

CHILDREN'S CHARACTER BUILDING METHOD IN ISLAM: ANALYSIS OF SURAH LUQMAN

**Khairul Azhar Meerangani¹
Muhammad Hilmi Mat Johar²
Abdul Muhaimin Abu Bakar²
AbdulQayuum Abdul Razak¹**

Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Melaka¹
Kolej Universiti Islam Melaka²

Abstract

Children are gift and trust given by God to selected people called parents. Every child is born in a state of purity from any stain. Therefore, parents play a very important role in shaping the character of their children in God's favor. The Quran records the wisdom of a father named Luqman in shaping his son's character. Luqman's perseverance in educating his children to be a good and responsible person has been used as a guide for today's parents in shaping their children's personality according to Islamic way of life. This is because the educational model implemented by Luqman is easy to follow, neat and organized. This study was conducted qualitatively with a review of the classical and contemporary texts on the interpretation of verses 13-19 of surah Luqman, and analyzed inductively to produce a general guide on the method of character formation of Islamic children. Hopefully, this guide will serve as a reference model for parents who are still looking for the best way to raise and educate their children in these challenging days.

Keywords: *Method, Character, Luqman, Wisdom, Education*

Abstrak

Kanak-kanak adalah anugerah dan kepercayaan yang diberikan oleh Allah kepada orang-orang terpilih yang dipanggil ibu bapa. Setiap kanak-kanak dilahirkan dalam keadaan suci dari mana-mana kotoran. Oleh itu, ibu bapa memainkan peranan yang sangat penting dalam membentuk watak anak-anak mereka memihak kepada Tuhan. Al-Quran merakamkan kebijaksanaan seorang bapa bernama Luqman dalam membentuk watak anaknya. Kegigihan Luqman dalam mendidik anak-anaknya supaya menjadi insan yang baik dan bertanggungjawab telah dijadikan panduan untuk ibu bapa hari ini dalam membentuk keperibadian anak-anak mereka mengikut cara hidup Islam. Ini kerana model pendidikan yang dilaksanakan Luqman mudah diikuti, kemas dan teratur. Kajian ini dijalankan secara kualitatif dengan mengkaji semula teks-teks klasik dan kontemporari mengenai tafsiran ayat-ayat 13-19 surah Luqman, dan dianalisis secara induktif untuk menghasilkan panduan umum mengenai kaedah pembentukan keperibadian kanak-kanak Islam. Semoga panduan ini akan menjadi model rujukan kepada ibu bapa yang masih mencari jalan terbaik untuk membesarkan dan mendidik anak-anak mereka pada hari-hari yang mencabar ini.

Kata kunci: *Kaedah, Watak, Luqman, Kebijaksanaan, Pendidikan*

INTRODUCTION

Education plays an important role in shaping one's thinking and behavior. Therefore, this element needs to be given careful attention so that the process of forming children as useful human capital can be realized. Education in Islam is not limited to physical training but it also involves other aspects such as emotion and intellect. Each of these aspects is closely related to each other in establishing a balance in the formation of one's personality (Abdul Mukti, 2018). Children are a valuable asset not only to their parents but also to future generations of national leaders. Therefore, superior character and personality need to be developed from childhood to prepare them for future challenges. Proper and quality educational techniques will definitely produce a competitive and self-sufficient generation. The foundation of this formation is the role and responsibility of each parent in making the education more effective. This is pointed out by Wahyudin who states that one of the main factors contributing to social problems among adolescents is parenting failure. He stated that:

Therefore, it can be said that the major causes of moral collapse are parental neglect, education, guidance and control by parents or guardians. In addition, the stress of life, the pursuit of luxury and involvement in other social activities had left parents and children do not have enough time or opportunity to speak, discuss, and interact with each other. There were also rarely meet face to face. This causes teens to lead their own lives without parental guidance and supervision” (Wahyudin, 2017)

Islam has provided a clear guide to the process of children's education from birth to adulthood. The first principle that should be given to children is an introduction to God that has created them and trailed with the application of Shariah and moral values in guiding them in their life in this world. This concept can be clearly seen in the Quran through the educational method implemented by a father named Luqman on his son. Thus, this study focuses on the early childhood education techniques applied by Luqman as a guide in the formation of the character of children based on Islam. This study was conducted qualitatively with a review of the classical and contemporary texts on the interpretation of verses 13-19 of surah Luqman, and analyzed inductively to produce a general guide on the method of character formation of Islamic children. The advice and guidance given by Luqman to his son has covered three major facets of Islam: faith, sharia and morality. Therefore, this method should be given attention in order to apply it to today's children's education.

