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The Qur'anic Concept of Fitrah and Its Implications for Early Childhood Development

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Abstract:

This study explores the Qur'anic concept of Fitrah, the innate disposition with which every human is created and its implications for early childhood development. While the term appears in the holy Qur'an and has been discussed by classical scholars such as al-Ghazali and Ibn Taymiyyah, its direct connection to contemporary understandings of child psychology remains underdeveloped. This research examines Qur'anic verses and related Hadith to clarify the meaning of Fitrah, and reviews interpretations in major works of Tafsir. It then places these insights in dialogue with modern theories of childhood development, particularly those of Piaget, Erikson, and Montessori. By comparing Islamic and contemporary perspectives, the study highlights how Fitrah provides a foundation for understanding children's moral, cognitive, and spiritual growth. The findings suggest that recognizing and nurturing Fitrah can enrich early education and parenting practices, contributing a background that values both faith and human potential. In conclusion, this research argues that an integrated approach to child development, one that respects the Qur'anic idea of Fitrah while engaging with modern psychology, can contribute to more holistic models of education in Muslim contexts.

Keywords: *Qur'anic perspective, Fitrah, Early Childhood Development, Islamic Education, Child Psychology, Spiritual Nurturing, Parenting in Islam.*

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

The Qur'anic concept of *Fitrah* provides a profound foundation for understanding human nature, morality, and development within the Islamic worldview. The term *Fitrah*, derived from the Arabic root *fa-ta-ra* meaning “to create” or “to bring forth,” refers to the innate disposition with which every human being is born—an inherent tendency toward truth, goodness, and recognition of the Creator. The holy Qur'an states, “*So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth; [adhere to] the Fitrah of Allah upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be*

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in the creation of Allah”¹. This verse situates *Fitrah* as a divine endowment that grounds moral consciousness and spiritual potential. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) reinforced this understanding, saying, “Every child is born upon *Fitrah*, but his parents make him a Jew, Christian, or Magian”². Together, these sources affirm that human beings begin life in a state of purity and receptivity to divine truth, and that environment, education, and parental influence determine whether this innate nature is preserved or altered.

In the contemporary Muslim world, societies are facing profound moral, intellectual, and spiritual challenges. The anxiety of being left behind in science, education, and cultural development has generated a crisis of confidence, while literalist interpretations of the Qur'an and authoritarian thought patterns have obscured Islam's universal values of justice, compassion, and equality³. This tension reflects a disconnection between material progress and spiritual balance. Within this context, the Qur'anic concept of *Fitrah*—the innate disposition with which every human being is created—emerges as a vital framework for re-establishing harmony between faith, knowledge, and human development. The Qur'an states: “So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth; [adhere to] the *Fitrah* of Allah upon which He has created all people. No change should there be in the creation of Allah”⁴. This verse affirms that *Fitrah* is a divine endowment that inclines humans toward truth, moral integrity, and the recognition of Allah's oneness (*Tawhid*).

From the Islamic perspective, humanity was created as Allah's vicegerent (*khalifah*) on earth and entrusted with both physical and spiritual responsibilities. Allah (SWT) gifted humans with a combination of intellect, emotion, and moral awareness collectively referred to as *Fitrah*. Scholars define *Fitrah* as a state of purity and natural goodness that shapes human potential. Classical scholars⁵ describe it as the innate capacity for faith and righteousness⁶ that guides individuals toward divine truth⁷. One of the most renowned scholars⁸ categorizes interpretations of *Fitrah* into three major views: first, *Fitrah* as Islam itself; second, as monotheism (*tawhid*); and third, as the original human nature instilled at creation. These perspectives

¹ Ar Rum, 30:30.

² Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Janā'iz, ḥadīth no. 1358 (Beirut: Dār Ṭawq al-Najāh, 1422 AH).

³ Sovia, Siti Nur. “Interpretasi kontekstual (Studi Pemikiran Hermeneutik al-Qur'an Abdullah Saeed).” *Dialogia: Jurnal Studi Islam dan Sosial* 13, no. 1 (2015): 52–65.

⁴ Surah ar Rum, 30:30.

⁵ Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid Muhammad. *Ihya' Ulum al-Din [The Revival of the Religious Sciences]*. Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 2000.

