaches that prioritize individual freedom and self-development. Parents adopting this style focus on character-building through education that supports the child's autonomy, critical thinking, and decision-making abilities. This approach also stresses the importance of open communication between parents and children to address challenges in the digital age while ensuring the child's mental and emotional well-being (Rahmat, 2018).

Religious Principles in Parenting

In the context of Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism, parenting is grounded in teachings that emphasize moral values such as compassion, discipline, and character formation. For example, in Islam, parents are strongly encouraged to provide religious education as a means of moral development, with worship practices being an integral part of daily life (Pingky et al., 2022). Similarly, in Christianity, the values of love and forgiveness as taught by Jesus form the foundation of parenting (Yeniretnowati & Angin, 2021). In Hinduism and Buddhism, virtues such as patience, self-control, and compassion serve as core principles in parenting practices (Khairunnisa et al., 2024).

The Role of Spirituality in Character Formation

Spirituality theory suggests that spirituality plays a crucial role in children's character formation, as religious values offer a strong foundation for the development of moral and social character. Religious teachings help strengthen children's moral identity, facilitate the development of ethical reasoning, and enhance their social relationships. Through religious instruction, children learn discipline, responsibility, and self-control, which are essential to their personal development. Education that integrates spirituality fosters not only strong moral character but also the ability to form healthy social connections (Jaenudin et al., 2024).

The Influence of Religion on Parenting Across Cultures

Islam

The influence of Islam on parenting is highly significant, as the religion provides clear guidance on child-rearing through the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith. In Islam, parenting is not limited to academic education but also emphasizes character development through moral values such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility. For example, the Qur'an in Surah Luqman (31:13) teaches the importance of offering advice and education to children, including the concept of monotheism, as well as educating them with care and compassion (Qur'an Ministry of Religious Affairs [Kemenag]). This verse highlights the importance of moral guidance in parenting. In addition, a Hadith from Sahih Muslim states: "Every child is born in a state of fitrah (purity), then his parents make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian" (Muslim, Hadith no. 4803). This Hadith emphasizes the critical role of parents in shaping their children's religious orientation and the importance of imparting religious education with love and proper moral

instruction. This reflects how Islamic parenting promotes a balance between compassion and firm discipline in shaping children of good character.

On the other hand, the influence of Islam on parenting may vary across different cultural contexts, depending on how Islamic teachings are interpreted and practiced within a society. In many Muslim-majority cultures, such as in Indonesia and the Middle East, parenting often involves strong familial roles, where religious values are directly passed from parents to children. A study by Romlah and Rusdi (2023) highlights the significant role of Islamic education in shaping children's morality and ethics in Indonesia. Islamic teachings not only provide spiritual guidance but also shape character through the application of religious values in everyday life. Religious education integrated into family parenting practices in Indonesia serves to strengthen family bonds, enhance discipline, and cultivate children's moral character, which is essential for their social and emotional development (Romlah & Rusdi, 2023). In such cultural contexts, religious values are central to moral education, aiming to preserve the sanctity and harmony of the family.

In countries where Muslims are a minority, Islamic religious education within the family plays a vital role in shaping children's identity and character. According to Loretha et al. (2017), parents in Muslim minority communities, such as those in Amphoe Rattaphum, Thailand, heavily rely on religious instruction at home as a means of preserving Islamic teachings in daily life. Despite challenges posed by a sociocultural environment that may not fully support Islamic values, parents strive to instill discipline and morality through religious education to reinforce family cohesion and their children's identity as Muslims. Therefore, although families in Muslim-minority contexts often face social and cultural challenges, the role of parents in guiding their children through religious education remains a fundamental aspect of moral and ethical character development.

Overall, the influence of Islam on parenting largely depends on how religious teachings are interpreted and applied within broader cultural contexts. In more religious communities, Islamic teachings serve as the foundation for parenting, whereas in more pluralistic and secular societies, applying religious values may pose a challenge. Therefore, it is important for parents and educators to understand their cultural context when educating children to ensure that religious values are preserved effectively.

Christianity

The influence of Christianity on parenting across cultures is particularly notable, especially in instilling the values of love and forgiveness. Christian teachings encourage parents to raise their children with affection while maintaining firm discipline to shape strong moral character. As reflected in the teachings of Jesus, which prioritize love for others, Christian parents across various cultures attempt to apply this principle in their daily parenting practices teaching their children to love and forgive.

