

# The Impact of Parental Care on the Academic Achievement of Islamic Education Among Secondary School Students in Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of parental care on academic achievement in Islamic Education among 335 religious secondary school students in Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia. Utilizing a descriptive-analytical approach and a questionnaire-based methodology, the study found high levels of both parental care and academic performance. Results indicated a statistically significant positive correlation between parental involvement and student success. Regression analysis further identified parental care as a significant predictor of academic achievement. The study concludes that parental support is vital for educational progress and recommends strengthening family-school collaboration and enhancing parental monitoring of students' learning.

**Keywords:** Parental Care, Academic Achievement, Islamic Education, Secondary Students.

## INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, Islam has consistently encouraged parents to provide a positive upbringing for their children, emphasizing the exertion of maximum effort in nurturing their education. This is encapsulated in the Quranic mandate: "O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire..." (Al-Tahrim: 6). This divine instruction serves as a profound call for parents to monitor their children's development within both their internal home environment and the external world, guiding them toward actions that serve their best interests. Furthermore, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) underscored this duty by linking early discipline to long-term worship and character building (Abu Dawood: 495), affirming that Islam mandates parental devotion to education as a primary religious and social responsibility.

As the nucleus of society, the family acts as the primary cradle where children's mental faculties and capabilities flourish through healthy social, cultural, and healthcare provisions. While various educational institutions share the responsibility of instruction, they must operate in integration with the family to achieve social equilibrium. This highlights the pivotal responsibility of parents and the profound influence positive or negative they exert on their children's academic success. The individual efforts of parents in fostering achievement are undeniable, as the family remains the foremost social institution shaping the emotional and cognitive foundations of future generations (Busami, 2022).

Beyond its structural role, the family is the most significant agency of socialization, transforming the individual from a mere biological entity into a learned, thinking, and productive social being. It serves as the essential medium through which children achieve psychological stability and social adaptation (al-Khashab, 1981). By transmitting prevailing cultural values and norms, parents act as the primary reference group that either paves the way for academic excellence or becomes a formidable obstacle to a learner's aspirations (Bin Ayad, 2023). This dynamic determines how students perceive their educational journey and their ability to integrate into the broader social fabric (Oweida, 1996).

This intricate relationship is further elucidated by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979), which identifies the family as the "Microsystem" the most immediate and influential environment. This theory posits that the quality of interaction and parental care within this system directly dictates a student's motivation and educational behavior. Robust parental involvement acts as a catalyst for academic persistence, whereas neglect within this primary system can severely impede cognitive growth. Building upon these foundations, the present study investigates the impact of parental care on the academic achievement of secondary school students in Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia, seeking to uncover the extent of this vital influence (Soyer, 2019).

## Problem Statement

Academic achievement challenges represent a global concern with direct ramifications for both individuals and societies. Researchers consistently highlight that educational failure can destabilize social equilibrium and diminish equal opportunities, leading to profound disparities in the intellectual and socio-economic quality of life. Despite the historical nature of this issue, there is a renewed scholarly focus on academic performance as a cornerstone of developed societies and a primary determinant of an individual's future.

As the family constitutes the primary environment for students, parental care emerges as the most influential factor in fostering skills, shaping personality, and guiding academic interests. Abassa and Lakmesh (2020) emphasize that parental treatment styles characterized by encouragement, tolerance, and acceptance directly enhance academic outcomes. Conversely, al-Fallaj (2010) argues that parenting is both a science and an art; neglect of these principles often leads to academic and behavioral deviation. Currently, many parents exhibit a lack of consistent monitoring regarding their children's academic performance, failing to recognize their profound impact on educational success.

Given these dynamics, this study addresses a critical gap by investigating the extent to which parental care influences academic achievement in Islamic Education among secondary school students in Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia.

## Research Questions

To systematically investigate the relationship between the study variables and achieve the research objectives, this study addresses the following key questions:

1. What are the levels of parental care and academic achievement in Islamic Education among religious secondary school students in Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia?
2. Is there a statistically significant correlation between parental care and students' academic achievement in Islamic Education?
3. To what extent does parental care predict and impact the academic achievement in Islamic Education within the studied context?