⁶ Ibn Taymiyyah, Taqī al-Dīn Ahmad. *Dar' Ta'arud al-'Aql wa al-Naql [The Refutation of the Contradiction between Reason and Revelation]*. Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1995.

⁷ Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, Muhammad. *Madarij al-Salikin [Stations of the Seekers]*. Dammam: Dar Ibn al-Jawzi, 2005.

⁸ Abdurrahman, S. *Teori-Teori Pendidikan Berdasarkan al-Qur'an*. Translated by H. M. Arifin and Zainuddin. Jakarta: Bhineka Cipta, 1990.

collectively emphasize that *Fitrah* encompasses both spiritual orientation and psychological potential. It represents a holistic view of the human being as a moral, intellectual, and spiritual entity whose growth must be nurtured rather than imposed.

The study of *Fitrah* gains renewed significance in the era of globalization, where materialism and secular ideologies often erode the moral and spiritual foundations of education. The modern civilization's imbalance has led to "spiritual disequilibrium," as human potential is underdeveloped when divorced from divine guidance⁹. Their study of *Fitrah* in the Qur'an highlights that humans possess innate creativity and capacity for growth that must be cultivated through moral and spiritual education. Building upon this foundation, the present research extends the discussion by exploring the implications of *Fitrah* for early childhood development, integrating Qur'anic principles with contemporary child psychology. Modern developmental theories such as¹⁰ psychosocial context emphasis on natural learning resonate with the Qur'anic idea¹¹ that children possess intrinsic capacities that unfold through proper guidance and environment¹².

Therefore, this study seeks to bridge the Qur'anic perspective and modern psychology to propose a holistic approach to nurturing children's moral, cognitive, and spiritual growth. Recognizing and cultivating *Fitrah* through Islamic education, spiritual nurturing, and parenting in Islam can contribute to balanced human development—one that harmonizes faith and reason, intellect and heart, in service of God and humanity.

1.2. Significance of the Study

This study carries significance because it brings attention to the Qur'anic concept of *Fitrah* and its role in early childhood. The Qur'an describes *Fitrah* as the natural state in which every human is created, a state that inclines toward truth and recognition of Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT) says: "So, direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the *Fitrah* of Allah upon which He has created people. Let there be no change in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know"¹³. This verse shows that education and upbringing should not attempt to erase or replace *Fitrah* but should nurture and protect it. The role of parents, teachers, and society is to guide children so that their natural state remains intact.

⁹ Sudrajat, Pupu, and Purnomo Dwipoyono. "The Concept of Fitrah in the Qur'an and Its Implications." *Al-Manar: Jurnal Komunikasi dan Pendidikan Islam* 10, no. 2 (2021): 52–54.

¹⁰ Piaget, Jean. *The Psychology of the Child*. New York: Basic Books, 1972. [The Psychology Of The Child - Jean Piaget, Barbel Inhelder - Google Books](#)

¹¹ Erikson, Erik H. *Childhood and Society*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1963. https://archive.org/details/childhoodsociety0000erik_n1o3

¹² Montessori, M. (1967). *The absorbent mind*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. https://books.google.com.bd/books/about/The_Absorbent_Mind.html?id=IeIemFs_IN4C&redir_esc=y

¹³ Ar Rum, 30:30.

The Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) emphasized the same truth in his words: “*Every child is born upon Fitrah, but his parents make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian*”¹⁴. This Hadith underlines the responsibility placed on caregivers. It suggests that a child begins life with purity and an innate awareness of Allah (SWT), but external influences can alter this path. Protecting and nurturing *Fitrah* becomes a trust (*amānah*) for parents and educators. Modern child development theories, such as those by Piaget, Erikson, and Montessori, provide valuable insights into cognitive, emotional, and social growth. Yet, they often neglect the spiritual foundation that Islam considers essential. This study gains its importance by placing these perspectives side by side. It asks how nurturing *Fitrah* can enrich the ways parents and teachers respond to children’s needs, not only intellectually but also morally and spiritually. The significance of this research lies in its practical implications. For parents, it highlights that raising children means protecting their natural purity and guiding them toward Allah. For educators, it stresses the need for curricula that support not only learning skills but also strengthening faith and character. For researchers, it offers an agenda that integrates Qur’anic visions with modern psychology, opening doors for new approaches to Islamic education.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explain the meaning of *Fitrah* in the Qur’an and Hadith, to review how classical scholars understood it in relation to human nature, and to compare it with modern theories of child development by Piaget, Erikson, and Montessori. It also aims to show how the concept of *Fitrah* can guide parents and teachers in shaping early education. By doing this, the study seeks to build a link between Islamic teachings and modern psychology that can help Muslim families and educators support children’s growth in faith, character, and learning.