This aligns with findings from Wening (2018), which argue that the authoritative parenting style practiced by parents in the Javanese Christian Church community of the Surakarta district positively influences adolescents' religiosity. The authoritative style, which combines firm discipline with emotional warmth and support, appears to foster the internalization of religious values in youth. Emphasizing Christian values such as compassion, responsibility, and discipline has been shown to strengthen adolescents' religious practices and deepen their connection to their faith and church community. These findings suggest that parenting rooted in affection and religious instruction can nurture strong religiosity among children in Christian families.

Furthermore, moral education in Christianity also plays a crucial role in shaping children's social behavior. According to Putrawan and Eunike (2022), Christian moral education helps instill values such as love, honesty, and mutual respect, contributing to the development of positive social behavior in adolescents. Christian parenting practices that combine discipline and compassion support the development of children's character and social behavior within their communities. As a result, Christian religious education helps to strengthen interpersonal relationships within families and society.

Within Christian tradition, parents often emphasize the importance of moral instruction through biblical stories and the application of principles such as honesty, responsibility, and hard work. According to Mijah (2018), Bible-based education serves not only as spiritual guidance but also as a foundation for building children's personalities. These teachings encourage children to live with integrity and a sense of responsibility toward others.

However, in different cultural contexts, the implementation of Christian teachings in parenting may face challenges. For example, in more secular or pluralistic societies, Christian parents often need to adapt in order to preserve their religious values while respecting cultural diversity around them. A study by Sulastrri (2022) shows that in families where parents practice different religions, Christian teachings still aim to instill religiosity. Nevertheless, challenges arise when families must adjust their religious teachings to fit into the social norms of more pluralistic societies. This indicates an effort by Christian families to maintain their religious values while respecting the cultural diversity present in their environment (Sulastrri, 2022).

Overall, the influence of Christianity on parenting is highly significant in shaping children's moral and social character. Despite facing cultural and social challenges in multicultural societies, Christian families work diligently to instill the moral and spiritual teachings of their religion. This demonstrates that, even amid social and cultural changes, Christian values continue to serve as a strong foundation for child education.

Hinduism

Hinduism exerts a significant influence on parenting, as reflected in its teachings and spiritual practices that emphasize values such as kindness, peace, and balance. According to Hindu teachings, parents are regarded as manifestations of divine figures—goddesses or gods—who guide their children in both spiritual and moral development. In Hindu families, moral education is closely linked with the teachings of *Dharma* (moral duty) and *Karma* (the law of cause and effect), which shape children's attitudes and behavior. These teachings encourage parents to instill discipline and personal responsibility in their children while cultivating respect for the universe and others. Thus, Hindu doctrine offers a strong foundation for character development by emphasizing the importance of goodness and harmony in everyday life (Siregar et al., 2021).

Furthermore, in Hindu culture, parenting is not limited to moral and ethical aspects but also focuses on the development of children's spirituality. In many Hindu households, children are taught to honor and participate in religious rituals, including daily offerings and religious festivals. Participation in these rituals provides children with an understanding of concepts such as karma, reincarnation, and the attainment of *moksha* (spiritual liberation). These practices are

a vital part of character formation rooted in Hindu teachings, which prioritize inner peace and life balance.

According to a study by Sumertini (2023), Hindu families play a pivotal role in shaping children's character by instilling values such as discipline, responsibility, and emotional balance. Children raised in environments that teach Hindu principles—especially reverence for Dharma tend to develop greater self-awareness and emotional regulation. This religiously grounded parenting approach strengthens children's ability to face life's challenges with a sense of responsibility and inner peace.

However, applying Hindu teachings in parenting may present challenges in pluralistic and secular societies. In contexts where other religions dominate, Hindu parents may struggle to maintain their religious traditions in child-rearing, especially when their values do not align with broader societal norms. Parents engaged in intercultural parenting such as those in Hindu families residing in countries with non-Hindu majorities often encounter difficulties in transmitting religious values to their children. These parents must adapt their teaching methods to preserve Hindu spiritual and moral principles while respecting local cultural norms.

