

The role of female Islamic preachers in shaping the character of Muslim mothers

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Submission	Revised	Accepted
April 30, 2025	Mei 2, 2025	June 23, 2025

Abstract

This study examines the role of female Islamic preachers in shaping the personality of Muslim mothers within the family context. Employing a qualitative approach, the research involved in-depth interviews with three prominent female preachers in Aceh. The findings reveal that female preachers significantly contribute to enhancing mothers' understanding of religious values, which in turn fosters the development of positive character traits such as patience and compassion. These preachers utilize interactive sermon methods that enable mothers to better comprehend and apply Islamic teachings in their daily lives. The study aims to provide deeper insights into the ways female Islamic preachers support the personal and spiritual growth of mothers within the household sphere.

Keywords: Female Preachers, role of mothers, Character Development

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji peran mualighah dalam membentuk kepribadian ibu-ibu Muslim di lingkungan keluarga. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan tiga mualighah, yaitu Ustadzah L.M., Ustadzah C.F., dan Ustadzah L.H. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa para mualighah berperan penting dalam memperkuat pemahaman keagamaan para ibu, yang berdampak pada perkembangan sifat-sifat positif seperti kesabaran dan kasih sayang. Para mualighah ini menggunakan metode ceramah interaktif yang memudahkan para ibu dalam memahami dan menerapkan ajaran Islam dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memberikan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam mengenai kontribusi mualighah terhadap pertumbuhan kepribadian dan spiritual para ibu dalam konteks keluarga.

Kata Kunci: Pendakwah perempuan, peran ibu, pembentukan karakter



INTRODUCTION

The family is the foundational unit in shaping an individual's character, with mothers playing a central role in creating a nurturing environment for children's development (Rahmalia & Laeli, 2024). As the first educators of their children, mothers are responsible for instilling strong moral, religious, and social values. In Islamic thought, women are viewed as having equal potential to men, possessing intellectual capability, spiritual instinct, and distinct physical needs. Their vital role within families and society, especially as mothers shaping future generations, positions them as key figures in directing the course of civilization (Zuhriyah, 2018).

Islam accords women a strategic role in forming morally sound generations through their positions as mothers, educators, and wise household managers (Komara, 2016). However, the pressures of globalization, digital exposure, and socio-cultural change have increasingly challenged women's ability to fulfill this role optimally. The formation of a mother's character is therefore crucial, as her values directly affect how she raises her children. A strong, religiously grounded mother will likely foster a caring, value-based, and resilient family environment (Hilal, 2023).

In the modern era, mothers face a wide range of pressures, including identity crises, economic stress, and moral confusion in navigating unfiltered information. In this context, female Islamic preachers (*muballighat*) can provide relevant and empathetic guidance to support mothers in strengthening their roles (Daulay et al., 2020). According to Lickona (2012), character is shaped by three key dimensions: moral knowledge, moral feeling, and moral behavior – each of which requires consistent reinforcement within the family context.

Female preachers play a vital role not only in religious instruction but also in empowering mothers through personal guidance, group study (*majelis taklim*), and increasingly through digital platforms. Their shared experiences allow them to offer accessible and contextually relevant support, particularly in small-group or informal settings (Saifulbahri, 2023; Saputra, 2011). Despite this, challenges such as social stigma and lack of institutional support still hinder their full potential.

While many studies have explored the role of mothers in character education, few have focused on the specific contribution of female preachers in shaping mothers' character as moral agents within Muslim families. This study addresses this gap by examining the strategic, personal, and collective roles of female preachers as transformative agents.

The novelty of this study lies in positioning female Islamic preachers not only as transmitters of religious knowledge, but as character mentors for

mothers—contributing directly to family moral resilience. This research further proposes a model of integrative female preaching that blends personal counseling and communal education to strengthen Muslim mothers in facing contemporary challenges.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach to explore the role of female Islamic preachers in supporting and developing the role of mothers within the family. The qualitative method was chosen for its ability to provide in-depth understanding of values, social interactions, and lived experiences, which are central to this research. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research involves observation, interviews, and document analysis to collect non-numerical data aimed at understanding meaning, perspectives, or individual experiences within specific contexts.

A single case study design was applied to allow a comprehensive investigation of the selected subjects and to gain deep insights into the phenomenon under study. The research subjects consisted of three female Islamic preachers who focus on family development. The study was conducted in a religious community where female preachers are actively engaged in guiding housewives. This location was chosen because of its structured preaching programs aimed at enhancing religious understanding and strengthening participants' character.

The participants were selected using purposive sampling, a technique in which subjects are deliberately chosen based on specific criteria aligned with the research objectives (Sugiyono, 2019). To obtain completed and relevant data, in-depth interviews were conducted through direct interaction between the interviewer and the participants. A semi-structured interview format was employed to allow flexibility in exploring key issues and probing deeper into the participants' experiences.

The interviews focused on the preaching methods used by the female preachers, the values they promote, and the ways these values are conveyed to mothers. The data analysis employed thematic analysis, consisting of three main stages: (1) data were organized and coded according to the research focus, (2) findings were presented in narrative form, and (3) conclusions were drawn based on the interpreted data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Female Preachers in Shaping the Character of Muslim Mothers

The cultivation of children's religious obedience begins within the family, where parents—especially mothers—are responsible for introducing core Islamic teachings such as the shahada, prayer (*shalat*), ablution (*wudhu*), *du'a*, and Qur'anic recitation. In addition, children are taught to engage in *dhikr* and embody virtuous conduct, including gratitude, honesty, social harmony, and avoiding prohibited behavior. This effort requires continuous guidance, care, and education from parents—both physically and spiritually—until children reach maturity and independence.