1.4. Research Questions

- What does the Qur’an and Hadith teach about the concept of *Fitrah* in relation to children?
- How can the idea of *Fitrah* be connected with modern theories of child development?

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Qur’anic Concept of Fitrah

The Qur’an presents *Fitrah* as the original nature of human beings. It is the state of purity and faith upon which every person is created. Allah (SWT) says: “*So, set your face to the religion, upright, the Fitrah of Allah upon which He created people. There is no change in the creation of Allah*”¹⁵.

¹⁴ Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Qadar, Edited by Muḥammad Fu’ād ‘Abd al-Bāqī. ḥadīth no. 2658 (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, n.d.).

¹⁵ Ar Rum, 30:30.

This verse affirms that every person has an innate inclination toward truth. Scholars explain that¹⁶ Fitrah includes a natural recognition of Allah and a moral compass that distinguishes right from wrong.¹⁷ Hadith confirms this idea. The Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) said: “*Every child is born upon Fitrah*”¹⁸.

Commentators explain that¹⁹ this Hadith means every child has a pure beginning but is influenced by parents and society²⁰. This teaching places responsibility on caregivers to protect a child's natural purity.

2.2. Insights from Classical Scholars

Islamic scholars gave rich explanations of Fitrah. The heart is like a polished mirror²¹ If guarded, it reflects divine truth. If neglected, it becomes clouded. He stressed that early childhood is the most important stage for shaping character. Ibn Taymiyyah argued that humans are born with an inner knowledge of God. Social influences can cover or distort this, but the natural state remains²². Ibn Qayyim supported this view, saying that Fitrah is not just potential but an active recognition of truth²³. Al-Maturidi described Fitrah as an innate capacity for belief,²⁴ while Ibn Abd al-Barr suggested it means both natural faith and openness to learning²⁵. Fitrah leads people to good unless they are led astray²⁶. These views show agreement that children are naturally inclined to goodness and faith.

2.3. Contemporary Islamic Perspectives

In recent years, Muslim scholars have reconnected Fitrah with education and psychology. The foundation of moral education in Muslim schooling²⁷. In later work,²⁸ that Fitrah is linked to the child's curiosity and drive to seek meaning.

¹⁶ Ibn Kathir, Ismail. *Tafsir al-Qur'an al- 'Azim [Commentary on the Qur'an]*. Riyadh: Darussalam, 2003.

¹⁷ Al-Tabari, Muhammad ibn Jarir. *Jami' al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an [Comprehensive Explanation of the Qur'an]*. Cairo: Dar al-Hijr, 1997.

¹⁸ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, no. 1358.

¹⁹ Ibn Hajar al- 'Asqalani, Ahmad. *Fath al-Bari bi Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari [Commentary on Sahih al-Bukhari]*. Beirut: Dar al-Ma 'rifa, 1989.

²⁰ Al-Nawawi, Yahya ibn Sharaf. *Sharh Sahih Muslim [Commentary on Sahih Muslim]*. Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al- 'Arabi, 2002.

²¹ Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*.

²² Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar' Ta'arud al- 'Aql wa al-Naql*.

²³ Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, Muhammad. *Madarij al-Salikin [Stations of the Seekers]*. Dammam: Dar Ibn al-Jawzi, 2005.

²⁴ Al-Maturidi, Abu Mansur Muhammad. *Kitab al-Tawhid [The Book of Divine Unity]*. Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al- 'Ilmiyyah, 1998.

²⁵ Ibn Abd al-Barr, Yusuf. *Al-Tamhid Lima fi al-Muwatta' min al-Ma 'ani wa al-Asaneed [Explanation of al-Muwatta']*. Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al- 'Ilmiyyah, 2000.

²⁶ Al-Saadi, Abdur Rahman Nasir. *Taysir al-Karim al-Rahman fi Tafsir Kalam al-Mannan [Simplified Commentary of the Qur'an]*. Riyadh: Dar al-Salam, 2003.