Nonetheless, these challenges often present opportunities for intercultural dialogue that can enrich family experiences and deepen understanding of their religious values. As noted by Bhugun (2019), this suggests the importance of integrating religious teachings into child education, even when navigating social and cultural diversity.

Overall, the influence of Hinduism on parenting is crucial in shaping children's moral and spiritual character, which impacts not only their personal lives but also their social relationships. The teachings of *Dharma*, *Karma*, and *Moksha* provide a strong moral framework for parents to guide their children to live responsibly, peacefully, and respectfully toward others. However, the challenges of implementing Hindu values in pluralistic societies underscore the need for wise adaptation to ensure that religious teachings are passed on to future generations without losing their essence.

Buddhism

Buddhism offers a unique perspective on parenting, focusing on the cultivation of virtue, patience, and self-control. Buddhist teachings emphasize the importance of understanding the law of cause and effect (*karma*) and the concept of inner peace, which can be integrated into parenting practices. Parents who adhere to Buddhist principles typically teach their children values such as non-harm, compassion, and mindfulness. Amiro and Yonata (2019) explain that in Buddhist families, parents play a crucial role in enhancing children's spiritual intelligence by instilling values such as compassion, patience, and mindfulness. Buddhist teachings encourage children to understand the principle of karma and to avoid actions that harm others. Through teachings about inner peace and the consequences of actions, parents help shape the moral character of their children, enabling them to develop a sense of responsibility and respect for others in their daily lives (Amiro & Yonata, 2019).

Moreover, in families that practice Buddhism, parenting is closely linked to the development of awareness and harmony within the child. Teachings on meditation and self-understanding from an early age can help children manage emotions and internal conflicts. Meditation is considered an effective tool for enhancing focus and mental tranquility. Buddhist parents often teach their children to practice meditation as a means of improving concentration, calming emotions, and achieving inner balance. Through this practice, children are taught to live with full awareness, supporting their character development and spiritual intelligence in everyday life. This demonstrates that Buddhism not only shapes morality but also provides practical tools for personal growth through a more introspective approach (Widodo, 2022).

However, the application of Buddhist teachings in parenting can face challenges, particularly in cultures that are more materialistic or individualistic. In societies where personal achievement and social status are emphasized, Buddhist principles that promote simplicity and detachment from desire may appear to conflict with prevailing social norms. Astuti, Kabri, and Surya (2024) highlight that Buddhist families in Western countries often encounter significant challenges in maintaining Buddhist traditions, especially when influenced by the pressures of consumerism and dominant self-centered lifestyles. In response, these families make considerable efforts to instill Buddhist values in their children, even though they frequently have to adapt their methods to align with differing social norms, which in turn influence how they teach principles such as peace, simplicity, and mindfulness. Nevertheless, wise Buddhist parents

continue striving to balance these spiritual teachings with cultural demands without compromising their core values (Astuti et al., 2024).

Overall, Buddhism offers a holistic approach to parenting by emphasizing virtue, self-regulation, and inner peace. Despite the challenges of sustaining Buddhist teachings in more secular or materialistic societies, the influence of Buddhism remains relevant in shaping children into compassionate and wise individuals. Therefore, it is important for parents to continue imparting these values in daily life, so that their children can grow into individuals who possess inner peace and harmonious relationships with the world around them.

Comparison of Religion-Based Parenting Practices Across Different Countries

Religion-based parenting practices exhibit significant variation across countries and cultures. Nations with strong religious traditions, such as those in the Middle East, India, and Eastern Europe, tend to maintain more conservative and religious parenting patterns. For instance, in Middle Eastern societies, child-rearing is heavily influenced by Islamic teachings, which emphasize the importance of religious education in daily family life. Conversely, in countries more open to pluralism and globalization, such as Western nations, the influence of religion in child-rearing has begun to decline. Globalization and secularization have led to shifts in values within many families, often prioritizing modern psychological approaches in child education. Religion-based parenting practices thus differ significantly depending on the local religious and cultural context.

