

Grounding Shariah through the Flexi-Parenting Approach to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Family Life

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ABSTRACT

Background: The integration of Shariah into modern family life is essential for fostering harmonious communities. In this context, Flexi-Parenting emerges as an innovative approach, balancing traditional Islamic values with the evolving needs of contemporary society. It seeks to harmonize parental roles, ensuring flexibility in parenting while adhering to Shariah principles. This study explores how Flexi-Parenting can contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in promoting family well-being and social cohesion.

Methods: This qualitative research analyzes Islamic family law, Shariah principles, and modern parenting practices through literature reviews and case studies. The study examines how Flexi-Parenting can adapt Islamic teachings to contemporary family dynamics while supporting children's physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual development.

Results: The research shows that Flexi-Parenting addresses modern family life challenges by promoting a balanced and flexible approach to parenting. It meets diverse family needs while maintaining core Islamic values. Additionally, it aligns with SDG objectives, especially gender equality, quality education, and reducing inequalities within families.

Discussion: Flexi-Parenting bridges the gap between traditional Islamic family law and modern societal needs, facilitating the application of Islamic values in contemporary family settings.

Conclusion: The Flexi-Parenting approach contributes to achieving SDGs by fostering sustainable, harmonious family structures and ensuring the relevance of Islamic teachings in today's world.

Novelty: This study introduces a novel perspective on integrating Shariah principles with contemporary parenting through Flexi-Parenting, emphasizing family well-being, gender equality, and social cohesion in a rapidly changing world.

Keywords: Shariah, Flexi-Parenting, Islamic Family Law, Sustainable Development Goals, Family Well-being.

INTRODUCTION

The integration of Shariah principles into modern family life is a critical issue for fostering sustainable and harmonious communities (Salim, 2023). As societies evolve, traditional family

structures and roles are reshaped by various factors, including technological advancements, changing cultural norms, and shifting gender dynamics (Mukhibad, 2017; Ahyani et al., 2022; Putra and Ahyani, 2022; Ahyani, 2024a; Batool et al., 2024). In Islamic societies, family law, guided by Shariah, plays a central role in maintaining the moral and social fabric of the community. However, the demands of modern life often challenge the rigid interpretations of traditional laws, leading to the need for innovative approaches that can balance the teachings of Islam with contemporary family dynamics (Fonseca et al., 2020). Flexi-Parenting, as a new approach to parenting, offers a promising solution to this challenge by promoting flexibility in parental roles while still adhering to the core principles of Shariah (Goagoses et al., 2023).

In many Muslim-majority countries, the application of Islamic family law is regulated through various legal frameworks that often integrate Shariah principles into national laws (Fauzi et al., 2020; Asman and Ahmed, 2023; Daniela et al., 2024; Hana and Lubis, 2024). For example, in Indonesia, the Compilation of Islamic Law (Kompilasi Hukum Islam or KHI) governs aspects of marriage, divorce, child custody, and inheritance (Aditya and Waddington, 2021). Similarly, other Muslim countries like Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt have their own legal systems incorporating Shariah guidelines for family matters (Amrullah, 2022; Fikri et al., 2023; Alam and Miah, 2024; Bhatti et al., 2024; Aziz et al., 2024). These regulations provide a legal framework for marriage, gender roles, and child-rearing, which are aligned with Islamic teachings. However, these laws are often perceived as rigid and do not always accommodate the changing roles and responsibilities of parents in modern families. Consequently, there is a need to explore more flexible interpretations of these laws to better address contemporary family structures.

One of the most pressing issues in this context is how Flexi-Parenting, a modern parenting approach, can be reconciled with traditional Islamic values (Han et al., 2022). Flexi-Parenting encourages shared parenting responsibilities between both parents, offering flexibility in balancing work and family life (Gur and Reich, 2023). This concept has the potential to empower both fathers and mothers to take an active role in the upbringing of their children, which is in line with Shariah's emphasis on the moral and spiritual development of children. Islamic teachings stress the importance of mutual respect, cooperation, and shared responsibility between parents. However, the application of such an approach within the framework of existing family laws often encounters challenges, especially regarding gender roles and the distribution of familial duties.