²⁷ Sahin, Abdullah. *New Directions in Islamic Education: Pedagogy and Identity Formation*. London: Kube Publishing, 2013.

²⁸ Sahin, Abdullah. *Islamic Education: Theory and Practice in a Changing World*. London: Routledge, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315734632>

Rothman places Fitrah at the center of Islamic psychology²⁹. He sees human well-being as a return to this natural state. Some researchers argue that therapy should help people uncover their Fitrah when it is covered by trauma or unhealthy influences³⁰.

Montessori's ideas about independence align closely with Islamic understandings of responsibility within Fitrah, as discussed by scholars examining the intersection of Western and Islamic educational philosophies³¹. Research in Malaysia and Indonesia has applied these principles to curriculum design and teacher training³². In Malaysia, educational theorists argue that Fitrah should form the basis for moral and intellectual development³³. Meanwhile, studies on Islamic schools emphasize balancing academic achievement with nurturing a child's innate spiritual disposition³⁴. In Indonesia, educators frequently connect Qur'anic values to classroom practice as a way of preserving Fitrah³⁵.

2.4. Child Development in Psychology

Psychology provides several influential models of child development. Piaget described the progression of cognitive stages, showing how children move from sensory learning to logical reasoning.³⁶ Erikson outlined a series of psychosocial stages that emphasize the growth of trust, identity, and responsibility³⁷. Montessori, meanwhile, highlighted children's natural curiosity and independence as the foundation of learning³⁸. Later scholars extended and refined these theories³⁹ to include social, emotional, and cultural dimensions of development. Vygotsky emphasized that learning is shaped by culture, language, and social interaction⁴⁰. Kohlberg outlined stages of moral development, showing how children progress

²⁹ Rothman, Abdul Aziz E., and Andrew Coyle. *Islamic Psychology: Human Behaviour and Experience from an Islamic Perspective*. New York: Routledge, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003131166>

³⁰ Rothman and Coyle, *Islamic Psychology*.

³¹ Abdullah, Muhammad, and Ahmad Hassan. *Islamic Education and Montessori Pedagogy in Southeast Asia*. Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Research Institute, 2020.

³² Hashim, Rosnani, and Hasan Langgulung. "Islamic Religious Curriculum in Muslim Countries: The Experiences of Indonesia and Malaysia." *Bulletin of Education and Research* 30, no. 1 (2008): 1–19. <https://ber.um.edu.my/article/view/15954>

³³ Hussain, Rukhsana, and John Read. "Education and Values in Muslim Contexts: The Role of Islamic Schools." *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 45, no. 2 (2015): 242–261. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2013.873019>

³⁴ Fauzia, Amelia. "Islamic Education and Child Development in Indonesia." *Journal of Islamic Education Studies* 4, no. 2 (2016): 112–128. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2016.1143278>

³⁵ Nuryatno, Mohamad Ali. "Islamic Education and Curriculum Reform in Indonesia." *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education* 6, no. 1 (2018): 45–63. <https://doi.org/10.21580/ijie.v6i1.3468>

³⁶ Piaget, *Psychology of the Child*,

³⁷ Erikson, *Childhood and Society*.

³⁸ Montessori, *Absorbent Mind*.

³⁹ Jean Piaget, *The Origins of Intelligence in Children* (New York: International Universities Press, 1952).

⁴⁰ Lev S. Vygotsky, *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978)

from simple obedience to advanced ethical reasoning⁴¹. Bandura demonstrated that much of children's learning occurs through observation and imitation⁴². These psychological theories explain key aspects of cognitive and moral growth; however, most overlook the spiritual dimension that is central to Islamic conceptions of human development.

2.5. Linking Fitrah and Psychology

A few scholars have sought to connect the concept of Fitrah with modern psychology. Some have shown that both Qur'anic understandings of Fitrah and Western developmental theories emphasize the child's natural curiosity and innate drive to learn⁴³. Others have drawn parallels between psychosocial development and Islamic teachings on identity, trust, and responsibility⁴⁴. Educational thinkers have also linked the idea of personal freedom in early learning with the Islamic principle of accountability before Allah (SWT)⁴⁵. Several Muslim philosophers argue that true education must cultivate both the intellect and the soul, integrating spiritual and moral growth⁴⁶. Others have called for curricula that nurture Fitrah while also preparing students with practical life skills⁴⁷. Collectively, these perspectives suggest that Islamic concepts can enrich modern developmental theories, though few studies have examined this relationship in a systematic way.