In Indonesia, where the majority of the population is Muslim, child-rearing is strongly influenced by Islamic teachings, which prioritize religious education and moral values from an early age. Islamic education plays a crucial role in shaping children's character in Indonesian society. Islamic teachings emphasize values such as compassion, responsibility, and discipline, which parents implement in their parenting styles. These serve as a strong moral foundation that not only shapes children's behavior in everyday life but also prepares them to play an active and positive role in society. According to Somad (2021), character formation grounded in religion is an essential foundation for a child's social life.

In India, home to the largest Hindu population globally, religion-based parenting is significantly influenced by Hindu values, which teach the importance of discipline,

responsibility, and harmony with nature. Mishra (2012) explains that Hindu parents in India educate their children by instilling the principles of Dharma (moral duty) and Karma (cause and effect), encouraging children to take responsibility for their actions and develop strong moral character. This reflects the important role of Hinduism in shaping social behavior and adolescent character development in India.

In Thailand, where Buddhism is the majority religion, child-rearing practices are heavily influenced by Buddhist teachings. Within Buddhist families, lessons on inner peace, patience, and compassion are often imparted to children from an early age. As described by Loretha et al. (2017), Buddhist families in Thailand tend to raise their children with an emphasis on self-control and virtues in daily life. This approach supports the development of a balanced and compassionate moral character.

In contrast to Asian countries, Western countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany are often more influenced by secularism and religious pluralism. In the United States, although many families identify with Christianity, the role of religion in parenting has diminished alongside rising secularization trends. Many families increasingly adopt modern psychological approaches, which emphasize emotional development and social intelligence over strict adherence to religious teachings. This approach focuses on understanding children's social and emotional needs, supporting more flexible character development oriented toward individual well-being. Similarly, in Eastern Europe and Russia, despite the majority of the population being adherents of Orthodox Christianity, the influence of religion on parenting practices has declined amid social and political secularization. In Russia, for example, despite efforts to restore the church's influence in social life, many families prioritize secular and rational educational values, placing little emphasis on religious education in daily child-rearing (Horwath et al., 2008).

Overall, despite clear differences in religion-based parenting practices between Eastern and Western countries, it can be concluded that local culture and globalization developments profoundly influence how parents raise their children. In countries with strong religious influence, child-rearing remains largely shaped by religious teachings, whereas in more secular countries, modern psychological approaches and pluralistic values increasingly dominate.

The Influence of Globalization on Religion-Based Parenting

Globalization has brought significant changes to child-rearing patterns, particularly concerning the influence of religion. In many traditional societies, religion serves as the foundation for guiding parenting values. However, with the increasing strength of globalization, especially through digital media and more open communication—there have been notable shifts in how parents raise their children. For example, in many developing and developed countries, the universal values promoted by global media often conflict with traditional religious teachings. In some religion-based families, religious teachings such as discipline, morality, and family values are frequently overshadowed by more secular values that emphasize individualism and materialism, which are often stressed in modern education. This trend suggests that globalization has the potential to reduce the influence of religion in children's moral education, shifting toward a more secular approach.

Moreover, globalization affects religion-based parenting through the advancement of technology. Children's access to technology, such as smartphones, the internet, and social media, has transformed the way they interact with the world and their religion. In many cultures, parents who previously relied on conventional religious teaching methods now face challenges in maintaining the relevance of religious values in this digital era. On one hand, technology allows parents easier access to religious information; on the other hand, it opens exposure to broader cultural influences that often conflict with traditional religious values. Consequently, religion-based parenting in the digital age demands greater adjustment between religious norms and technological developments.

Nevertheless, despite the challenges posed by globalization, some studies indicate that families who steadfastly uphold their religious teachings can integrate religious principles into child-rearing in more flexible ways. For instance, parents who teach religion within the context of modern life adapt religious teachings to respond to globalization challenges without losing the essence of the moral and spiritual values they hold (Samho, 2024). This demonstrates that although globalization presents challenges, many families can still maintain and even strengthen the influence of religion in their parenting styles by adopting more adaptive and relevant approaches to changing times.

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that the influence of globalization on religion-based parenting is significant but manageable through more flexible approaches. Despite major challenges, globalization does not entirely diminish religious values in child

education. Instead, with the right approach, parents can still combine religious teachings with global values in their parenting. In this context, it is important to maintain a balance between preserving a strong religious identity and adapting to the changes of the times.