## Research Hypotheses

Based on the research objectives, the study tests the following two primary hypotheses:

### 1. Correlation Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): There is no statistically significant correlation between parental care and academic achievement in Islamic Education.

Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_a$ ): There is a statistically significant correlation between parental care and students' academic achievement in Islamic Education.

### 2. Predictive Impact Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): Parental care does not significantly predict or impact students' academic achievement in Islamic Education.

Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_a$ ): Parental care has a statistically significant predictive impact on students' academic achievement in Islamic Education.

### Significance of the Study

The importance of this study is manifested in its dual contribution to both theory and practice:

1. **Practical Utility:** It empowers the Islamic community and parents by elucidating their pivotal role in directly influencing their children's learning outcomes and academic development.
2. **Educational Collaboration:** The research fosters stronger synergies between parents and educators, promoting the concept of "shared responsibility" to enhance student performance in Islamic Education.
3. **Policy & Guidance:** By providing empirical evidence on parental impact, the study serves as a foundational resource for developing integrated family-school support systems.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Extensive research in the literature has validated the fundamental impact of parental involvement on student outcomes across diverse cultural environments. Studies by Abassa and Lakmesh (2020) and Azzam (2024) demonstrated that positive parenting styles—characterized by encouragement, tolerance, and acceptance—directly correlate with higher achievement levels among secondary school students. Within the Omani context, al-Saidiya (2021) identified parental upbringing as a key influencer of achievement goal orientations, accounting for 37% of the variance in student performance. These findings are reflected both regionally and globally; a meta-analysis by Sujarwo & Herwin (2023) of research indexed in the Scopus database confirmed a robust positive correlation between parental involvement and academic success. Furthermore, studies by Asif et al. (2021) and Ashouri (2022) highlighted that familial socioeconomic and cultural conditions, combined with active parental guidance, are direct determinants of student motivation and success during the critical adolescent stage. This reinforces the principle of "shared responsibility" between home and school in maintaining social equilibrium and fostering cognitive growth.

Based on this literature review, the current study aligns with previous trends in examining the link between parental care and achievement, yet it distinguishes itself through three core dimensions that offer significant added value. First, regarding subject specificity, it focuses specifically on Islamic Education a subject that integrates moral and cognitive development unlike many general studies. Second, the study is characterized by its unique geographical context, conducted in Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia, a region with a deep Islamic cultural identity that provides a specific sociological and religious lens for understanding the effectiveness of parental care. Finally, the research exclusively targets religious secondary school students, a group that adopts an educational vision integrating rigorous academic standards with authentic Islamic values, thereby offering specialized insights that broader educational studies may overlook.

The theoretical framework of this study serves as the cornerstone for understanding the profound relationship between parental care and academic achievement. The parent-child relationship acts as the foundational cradle for a healthy upbringing and the primary source of a child's religious, cultural, and cognitive development. As the family functions as a vital bridge between the individual and society, it plays a decisive role in shaping a child's personality, ensuring psychological stability, and defining social interaction patterns. From an Islamic educational perspective, this bond is viewed as a "sacred trust" (*amanah*), imposing a significant religious and social responsibility on parents to monitor their children's growth and guide them toward beneficial outcomes. In this context, al-Ghazali (1992) emphasized that a child's heart is a pristine, precious jewel, devoid of any prior impression; it is a blank slate capable of embracing any direction. If a child is accustomed to goodness, they will achieve success in both this world and the hereafter, whereas neglect inevitably leads to moral and academic failure. Conceptually, academic achievement is defined as the sum of knowledge and experiences acquired through the educational process, typically measured by standardized assessments. While the school functions as a "second family," the parental role remains the most potent predictor of a student's ability to adapt socially and excel intellectually. The family serves as the primary reference group, transmitting cultural values and standards that either pave the way for excellence or act as a formidable obstacle to a learner's aspirations.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive-analytical approach to investigate the relationship between the research variables. Given the nature of the inquiry, a quantitative methodology was adopted to ensure objective data analysis and statistical precision.