Literature Gap

Most Islamic writings explain Fitrah as a spiritual concept but do not connect it with modern theories of child development. Psychology offers detailed models of growth but often ignores the spiritual side. Few studies bring these two perspectives together in a practical way for parents and teachers. This study addresses that gap by linking Qur'anic teachings on Fitrah with perceptions from modern psychology.

3. Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach based on text analysis. Qur'anic verses and Hadith related to Fitrah were examined and interpreted with the help of classical commentaries. Writings from scholars such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Taymiyyah, and Ibn

⁴¹ Lawrence Kohlberg, *Essays on Moral Development, Vol. 1: The Philosophy of Moral Development* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981).

⁴² Bandura, Albert. *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1986.

⁴³ Sahin, Abdullah. *Islamic Education: Theory and Practice in a Changing World*.

⁴⁴ Rothman, Abdulaziz E. "Erikson's Stages in Islamic Perspective: Integrating Psychology and Spirituality." *International Journal of Islamic Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2019): 50–67.

⁴⁵ Abdullah and Hassan, *Islamic Education and Montessori Pedagogy*.

⁴⁶ al-Attas, Syed Muhammad Naquib. *The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education*. Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1991.

⁴⁷ Taha Jabir Alwani, *Issues in Contemporary Islamic Thought* (London: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2005); Khurshid Ahmad, *Education and Spirituality in Muslim Societies* (Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press, 2014).

Qayyim were reviewed to understand how earlier thinkers explained human nature. Contemporary works on Islamic education and psychology were also studied. In addition, major child development theories by Piaget, Erikson, and Montessori were analyzed to identify points of connection with Islamic thought. Secondary sources such as journal articles, books, and educational studies were included to provide context and depth. The goal was to compare perspectives and highlight where Islamic teachings and psychology can support each other. A library-based research method was chosen since it allows wide review of written sources without direct fieldwork⁴⁸. I note one limit. The study lacks classroom data and parent voices. Future fieldwork can test and refine the model.



Figure 1. Self. Research Methodology

4. Discussion and Findings

4.1. Fitrah as the Foundation of Human Nature

The findings of this study emphasize *Fitrah* as the essential foundation of human nature in Islamic thought. Islamic sources describe every child as being born in a state of natural purity, possessing an innate orientation toward truth, goodness, and recognition of the Creator. The holy Qur'an and Hadith together portray *Fitrah* as an inner compass that guides human beings toward moral awareness and faith. These understanding positions spirituality not as an external addition to development but as an inherent dimension of human existence from birth.

Classical Muslim scholars elaborated on this principle in depth. They explained that the child's heart is pure and impressionable—naturally inclined toward knowledge of Allah (SWT) but susceptible to environmental influences that may form or distort this purity. Such interpretations affirm that nurturing *Fitrah* is both a spiritual responsibility and an educational duty, one entrusted to parents and teachers as a

⁴⁸ Creswell, John W. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2014.

sacred trust. In contrast, modern psychology tends to frame early development primarily through cognitive and behavioral mechanisms. Developmental theorists describe how children construct understanding through sensory experience, reasoning, and social interaction. These frameworks are valuable for explaining how knowledge and behavior evolve, yet they often remain silent on the spiritual dimension that underpins human purpose and morality. The comparison between Islamic teachings and psychological theories reveals a complementary relationship rather than a contradiction. While psychology explains the process of growth, Islam explains its purpose. *Fitrah* thus provides a deeper interpretive base—one that views children not as blank slates but as souls already endowed with moral potential and divine consciousness. Recognizing this unity between intellectual and spiritual development redefines the role of education: it becomes a process of uncovering and nurturing what is already within the child's natural disposition.