Challenges and Dilemmas in Religion-Based Parenting Practices

Secularization and Social Change

A primary challenge in religion-based parenting practices is secularization and social change, which create a gap between the religious values taught by parents and the increasingly secular values developing in society. Secularization leads to the separation of religion from various aspects of public life, including public policy and education. In this context, religion is no longer considered the primary foundation for determining values and decisions governing social and political life (Berger, 2011). This poses difficulties for parents striving to uphold religious teachings in their children's daily lives. In increasingly pluralistic and multicultural societies, parents often feel pressured to confront strong secular cultural influences that frequently conflict with their religious beliefs. Edgell (2013), in *Religion and Family in a Changing Society*, emphasizes that amid rapid social change, many families face dilemmas balancing religious values with dominant social norms, particularly those related to individual rights, religious freedom, and cultural inclusivity. According to Edgell, the growing influence of secular culture in education and media can create tension between parents' desire to maintain religious teachings at home and social demands that prioritize diversity and tolerance. Thus, parents in this context must find wise ways to instill religious values in their children while remaining open to broader social realities that are more pluralistic (Edgell, 2013). From the author's perspective, secularization indeed creates tensions between religious values and the demands of the modern world; however, these challenges can be overcome through flexible and adaptive approaches to religious education at home that align with evolving social realities.

Intergenerational Differences in Perspective

Intergenerational conflicts regarding child-rearing frequently arise in families living within pluralistic cultures. Older generations tend to emphasize parenting based on strict religious norms, while younger generations are more open to modern values and more likely to question religious authority in child education. Birge (2023), in the dissertation *Understanding*

How Secular Spirituality Transforms Intergenerational Parenting Styles, explains that value shifts between older and younger generations often emerge due to differing views on the role of religion in family life. Younger generations, increasingly exposed to secular culture and pluralism, prioritize more flexible and inclusive parenting approaches, often leading to critiques of religious norms perceived as rigid or restrictive. Meanwhile, older generations, bound by tradition and more conservative religious teachings, tend to uphold religious values as the primary foundation for shaping children's character and behavior. Birge highlights that these differing views create challenges in intergenerational relationships, necessitating a bridging of tensions between preserving religious teachings and accommodating more progressive perspectives among youth (Birge, 2023). This tension often creates dilemmas for parents in transmitting religious teachings to their children, especially when prevailing social and cultural norms emphasize personal freedom and children's rights. The divergence between traditional and progressive values illustrates the tension affecting parental approaches to child education. From the author's viewpoint, it is important for parents to find a balance between maintaining religious values and allowing children to thrive in an increasingly open and pluralistic society. Constructive intergenerational dialogue can help resolve conflicts and bridge these differences.

Social and Cultural Pressures

Social and cultural pressures stemming from continuously changing norms also present significant challenges for religion-based parenting. For example, the increasing recognition of children's rights and gender equality in society can conflict with more traditional religious interpretations regarding gender roles and children's autonomy. Although many societies have embraced gender equality and children's rights as part of social justice efforts, religious traditions often hold more conservative views on gender roles within family and society. In many traditional religious interpretations, male and female roles are clearly delineated, and children's autonomy is limited within the context of obligations to parents and the religious community (Friedman & Gordezky, 2011). In this context, parents often face the dilemma of whether to adhere to religious teachings emphasizing differentiated gender roles or to adapt to social developments that prioritize equality. Meanwhile, contemporary social norms promote more inclusive gender equality, where women and men are regarded as having equal rights across multiple life domains, including employment, education, and family decision-making. The tension between traditional religious gender roles and evolving social values on gender equality

creates challenges for individuals and religious groups in adapting their teachings to ongoing social change (Aidala, 1985). From the author's perspective, these shifting social and cultural pressures require parents to think critically about religious education—maintaining religious values while being responsive to human rights demands and broader social changes. Finding a balanced approach to educating children within an increasingly pluralistic context can serve as a prudent middle ground.