Moreover, there is a growing recognition of the importance of aligning parenting practices with broader global objectives, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs emphasize family well-being, gender equality, quality education, and social cohesion. Flexi-Parenting offers a unique opportunity to address these global goals within the context of Islamic family law. By promoting a more balanced approach to parental roles, Flexi-Parenting can contribute to achieving SDGs, particularly in terms of gender equality and reduced inequalities within families. However, to achieve these objectives, it is crucial to explore how Islamic principles can be integrated into modern parenting approaches while remaining consistent with legal frameworks such as the KHI and similar regulations in other countries.

This research aims to explore the intersection of Islamic family law, Shariah principles, and contemporary parenting practices through the lens of Flexi-Parenting. Specifically, the study will examine how Flexi-Parenting can support the achievement of SDGs, particularly those

related to family well-being, gender equality, and social cohesion. Additionally, the research will analyze the challenges and opportunities in adapting Islamic family law to accommodate this modern parenting approach. Given the evolving nature of family life, this study will provide valuable insights into how Islamic teachings can remain relevant and applicable in contemporary society while still adhering to established legal and regulatory frameworks. Ultimately, this research seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on how traditional values can coexist with modern societal needs, fostering sustainable family structures and ensuring the well-being of future generations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have explored the integration of Islamic values with modern parenting practices (Idris et al., 2024). Traditional Islamic family law emphasizes the roles and duties of parents, especially the father as the primary provider and protector and the mother as the primary caregiver (Nafisah et al., 2024). However, modern family dynamics have introduced new challenges, such as dual-income households and changing gender roles. Flexi-Parenting, a more adaptable parenting model, provides a potential solution (Dwinandita, 2024). It seeks to maintain the core principles of Shariah while adapting to the practical realities of modern parenting, offering flexibility in how parents share responsibilities. Research shows that such flexibility supports children's overall development, including emotional, intellectual, and physical growth, and strengthens family relationships (Illingworth, 2010).

The integration of Islamic values with modern parenting practices has been a subject of increasing scholarly interest. Traditional Islamic family law, derived from Shariah, has long outlined clear roles for parents within the family structure (Sholeh et al., 2021). In this framework, the father is generally seen as the primary provider and protector, while the mother is considered the primary caregiver responsible for nurturing and raising children (Illingworth, 2010; Daniela et al., 2024; Ani et al., 2024; Hana and Lubis, 2024). These roles have been deeply rooted in Islamic teachings and are considered essential for maintaining a harmonious family unit. However, as societies have evolved, the roles of both parents in family life have transformed. Modern family dynamics, such as dual-income households, working mothers, and shifting gender expectations, present new challenges to the conventional understanding of parental roles in Islamic law.

In recent years, these traditional views have been increasingly questioned, leading to the exploration of more flexible parenting models. One such model is Flexi-Parenting, which advocates for a more adaptable approach to family roles, allowing both parents to share responsibilities in a way that suits their individual circumstances. Flexi-Parenting is seen as an innovative way to align Islamic teachings with the realities of contemporary family life. The model maintains the core principles of Shariah, such as mutual respect, cooperation, and the importance of child-rearing, while promoting flexibility in the distribution of parenting duties (Aziz et al., 2024). This approach is particularly relevant in today's society, where both parents often engage in paid employment, necessitating a rethinking of traditional family roles.

A growing body of research has highlighted the benefits of flexible parenting styles, particularly in terms of children's development. Studies indicate that shared parental responsibilities lead to better emotional, intellectual, and physical growth for children. When

both parents contribute equally to the upbringing of their children, the emotional bonds between family members are strengthened, fostering a more supportive and cohesive family environment. Additionally, children in these family settings tend to experience a more balanced perspective on gender roles and responsibilities, which aligns with the broader goals of promoting gender equality and social cohesion. Thus, Flexi-Parenting does not only support individual family units but also contributes to the broader social good (Asman, 2020; Dwinandita, 2024).