LUQMAN'S BACKGROUND

Luqman's Surah is the 31st according to the order in the Quran and contains 34 verses. It is called Luqman because in this surah Allah narrates the story of a man named Luqman from verses 12 to 19. Luqman is known as a man who has been given by Allah with wisdom and praiseworthy. Al-Syawkani states that his real name was Luqman bin Ba'uran bin Nahur bin Tarakh. He is said to have lived before the time of the Prophet Daud and was a reference to the public in religious matters. But after Daud was sent, he stopped giving the fatwa and became the disciple of Daud. Scholars have different views on whether he is a prophet or a righteous man. However, most of them viewed him as a righteous man who has been given special privileges by Allah (Wahbah, 2009). Luqman was a dark-skinned man from Sudan. Allah has elevated his position based on the level of knowledge and piety he possessed disregard his appearance and origin. Both of these elements are important indicators that serve as the basis for God's judgment on His servants as explained in the following verses:

O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you clans and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted. (Surah al-Hujuraat 49: 13)

Luqman is an ordinary human being adorned with a variety of praises. All responsibilities given are carried out in a trustworthy and honest manner. His humbleness and modesty are the reasons that Allah elevated his pride (al-Jawzi, 1995). Luqman's perseverance in instilling moral values and guiding his family members in the way that God desires should be considered an icon for today's society.

METHOD OF CREATING CHILDREN CHARACTERS ACCORDING TO ISLAM

Living in a world full of challenges and expectations requires a high level of commitment in realizing every parent's hope for virtuous children. This desire requires the continuous and quality care process (Rosnaaini&Suhanim, 2015). Luqman's ability to educate his children based on the techniques mentioned has the potential to be developed in an effort to provide a structured model to guide parents in shaping their children's personality. The key element of Luqman's technique is the effective communication that is implemented in every activity with his son. Communication in the form of daily conversations, body movements and harmonious discussions should be taken into account the background and position of each of the parties involved in ensuring that the communication does not deviate from the set objectives. In this regard, Islam has shown that some methods of communication that considered appropriate to be applied in constructing effective relationships as His word:

Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided. (Surah al-Nahl 16: 125)

According to Sayyid Qutb, communicating intelligently requires observation and examination of situations and realities when the target group is using appropriate and effective communication techniques (SayidQutb, 1996). The methods of advising are also applied through gentle communication that can penetrate the human soul rather than through the threat and pressure that can humiliate them for all they have done. Based on Luqman's verses 13-19, it is possible to formulate 6 effective methods of communication that can serve as a guiding model in shaping children's early character. Although the debate on Luqman's advice touches on educational matters, the aspects that will be emphasized in this paper will be on communication as one of the most important factors in the relationship between parents and children. The summary of the method is as follows:

a) Call

In the ongoing communication between Luqman and his son, it is evidently showed that he started the conversation by choosing a sweet and gentle call to his son. The call ((يُنِّي)) which means this beloved child shows us the love and concern that a sincere father has in raising his child (Abdullah, 1994). Luqman were found to have used the sweet call on his son 3 times in verses 13, 16 and 17. This indicates that the call was not a mere coincidence but reflects Luqman's thoroughness. Parents should choose the right words in every communication with their children's. The use of bad terms towards children will only makes them more harsh and difficult to accept. That's why every parent should choose a good name for their children because each of these names can affect the personality of each child. Aisyah RA states that the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) often changed the names of his best-known companions that have bad meaning to good names (al-Tirmidhi, t.t).

Every word that comes out of the mouth of a parent is a prayer that has a precious value in the sight of God. Abdullah bin Mubarak was approached by a man who complained about his son's misconduct that led him pray for harm onto his son. Abdullah further stated that the man had actually damaged his son with the prayer (al-Ghazali, 2005). This is based on the words of the Messenger of Allah:

Three supplications are answered, there being no doubt about them; that of a father, that of a traveller and that of one who has been wronged. (Abu Dawud no. 1536)

Al-Munsyawi (2007) tells the story of a famous Quranic scholar, Imam al-Zamakhsyari with his mother. As a child, al-Zamakhsyari, like other rugged children, played with a bird by tying the bird's feet. However, the tie was loosed causing the bird to fall into a hole and break its leg. Her mother who was sad and disappointed to see the incident unknowingly prayed for her son to be punished in the same way as the bird. After growing up, al-Zamakhsyari became a well-known scholar and traveled extensively in search of knowledge. In one of his trips to Bukhara, he fell from his back, causing his leg to break and had to be amputated. He limped to the end of his life and had to walk with the help of a stick. This story shows us how the words coming out of the parent's mouth can influence the formation of the children's character.