The Impact of Religion on Child Development

Character and Morality

Religious teachings can make a significant contribution to shaping children's character and morality, which subsequently influence their social and academic behavior. The instillation of religious values from an early age can introduce children to fundamental moral concepts such as honesty, empathy, and a sense of responsibility. Research indicates that families who teach religious principles often have children who are more likely to demonstrate positive social behaviors, such as helping others and maintaining harmonious relationships (Damon, 2008). Therefore, religious teachings not only play a role in forming individual morality but also encourage children to exhibit positive behavior within broader social contexts. Religious doctrines often emphasize respect for authority figures within family, school, and society. Values such as self-discipline, responsibility, and respect for authority, commonly taught in many religious traditions, can help children develop more positive attitudes toward learning and school regulations (Paloutzian & Park, 2014). Nonetheless, it is important to note that the positive impact of religious teachings on children's morality also depends on how religion is practiced daily and how religious values are adapted to existing social contexts. From the author's perspective, religion can provide a strong foundation for character development, but its implementation must be prudent to avoid rigid dogmatism and instead focus on universal values that are broadly acceptable.

Mental and Emotional Well-being

Religion-based education positively influences children's mental and emotional well-being, particularly in fostering a sense of security, self-identity, and healthy relationships with parents. Koenig (2018), in *Religion and Mental Health: Research and Clinical Applications*, explains that

religion provides clear structure in children's lives, which serves to reduce anxiety and offer a stronger sense of life purpose. Children with religious faith often feel safer because they believe their lives have greater meaning and that they are protected by a higher power. Religion also plays a crucial role in strengthening parent-child relationships, as religious values frequently encourage openness, communication, and attentiveness to children's emotional needs. Koenig argues that the security gained through religious education can enhance children's self-confidence while reducing feelings of alienation or emotional emptiness (Koenig, 2018). Hence, religion-based education benefits not only spiritual development but also makes a significant contribution to children's mental and emotional health.

Within the family context, religious teachings often reinforce emotional bonds between parents and children, as religion promotes open communication and attentiveness to emotional needs. Pargament (2011), in *Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy: Understanding and Addressing the Sacred*, asserts that religion not only provides spiritual guidance but also enriches interpersonal relationships by facilitating healthy emotional expression. Religious values commonly teach the importance of love, forgiveness, and care for others, which can improve the quality of parent-child communication. This creates more harmonious and deeper relationships in which children feel safe expressing their feelings and needs. For instance, religious teachings often instruct children to understand that they are valued and loved by God, which can reduce feelings of low self-esteem and enhance self-worth (Papaleontiou-Louca, 2023). Thus, religion plays an essential role in building strong emotional bonds within families, supporting children's emotional development and well-being.

Moreover, religious teachings provide children with an understanding of the importance of emotional regulation, such as patience and reliance on God in facing difficulties. Religious education focuses not only on spiritual aspects but also teaches values that support children's emotional intelligence development. Specifically, in Islam, values such as *sabr* (patience) and *tawakkul* (trust in God) are taught as ways to manage emotions when confronted with life challenges. Mahmudinata (2024) states that the ability to be patient and trust in God during difficult situations helps children control their emotions, reduce anxiety, and enhance emotional resilience. Therefore, religion plays a vital role in teaching children healthy ways to manage emotions, which positively impacts their mental well-being and character development. From the author's perspective, although it is undeniable that religion significantly enhances children's

mental and emotional well-being, parents should instill religious values in a balanced manner without imposing excessive pressure that may affect their psychological development.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that religion plays a significant role in shaping child-rearing practices across diverse cultures, including values such as compassion, discipline, and spirituality. Each religion such as Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism—offers unique approaches to child education that reflect their respective moral and spiritual teachings. The study also reveals that in the context of globalization and multicultural societies, challenges exist in maintaining religious values, including the influences of secularization, intergenerational conflicts, and cultural differences. Nonetheless, religious families show the ability to adapt to modern social realities, exhibiting flexibility in integrating religious values with social demands.

This research contributes novelty through a cross-cultural and interfaith approach that examines the influence of religion on parenting within pluralistic societies. This approach fills gaps in prior research, which has often focused on single cultural contexts. Moreover, the study provides a deeper understanding of the role of religion in child-rearing amid global social change, making it a valuable reference for religious education, family psychology, and policymakers.

Further research is needed to explore how interfaith families navigate challenges in establishing religion-based parenting patterns. Additionally, in-depth studies on the adaptation of religious values within societies characterized by greater religious diversity are necessary. Future research could focus on developing parenting programs grounded in religious values that are more inclusive and responsive to global social transformations.

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