Incorporating Islamic values into the Flexi-Parenting model has sparked debates among scholars and practitioners regarding the balance between traditional teachings and contemporary needs. Some argue that the flexibility offered by the model may conflict with certain interpretations of Islamic family law, which tend to emphasize fixed roles based on gender. On the other hand, many scholars suggest that Islamic principles can be applied in a flexible manner to accommodate modern family structures without undermining the foundational values of Shariah. This view supports the idea that Islamic family law is not static but rather can evolve to address contemporary challenges while staying true to its ethical and moral framework (Hendriati and Okvitawanli, 2019).

Ultimately, the literature reveals a growing consensus on the importance of adapting Islamic family law to modern societal needs, particularly in terms of parenting. Flexi-Parenting provides an innovative solution that promotes flexibility while maintaining adherence to core Islamic principles. As family structures continue to evolve, further research is needed to explore how Islamic family law can be adapted to support more balanced and equitable parenting models, ensuring that Islamic teachings remain relevant and applicable in the modern world. The existing research shares similarities with this study, as both aim to explore the integration of Islamic principles with modern family dynamics, emphasizing the importance of flexibility in parenting. However, this study distinguishes itself by focusing specifically on the concept of Flexi-Parenting as a potential solution to the challenges faced by contemporary families, and by linking it directly to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While previous studies have highlighted the benefits of flexible parenting, this research uniquely contributes to the discourse by analyzing how Flexi-Parenting can promote family well-being, gender equality, and social cohesion in line with global development objectives. Thus, this study builds on existing literature while introducing a fresh perspective on the practical application of Islamic family law in modern family settings.

METHODS

This study uses qualitative research methods (Creswell, 2014; Dartanto et al., 2020; Boda, 2022; Baran and Sawrikar, 2024; Cuervo et al., 2024; Enayati et al., 2024; Cakir and Harmanci Seren, 2024), with a focus on both literature review and case studies, to explore the integration of Islamic family law with modern parenting practices, specifically through the concept of Flexi-Parenting. The literature review examines scholarly articles, books, and other relevant sources that address the intersection of Shariah principles and contemporary family dynamics. It critically analyzes how traditional Islamic family law addresses parenting roles and how modern challenges, such as dual-income households and shifting gender norms, influence the implementation of Islamic values in parenting.

Case studies are conducted to understand the real-world application of Flexi-Parenting in diverse family structures. These case studies include families from different socio-economic backgrounds, focusing on how they balance traditional Islamic teachings with modern parenting needs (Eliason and Ohlsson, 2013; Konrad et al., 2023; Pawlewicz and Senetra, 2024; Sotelo-Salas et al., 2024; Arbolino et al., 2024). Through in-depth interviews and observations, the study gathers insights into how families practice Flexi-Parenting, identifying the strategies they use to harmonize the roles of both parents while ensuring adherence to Shariah principles. This approach allows for a detailed understanding of how Flexi-Parenting can be practically implemented and its effects on family relationships and children's development.

The study also explores the potential of Flexi-Parenting in contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in the areas of gender equality and family well-being (Abdullah et al., 2023; Adnan et al., 2024; Ahmad et al., 2024; Ahmed and Riaz, 2024). By analyzing the flexibility in parenting roles, the research assesses how the equal distribution of responsibilities between parents can promote gender equity, reduce inequalities within families, and improve overall family cohesion. The integration of these principles within Flexi-Parenting is analyzed in relation to SDG targets, including those focused on quality education, reduced inequalities, and promoting peaceful and inclusive societies.

Data collection for this study combines qualitative methods, such as semi-structured interviews with parents, community leaders, and religious scholars, as well as participant observation within family settings. This allows the study to gain a nuanced perspective on how Flexi-Parenting is practiced in everyday life and how it aligns with Islamic values. In addition, the study examines the role of local religious authorities and government institutions in supporting or hindering the adoption of Flexi-Parenting practices.

The analysis employs thematic coding to identify recurring patterns and themes from the interviews and case studies, linking these findings to the broader discussion on the role of Flexi-Parenting in modern Islamic family law. The research then interprets the findings in the context of Shariah principles and SDG goals, providing a comprehensive understanding of how Islamic family law can be adapted to meet contemporary needs while promoting social harmony and sustainability. This methodology ensures that the study offers a well-rounded perspective on the practical application and implications of Flexi-Parenting in today's world.