Therefore, in addition to using good calls, parents also need to be careful with every word that comes out of their mouth, especially in their uneven emotional state as it can have a huge impact on their children's lives. Anas bin Malik RA recounted his experience of serving with the Messenger of Allah. According to him, he never be reprimanded or criticized by him even though at times he did not do a good job. He even forbade members of Anas's family from ridiculing or speaking harshly to him (Ahmad, 1998). This is because scolding and ridicule do not actually have a positive effect but can be lead to children's self-esteem and emotional insecure (Nurhadia&Mahsyar, 2019). The example set by the Messenger of Allah in the care of children should be emulated and applied by every parent today.

b) Symbolize

Advice using the method of symbolization makes the advice deeper and easier to understand by the target audience. In verse 18, Luqman reminds his son of the importance of manners while interacting with others:

And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly. Indeed, Allah does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful. (Surah Luqman 31: 18)

Al-Syawkani (1993) states that the pronunciation (تَصَعَّرَ وَلَا) in the verse is derived from the word (الصعر) which refers to the camel suffering from neck pain (spasms / sprains) so that it is not possible to turn his neck in the other direction. Luqman's message to his son when further refined proved to be of high moral value. The arrogance and tendency to look down on others of different positions only create a gap in a relationship. The Messenger of Allah himself received a special reprimand from Allah when he turned his face to accept the presence of a blind friend named Abdullah bin UmamiMaktum. The presence of Abdullah, who wished to study about Islam with the Messenger of Allah, who at the same time was paying attention to persuade the Quraysh delegation to Islam, was considered to be a bit disturbing, which led him turning his attention away from Abdullah in a bitter face. It was not pleasing to Allah even though Abdullah was not affected by it because of his blind condition. But Allah wants to educate His Messenger and all Muslims on the importance of good manners. The incident was so affecting the Prophet that he used to honor Abdullah whenever he met him, saying:

Welcome to the person whose cause I am reprimanded by my Lord.

The same applies to the intonation and language aspects of speech. Luqman forbids his son from raising his voice when he speaks more than he needs by comparing it to a donkey-like voice as stated in the following sentence:

And be moderate in your pace and lower your voice; indeed, the most disagreeable of sounds is the voice of donkeys. (Surah Luqman 31: 19)

Arab society often uses the metaphor of a donkey when it is offensive or insulting by relying on the many bad traits it has on its abusive individual (Wan Nurulhuda, 2011). Therefore, the selection of donkeys to be compared to those who prefer to yell and raise their voices against others actually reflects the disadvantages of such behavior that society dislikes (*ibid.*). Honoring others while speaking with gentleness and with a smile on their face is one of the manners demanded in Islam. From Abu Dhar al-Ghifari RA, the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) said:

Do not disdain a good deed, (no matter how small it may seem) even if it is your meeting with your (Muslim) brother with a cheerful face. (Muslim no. 2626)

This is because with a cheerful face and gentle words, one is able to persuade others to receive advice and reprimand. It will even give a positive initial impression to the individual receiving the treat even if the conversation has not yet begun. Abu Hurairah RA stated that the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) said:

Verily, you cannot enrich all of the people with your wealth, but rather you enrich them with your cheerful faces and good character (al-Bayhaqi no. 7567).

The message of advice conveyed using this method of symbolization can make the advice clearer and more organized to reach the target audience. Bad habits that are instilled with animals indirectly teach children to maintain the dignity of being endowed by Allah by nurturing the good deeds and courtesy among humans. In addition, it is also a form of caution that every child strives to avoid becoming a source of blasphemy and ridicule by maintaining good manners when in a large group.

c) Repetition

To ensure that every advice given is firmly embedded in the minds of children, constant prompt must be given to ensure that it does not be forgotten. In this Luqman surah, we learn how to educate children by repeating four things consistently, which is the prohibition of shirk and the gratitude to Allah. In verse 13, Luqman warns his son about the dangers of shirk to Allah:

And [mention, O Muhammad], when Luqman said to his son while he was instructing him, "O my son, do not associate [anything] with Allah . Indeed, association [with him] is great injustice.

The warning regarding the dangers of shirk is also repeated by Luqman in verse 15 but in different contexts involves the priority of giving obedience to God in the event of a clash with the parents. Emphasis on the fundamental elements of the faith is important as faith-based education is a key pillar of the rule of Islamic teaching (Rosnaaini&Suhanim, 2015). In fact, shirk is also a form of great evil that should be avoided as much as possible because this practice causes every good deed to be rejected by God and be the reason to be thrown into hell forever (al-Syawkani, 1993).