However, the development of strong maternal character does not occur automatically. It is shaped amidst various contemporary challenges. Adequate education for women is essential due to their strategic role as the first educators in the family. Religious study groups (*majelis taklim*) play a crucial role in fostering mothers' spiritual and emotional development. These settings often rely on female preachers who can approach housewives personally and empathetically. Islam encourages women to participate in *da'wah*, including promoting what is right and preventing what is wrong (Safriani, 2021), as women have equal capacity to accept and disseminate the truth.

Based on interviews with three female Islamic preachers (*ustadzah*), the research reveals how each preacher uniquely contributes to the moral and religious development of mothers. The first preacher, *Ustadzah LM*—an Islamic scholar and lecturer at the State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN) Langsa, and a graduate of Egypt—emphasized the importance of instilling a love for the Qur'an in children. She encourages mothers to begin by introducing the Qur'an, listening to its recitation, reading, studying, memorizing, preserving memorization, and practicing its teachings. As children spend more time with their mothers at home, mothers play a critical role in shaping this foundation. Religious sessions equip mothers with the necessary knowledge and motivation to begin this process within themselves before applying it in child-rearing. As Hermawan (2020) states, an individual's knowledge of what is perceived as right influences their attitudes and ultimately shapes behavior and decision-making.

The second preacher, *Ustadzah CF*, leads a Qur'an recitation group called *Tahsin* in Kuala Simpang, Aceh Tamiang, and Langsa, and is also a faculty member at the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Da'wah at IAIN Langsa. She highlighted the importance of not only loving the Qur'an but also living a life rooted in *adab* (etiquette) and *akhlaq* (moral character). She emphasized that proper behavior begins at home, and parents—especially mothers—must

exemplify ethical conduct. Parents are responsible for educating and nurturing their children spiritually and morally, transmitting divine and contextually relevant life experiences. Through Islamic study groups, mothers gain valuable religious knowledge from preachers who share similar life roles as mothers, which help in shaping their own character and improving their parenting.

Children observe and model their parents' behavior – particularly that of their mothers, with whom they are closest (Ahid, 2010). Therefore, wise mothers are those who can guide their children toward better paths, preparing them to become strong future generations. Children need visible role models; when they consistently see their parents pray, behave ethically, and speak kindly, these actions significantly influence their own development.

The third preacher, *Ustadzah LH*, holds a doctoral degree and teaches at an Islamic higher education institution. She often integrates storytelling into her da'wah, sharing inspiring narratives of the Prophet Muhammad's companions. She emphasizes stories of righteous women known for their patience and love in nurturing their children. She frequently discusses exemplary figures such as Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (honesty and gentleness), Umar ibn Khattab (courage and decisiveness), Uthman ibn Affan (generosity and humility), and Ali ibn Abi Talib (intellect and wisdom). These stories are shared with mothers to retell to their children, as storytelling is a powerful tool that children enjoy and learn from.

Children learn best through storytelling, which not only connects them to Islamic values but also enhances creativity and critical thinking. By hearing morally grounded stories, children tend to adopt the behaviors of the characters they admire (Puspitasari & Hidayatulloh, 2020). Early childhood education is critical to the development of character, emotion, language, cognition, and spiritual values (Indyati & Suryana, 2020). Stories from the lives of prophets and righteous individuals – being based on real events – are particularly effective in stimulating children's cognitive and emotional development.

Based on the findings from interviews and observations, it is evident that female preachers shape the character of mothers through da'wah activities focused on family education. This involves living with the Qur'an, practicing noble character, and drawing inspiration from the righteous predecessors (salafus shalih). The study confirms that female preachers play a crucial role in strengthening mothers' religious understanding within the household. This, in turn, fosters maternal qualities such as patience and compassion. By shaping the character of the mother first, preacher's help initiate a ripple effect, enabling mothers to effectively raise and educate their children within a positive and spiritually grounded family environment.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that female Islamic preachers play a crucial role in shaping the character of mothers within the family. Through religious preaching (*da'wah*), housewives gain a deeper understanding of Islamic values, which positively influences their personal development—particularly in cultivating patience, compassion, and effective communication with their children. The interactive and practical approach adopted in their preaching allows mothers to internalize and apply religious teachings in daily life.

However, a significant barrier identified in this study is the limited time that many housewives have to participate in regular religious learning sessions. Consequently, there is a growing need for more flexible *da'wah* methods, particularly those that leverage digital technology.

The findings suggest the importance of developing accessible and adaptable *da'wah* programs for mothers with constrained schedules. Female preachers are encouraged to utilize digital platforms such as online lectures, podcasts, and video content that can be accessed anytime. This would enable mothers to benefit from religious guidance without being restricted by their daily routines and responsibilities.

In addition, the content of *da'wah* must be made more relevant and contextually grounded to address the real-life challenges faced by mothers. This includes topics directly related to household management, parenting, emotional well-being, and spiritual resilience. By adopting interactive and application-oriented approaches, female preachers can help mothers better understand and practice religious values in practical and meaningful ways.

Ultimately, the role of female Islamic preachers in shaping the character of Muslim mothers can be significantly enhanced through the development of more responsive, accessible, and needs-based *da'wah* programs. These efforts will contribute not only to the personal growth of mothers but also to the overall moral and spiritual well-being of Muslim families.

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