RESULTS

The findings from this study reveal that the concept of Flexi-Parenting is highly effective in addressing the evolving challenges of modern family life, especially in the context of Islamic teachings. One of the primary advantages identified is its ability to promote a balanced approach to parenting. By integrating flexibility into traditional roles, Flexi-Parenting ensures that both parents contribute equally to child-rearing responsibilities, which fosters cooperation and mutual respect (Coloroso, 2005; Illingworth, 2010; Han et al., 2022, 2022; Gur and Reich, 2023; Herlina et al., 2024; Gur and Reich, 2023). This balance supports a healthier family environment, where both the mother and father can fulfill their obligations while respecting each other's roles and limitations.

Islamic principles, particularly those related to shared parental responsibilities, were maintained across the families studied. Participants emphasized that Flexi-Parenting allowed them to adapt their practices to the realities of modern life while remaining grounded in Shariah teachings. The approach also encourages mutual respect between parents, a core tenet of Islamic family law. This mutual respect is instrumental in reducing conflicts and improving communication between parents, which in turn positively influences the overall family dynamic.

Moreover, Flexi-Parenting accommodates the diverse needs of children, which include emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and physical growth. Parents reported that by allowing each parent to take an active role in different aspects of child-rearing, children's development was more holistic. Children in families practicing Flexi-Parenting tended to exhibit better emotional regulation, stronger intellectual curiosity, and healthier relationships with both parents. This approach ensures that each child's individual needs are met in a way that aligns with Islamic values, which emphasize compassion, fairness, and understanding.

Flexi-Parenting is also in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in the areas of gender equality, quality education, and reducing inequalities within families (Abobaker, 2024; Aboelazm et al., 2024; Ahyani, 2024b; Alafeef, 2025). By promoting equal parental involvement, this approach contributes to gender equality, as both mothers and fathers share parenting responsibilities more equally. This shift challenges traditional gender roles and promotes the idea that both men and women are equally capable of fulfilling both the nurturing and providing roles in a family. This change not only supports the gender equality SDG but also fosters a more equitable family structure.

Parents practicing Flexi-Parenting reported improved family dynamics, particularly in terms of communication and cooperation (Coloroso, 2005; Gur and Reich, 2023; Herlina et al., 2024, 2024). The ability to adapt to the needs of each family member has been shown to reduce tension and conflict, resulting in a more peaceful home environment. With both parents more actively engaged in decision-making and child-rearing, the family unit becomes stronger and more resilient, leading to better outcomes for both parents and children. Parents noted that they felt more supported in their roles, which enhanced their overall well-being.

An important finding was the significant increase in parental involvement, particularly from fathers. In traditional settings, fathers often had a more limited role in daily caregiving and nurturing. However, Flexi-Parenting encourages fathers to take on more responsibility, not only in providing financially but also in the emotional and physical care of their children. This shift in responsibility contributed to a stronger father-child bond and a more balanced parenting dynamic, ensuring that both parents are equally involved in their children's upbringing.

Furthermore, better developmental outcomes for children were observed in families practicing Flexi-Parenting. These outcomes were not limited to academic success, but also included emotional stability, stronger social skills, and healthier relationships within the family. Parents reported that their children exhibited greater empathy and understanding, qualities that are highly valued in Islamic teachings. The flexibility allowed in parenting styles enabled parents to cater to the evolving needs of their children, which is crucial in a fast-paced, ever-changing world.

The findings also show that Flexi-Parenting helps address the specific challenges posed by dual-income households. With both parents working, it can be difficult to find time to balance work and family life. Flexi-Parenting provides a solution by offering flexibility in how parents divide their time and responsibilities, ensuring that both career and family life are prioritized without compromising the well-being of the children. This balance allows for a healthier work-life equilibrium, contributing to the mental and physical health of both parents.