Data collection was conducted using two primary sources:

1. Survey Instrument: A structured questionnaire was utilized to measure the level of parental care among the participants.
2. Academic Records: To assess academic achievement in Islamic Education, the study utilized the students' actual current grades (the target sample), providing an empirical measure of their performance in the subject.

This methodological framework ensures that the impact of parental care on academic outcomes is analyzed through validated statistical evidence, aligning with the study's objectives

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the empirical findings derived from the statistical analysis of the collected data, followed by a comprehensive discussion of their theoretical and practical implications

### Descriptive and Correlational Analysis

The descriptive statistics in Table 1 reveal high levels of both study variables. Parental Care achieved a mean of 4.35 (SD = 0.59), while Academic Achievement in Islamic

Education reached 4.29 (SD = 0.56). The Pearson correlation indicates a statistically significant positive relationship ( $r = 0.204$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), confirming that higher levels of parental involvement are consistently associated with superior academic performance. Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix

| Variables                                                | Mean  | Std. Deviation |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-------|----------------|
| Parental Care                                            | 4.355 | 0.591          |
| Academic Achievement                                     | 4.295 | 0.568          |
| *Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2tailed). |       |                |

### Regression Analysis

As illustrated in Table 2, the regression model is statistically significant ( $F = 14.401$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with parental care explaining 4.1% of the variance in academic achievement. The standardized coefficient ( $\beta = 0.204$ ) further confirms its positive predictive power.

| Predictor Variable | t-value      | Beta ( $\beta$ )           | Std. Error    | B             | Sig. ( $p$ ) |
|--------------------|--------------|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| (Constant)         | 15.201       | -                          | 0.227         | 3.440         | 0.000        |
| Parental Care      | 3.795        | 0.204                      | 0.052         | 0.196         | 0.000        |
| Model Summary      | $F = 14.401$ | $\text{Adj. } R^2 = 0.039$ | $R^2 = 0.041$ | $R^2 = 0.204$ | $p < 0.001$  |

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The empirical results of this study confirm high levels of both parental care ( $M = 4.35$ ) and academic achievement in Islamic Education ( $M = 4.29$ ) among secondary students in Kuala Terengganu. These descriptive findings suggest a robust educational environment where parents are deeply invested in their children's religious and academic growth. The statistically significant positive correlation identified ( $r = 0.204$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) underscores that as parental involvement increases, student performance in Islamic Education improves proportionately.

Furthermore, the regression analysis revealed that parental care explains 4.1% of the variance in academic achievement. While this percentage may appear modest, its statistical significance ( $F = 14.401$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) indicates that parental support is a stable and genuine predictor of success within the religious educational sector. This finding aligns perfectly with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, specifically the "Microsystem" layer, which posits that the family is the most immediate and influential environment shaping a student's cognitive and behavioral development. In the context of Terengganu, this effect is likely amplified by the "socio-religious harmony" between the home and the school; the alignment of conservative family values with the Islamic school curriculum creates a synergistic support system that reinforces student motivation.

These findings are consistent with a broad body of international and regional literature. Specifically, they corroborate the work of Abassa and Lakmesh (2020) and Azzam (2024), who argued that positive parenting styles characterized by encouragement and acceptance are foundational to academic proficiency. Similarly, the results echo the meta-analysis by Sujarwo & Herwin (2023) and the findings of Asif et al. (2021), both of which emphasize that parental engagement is a global determinant of educational outcomes. By focusing on Islamic Education, this study adds a unique dimension to the field, proving that parental care is not only vital for general academic success but is also a critical asset in fostering religious literacy and moral development within specialized educational settings.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

1. Parents: Increase active monitoring and engagement in their children's religious curricula.
2. Educators: Implement innovative collaboration programs to bridge the gap between home and school.
3. Researchers: Investigate further variables (socio-economic or psychological) that contribute to the remaining variance in student performance.

Parental care is a strategic educational asset. Strengthening the family school synergy is essential for sustained academic excellence in the religious education sector.

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