In addition, Luqman also taught his children to express gratitude for all the blessings God has given them. This is as stated in verse 12:

And We had certainly given Luqman wisdom [and said], "Be grateful to Allah." And whoever is grateful is grateful for [the benefit of] himself. And whoever denies [His favor] - then indeed, Allah is Free of need and Praiseworthy.

Gratitude is an essential attribute for furthering one's personal noble. Every human being should express gratitude to God by increasing obedience to him. There are too many favors Allah has

given to each of his servants regardless of whether they obey or disobey His commands. This is as stated in the following verse:

And if you should count the favors of Allah, you could not enumerate them. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. (Surah al-Nahl 16: 18)

Luqman repeated the same suggestion in verse 14, but this time the recommendation to be grateful to parents was also specified. This is because parents are the gift from Allah which is the cause of existence of children in this world. Therefore, obedience to parents should be given priority over all the pleasantness and sacrifices they have shed (Nooraini, 2013). However, each parent should also first set the best example by performing the virtue to their parents. This good example can be more easily absorbed in the children's lives and motivates them to do the same for their parents. Thus, the two elements mentioned, the prohibition of shirk and the grateful urges, are of utmost importance in the educational aspect of children as a key element in strengthening their identity in religious matters.

d) Explanation

Every order or prohibition issued by parents should be accompanied by reasonable arguments and explanation for facilitating the children's understanding. This method has been practiced by Luqman in explaining justification for children to appreciate the sacrifice of their parents, namely:

And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final].

In that verse, Luqman explains that mothers have endured many hardships and difficulties from early pregnancy to childbirth. This justification is a form of reinforcing argument to give children a sense of concern about the matter. Sometimes some children will refuse to carry out an instruction because they do not know the reason behind the instructions. Some parents prefer to force their children to accept all the instructions without asking too much. This will create rebellion in their young minds and make it difficult for them to accept and obey the instructions (Nekuei, A. & Nekuei, E., 2016). Therefore, every parent should strive to provide clarity in every piece of guidance and advice given to children in an effort to ensure that every one of them is accepted with willing and open mind.

e) Attention

While the various elements of education have been put into practice to the children, one thing parents should pay attention to is the regular monitoring and supervision of their children until they grow up. Some parents do provide good education for their children, but they often overlook to assess the extent to which education affects children due to their busy lives and other matters. This makes them grow up without any reprimand to correct their mistakes (Abd Basyir, 2015). In verse 13 of Luqman's chapter, we can see how Luqman is still monitoring his son's progress by giving him various advice without hesitation even though some of his advice is already understood by his son as stated below:

And [mention, O Muhammad], when Luqman said to his son while he was instructing him.

In addition, parents should spend quality time with their children to create warm and friendly relationships with them. It is because of today's busy parents that many children feel left out and eventually find comfort elsewhere to fill the emptiness. 'Aqra' bin Habis al-Tamimi once saw the Messenger of Allah kiss his grandson Hasan and said he never kissed his children. Then he said:

He who does not show mercy to others will not be shown mercy (al-Bukhari no. 5997)

This hadith provides us with useful reminders of the importance of loving children through touches and friendly conversation so that children will feel the love that showed from their parents. Tiredness and weariness should be ignored as the children are a valuable asset to be treasured in the future.

f) Idol Selection

Every child is born in a pure state of purity like a white cloth. Parents play an important role in shaping the best mold for their children in seeking God's preference. Therefore, the shaping of this mold should be initiated by the educator himself as children are more likely to copy and practice something when they see their own practitioner practicing it. Parents as an individual closer to children require them to be the best role models in shaping and educating children to be useful human beings. Action gives more meaning than words. If the father is just a teller but he doesn't do it himself, how can the children follow his instructions in religious appreciation? (Nurul Hidayat, 2016)

Therefore, parents who want their children to behave in a manner that is commendable should first ensure that they have those attitudes. This is because children who are used to seeing their parents' bad behavior are not always able to receive good advice from them because they feel that their parents' actions are not in line with their words. Children who are always in a good surrounding will be used to good deeds and morals (Eka Sapti, 2017).

Luqman is a man who has been given the wisdom of knowledge and wisdom of his words, especially when giving advice. He has been a great role model for his son as he has practice every piece of advice that will be delivered to his son. With such a noble personality, Allah elevated him to the point that all the advice he had delivered had been recorded in the Quran as a guide for future generations. In verse 15, Luqman has instilled in his son the importance of following the path of those who return to Allah on the right path as stated in the following verse:

And follow the way of those who turn back to Me [in repentance].