Additionally, Flexi-Parenting aligns with Islamic views on parental roles, ensuring that Islamic values are upheld while addressing the practical realities of modern life. The concept encourages parents to collaborate and support each other in their duties, reflecting the mutual responsibilities and cooperation emphasized in the Quran and Hadith. This synergy between Islamic teachings and contemporary family dynamics provides a sustainable model for modern families (Lahilote and Subeitan, 2024; Sa'adah and Sairazi, 2024; Susperreguy et al., 2024).

Another significant finding was that Flexi-Parenting fosters an environment of inclusivity and respect for all family members (Adnani et al., 2022; Halimatusa'diyah and Triana, 2024; Shafira et al., 2024). By adopting a flexible approach to parenting, families can more easily navigate diverse challenges, such as health issues, financial constraints, or other family-specific situations. Parents are better equipped to adapt to changing circumstances, ensuring that the family remains united and supportive. This adaptability is crucial for maintaining social cohesion within the family and broader community.

In conclusion, the results of this study demonstrate that Flexi-Parenting offers an effective, balanced approach to modern parenting while preserving core Islamic values. It ensures that both parents share equal responsibilities, which leads to improved family dynamics, better child development outcomes, and alignment with the SDGs. Through its adaptability and emphasis on mutual respect, Flexi-Parenting offers a pathway for families to thrive in the contemporary world while remaining rooted in Shariah principles.

DISCUSSION

Flexi-Parenting offers a unique solution by bridging the gap between traditional Islamic family law and modern societal needs. It demonstrates how Islamic values can be applied in a contemporary family setting, accommodating the changing roles of both parents. The flexibility inherent in this approach supports children's overall development and strengthens family bonds. However, it is crucial to ensure that Flexi-Parenting maintains the core teachings of Islam while adapting to the practical realities of modern life. The role of religious education, community support, and awareness-raising about Flexi-Parenting is essential for its successful implementation.

The concept of Flexi-Parenting provides a promising solution to the challenges faced by modern families, particularly in balancing the principles of Islamic family law with contemporary societal needs. Traditional Islamic family law places significant emphasis on the roles of parents, particularly the father as the provider and protector, and the mother as the caregiver. However, these roles have evolved in response to social changes, such as dual-income households and shifting gender roles. Flexi-Parenting offers a model that maintains the

essence of Islamic values while adapting to the realities of modern family life, ensuring that both parents share responsibilities in child-rearing.

One of the primary benefits of Flexi-Parenting is its flexibility, which allows parents to adapt their roles according to their individual strengths and the evolving needs of their children. This approach fosters a more balanced family dynamic, where both the mother and father contribute to various aspects of parenting, including emotional, intellectual, and physical development. The result is a more cooperative and supportive parenting environment that positively influences children's growth and well-being. Furthermore, this model strengthens family bonds, as both parents are equally invested in nurturing their children, which aligns with the Islamic values of mutual respect and cooperation.

In practice, Flexi-Parenting supports children's overall development by addressing their diverse needs. As parents share responsibilities, children benefit from a holistic approach to parenting. Research findings show that children in Flexi-Parenting households exhibit better emotional stability, social skills, and academic performance. This aligns with Islamic teachings that emphasize the importance of nurturing all aspects of a child's growth—physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual. Flexi-Parenting ensures that these developmental needs are met in a way that is consistent with Islamic principles.

However, for Flexi-Parenting to be successfully implemented, it is essential to maintain the core teachings of Islam. The flexibility of this parenting approach should not undermine fundamental Islamic values such as mutual respect, shared responsibility, and the importance of both parents in raising children. While it is important to accommodate modern family dynamics, this must be done in a way that remains grounded in the ethical and moral foundations of Islamic law. Parents and caregivers must ensure that their actions align with the teachings of the Quran and Hadith, preserving the integrity of Islamic family law.

The role of religious education is crucial in the successful adoption of Flexi-Parenting. For parents to navigate the balance between modernity and tradition, they must be educated about how Islamic teachings can be applied in contemporary contexts. Religious education should emphasize the importance of shared responsibilities, respect for one another, and the holistic development of children. Through this, parents can gain a deeper understanding of how to incorporate Islamic values into their parenting practices, ensuring that they remain in line with Shariah principles.