The choices of friends and the good environment also play a major role in shaping children's personalities. Parents should make sure that their children interact with good-natured individuals because the nature of the person can easily influence their close friends as stated by the Messenger of Allah:

A man is upon the religion of his friend, so let one of you look at whom he befriends.
(Abu Daud no. 4833)

Therefore, it is the responsibility of every parent to provide the best model of inclusion in them or in the environment of their children so that their children can absorb the virtues that can be seen from these models. Ignorance in this aspect can cause every child to be trapped in a hostile environment and surroundings that affects their own morals (Katutu & Usman, 2015).

CONCLUSION

The character development of each child needs to start from an early age. Parents should strive to equip themselves with parenting packages including knowledge, good morals and support from close family member. This model of education practiced by Luqman should be one of the key references in shaping the noble personality of each child as it has been acknowledged by Allah to be recorded in the Quran for the past, present and future generations. The essence of Luqman's method of education has always been to adhere to the fundamental principles of Islam in terms of the actual practice of establishing a relationship with Allah and fellow human beings

REFERENCES

- Abd Allah NasihUlwan. (1994).*Tarbiyyah al-Awlad fi al-Islam*. Beirut: Dar al-Islam.
- Abd al-Rahman al-Jawzi. (1995).*Tibb al-Ruhani*. Beirut: Dar al-Fikr.
- Abd Basyir. (2015). "Model Pendidikan KeluargadalamPerspektif al-Quran". *Mu'adalah: JurnalStudi Gender dan Anak*, vol. 3 no. 1.
- Abdul Mukti Baharudin. (2018).*Aulawiyatdalam Pendidikan Anak-Anak: Kajian Terhadap Surah Luqman*. Bangi: Penerbit KUIS.
- Ahmad bin Hanbal. (1998).*Musnad Ahmad*. Riyadh: Bait al-Afkar al-Dawliah.
- Eka SaptiCahyaningrum, Sudaryanti&NurtanioAgusPurwanto. (2017). "Pengembangan Nilai-Nilai Karakter Anak Usia Dini MelaluiPembiasaan dan Keteladanan". *Jurnal Pendidikan Anak*, vol. 6 no. 2.
- Katutu, A. & Usman, A. H. (2015). "Lukman al-Hakim Message: A Theoretical Model on How to Teach in Modern Era". *Mediterranean Journal of Social Science*, vol. 6 no. 6.
- Muhammad bin 'Ali al-Syawkani. (1993).*Fath al-Qadir*. Qahirah: Dar al-Haramayn.
- Muhammad bin Isa al-Tirmidhi. (t.t).*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*. Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif.
- Muhammad bin Muhammad al-Ghazali. (2005).*Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*. Beirut: Dar al-Hazm.
- Muhammad Siddiq al-Munsyawi. (2007).*100 QissahwaQissah fi Birr al-Walidayn*. Qahirah: Dar al-Fadilah.
- Nekuei, A. &Nekuei, E. (2016). "Study of Family's Role in Their Children's Training From the Perspective of the Holy Quran". *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, vol. 5 no. 6.
- Nooraini Othman. (2013). "ExplorasiHubunganantaraPersonalitiIslamik dan Gaya Keibubapaan". *International Journal of Islamic Thought*, vol. 4.
- NurhadiaFitri&Mahsyar Idris. (2019). "Nilai Pendidikan Islam dalam Qur'an Surah Luqman Ayat 1-19: TinjauanKognitif, Afektif dan Psikomotorik". *al-Musannif: Journal of Islamic Education and Teacher Training*, vol. 1 no. 1.
- Nurul Hidayat. (2016). "Konsep Pendidikan Islam Menurut QS Luqman Ayat 12-19". *Ta'allum: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, vol. 4 no. 2.
- Rosnaaini Hamid &Suhanim Abdullah. (2015)*Pendidikan KeibubapaanBerdasarkan Surah Luqman*. Sintok: Penerbit UUM.
- Sayyid Qutb. (1996).*Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*. Beirut: Dar al-Syuruq.
- Wahbah al-Zuhayli. (2009).*Tafsir al-Munir fi al-'Aqidahwa al-Syari'ahwa al-Manhaj*.Damsyik: Dar al-Fikr.
- Wahyudin, W. (2017). "Family Education According to Luqman al-Hakim". *JurnalKeislaman, Kemasyarakatan dan Kebudayaan*vol. 16.
- Wan Nurulhuda Wan Jusoh. (2011). "Metodologi Pendidikan Anak Menurut Surah Luqman. Thesis, Faculty of Education, University of Technology Malaysia.