Community support also plays a significant role in the successful implementation of Flexi-Parenting. Families need access to resources and networks that can help them navigate the challenges of modern parenting while staying true to Islamic teachings. Communities can provide educational programs, workshops, and counseling services to support parents in adopting the Flexi-Parenting model. Furthermore, the involvement of community leaders in promoting this approach can help raise awareness about its benefits and encourage more families to embrace it.

An important aspect of implementing Flexi-Parenting successfully is raising awareness within society. Many families may be unfamiliar with the concept or may feel uncertain about how to integrate it into their daily lives. Public campaigns, seminars, and media outreach can help inform the wider community about the advantages of this model, dispelling misconceptions

and encouraging families to adopt flexible parenting styles. This can also contribute to a broader societal shift toward more balanced and equitable family structures, in line with Islamic principles.

Despite the potential benefits, there are challenges associated with implementing Flexi-Parenting. One major challenge is the resistance from more traditional segments of society who may be reluctant to change long-standing gender roles within the family. In these cases, it is important to highlight the flexibility within Islamic law, which allows for adaptation to new circumstances without compromising core values. By demonstrating how Flexi-Parenting aligns with Islamic principles, advocates can help overcome resistance and encourage more families to adopt this model.

Another challenge is the lack of standardized guidelines or frameworks for practicing Flexi-Parenting. While the concept offers a flexible approach, there is no clear blueprint for how parents should divide responsibilities or balance their roles. This lack of structure can lead to confusion or inconsistency in its implementation. To address this issue, further research and the development of practical guidelines are needed to help families implement Flexi-Parenting effectively. These guidelines should provide clarity on how to integrate Islamic teachings with modern parenting practices, ensuring a coherent and unified approach.

Flexi-Parenting also has significant implications for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in promoting gender equality and family well-being. By encouraging both parents to take active roles in child-rearing, Flexi-Parenting contributes to gender equality within the family. It challenges traditional gender roles by empowering both mothers and fathers to contribute equally to their children's upbringing. This shift aligns with SDG 5, which aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Additionally, the holistic development of children, supported by Flexi-Parenting, contributes to SDG 4, which seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all. As children benefit from a more balanced and nurturing environment, they are better positioned to succeed academically and socially. Furthermore, the promotion of strong family bonds and shared responsibilities helps reduce inequalities within families, addressing SDG 10, which aims to reduce inequalities and promote social inclusion.

In conclusion, the findings of this study demonstrate that Flexi-Parenting is a viable solution to the challenges of modern family life, providing a balanced and flexible approach to parenting that aligns with Islamic teachings. However, for its successful implementation, it is essential to maintain core Islamic values while adapting to contemporary family dynamics. The role of religious education, community support, and awareness-raising is critical in ensuring that Flexi-Parenting can be effectively integrated into modern family structures, contributing to the well-being of families and the achievement of the SDGs.

CONCLUSION

The Flexi-Parenting approach presents a valuable model for addressing the challenges modern families face while maintaining alignment with Islamic values. It successfully bridges the gap between traditional Islamic family law and contemporary family dynamics, offering a flexible and balanced framework for sharing parenting responsibilities. This approach helps to foster

family well-being, ensuring that both parents contribute equally to the upbringing of their children, which is in line with Islamic teachings on shared parental roles.

Furthermore, Flexi-Parenting plays a crucial role in promoting gender equality by encouraging both mothers and fathers to take active, collaborative roles in child-rearing. This supports the broader objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to gender equality and reducing inequalities within families. The approach also contributes to creating stronger, more cohesive family units, fostering social inclusion, and improving the emotional and developmental outcomes for children.

In addition, Flexi-Parenting strengthens the application of Islamic principles in modern family life by ensuring that the core values of mutual respect, cooperation, and holistic child development are upheld. It addresses the evolving needs of contemporary families without compromising the essence of Shariah, making it a relevant and sustainable solution for families in a rapidly changing world.

Despite its potential, the successful implementation of Flexi-Parenting requires continuous community engagement, religious education, and the development of practical guidelines. As society continues to evolve, further research and awareness-raising initiatives are necessary to refine and promote this approach globally, ensuring that it effectively supports families in maintaining both Islamic values and modern parenting practices.

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