4.2. Role of Environment and Parenting

Parents and environment shape a child's faith, values, and behavior. Islam teaches that children are born pure, and parents' guide this purity. Psychology also confirms that family influences trust, learning, and growth. The Hadith makes clear that parents play a decisive role in shaping the faith of their children. The Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) said: *"Every child is born upon Fitrah, but his parents make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian"*⁴⁹. This Hadith shows the power of family and environment in shaping identity. It also reflects the Qur'an's teaching: *"O you who believe, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire"*⁵⁰. Parents are not only providers of food and shelter, but also guardians of faith and character. The role of parents is to teach a religious view of life in their children's. The religion of child to be adopted solely depends on the influence of their parents and the natural surroundings. The basics of religious activities must have been instilling since the children were still young because otherwise, they may experience difficulties later in achieving the goals of Islamic knowledge given in adulthood. The holy Qur'an provides an example how Luqman (AS) as a parent has introduced religious teaching in his children as mentioned in the holy Qur'an. *"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"*⁵¹.

Islamic thought extends beyond the boundaries of psychology by presenting children as a sacred trust (*amānah*) entrusted by Allah (SWT) to parents and educators. It portrays the child's heart as pure and impressionable, shaped by early experiences that can either preserve or obscure its natural clarity. Modern psychology similarly emphasizes the formative influence of environment,

⁴⁹ Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. Hadith no. 2658

⁵⁰ At Tahreem, 66:06.

⁵¹ Surah Luqmaan, 31:13.

recognizing that young minds learn through observation, imitation, and social interaction. The convergence of these perspectives highlights the vital role of early guidance in shaping personality and moral awareness. Yet Islam adds a profound spiritual dimension: safeguarding Fitrah is not merely a social or developmental task but an act of worship and moral accountability. Both psychology and Islamic teachings affirm that nurturing the child's early years determines lifelong character; however, Islam deepens this understanding by framing it as a sacred duty before Allah (SWT). In this view, parents and teachers carry not only educational responsibility but also a spiritual obligation to preserve the child's innate purity and direct it toward faith, virtue, and balanced growth.

4.3. Moral Development and Fitrah

Islam teaches that morality begins within the soul itself. The Qur'an says every soul is inspired with right and wrong. Psychology adds stages of moral expression, which Islam grounds in *Fitrah*. Moral development as a process. Children move from basic obedience to more advanced ethical reasoning⁵². While this model is helpful, it assumes morality is only shaped by experience. Islam teaches that morality begins within the soul itself. Allah (SWT) says: *“By the soul and the One who proportioned it, and inspired it with its wrong and its right”*⁵³. This verse shows that human beings are created with an inner awareness of both good and evil. Scholars such as Al-Raghib al-Asfahani explained that this is proof of innate moral knowledge⁵⁴. The Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) also said: *“Righteousness is good character, and sin is what troubles your soul and you dislike that people become aware of it”*⁵⁵. This Hadith supports the idea that morality is not only external rules but an internal compass given by Allah (SWT).

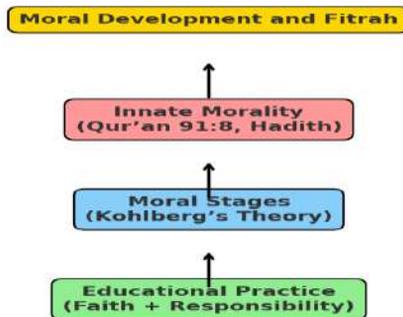


Figure 2. Self- Moral Development and Fitrah

⁵² Kohlberg, Lawrence. *Essays on Moral Development, Vol. 1: The Philosophy of Moral Development*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981.

⁵³ Ash Shams, 91:7-8.

⁵⁴ Al-Raghib al-Asfahani, Husayn. *Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Qur'an [Dictionary of Qur'anic Terms]*. Beirut: Dar al-Ma 'rifa, 1991.

⁵⁵ Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. Hadith no. 2553.

The finding is that Islam and psychology can work together. Psychology explains how children show morality in stages, while Islam provides the deeper foundation of why they have a sense of right and wrong. Education that joins both perspectives helps children not just follow rules but develop inner responsibility rooted in faith.

4.4. Educational Practice and Montessori Links

Children learn best when freedom is balanced with guidance. Montessori’s ideas echo the Islamic view of nurturing *Fitrah*. Both stress independence, reflection, and natural curiosity in learning. Montessori’s method emphasizes freedom within structure, seeing children as naturally motivated to learn. This view aligns strongly with Islam’s teaching on *Fitrah*. The Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) said: “*Every child is born upon Fitrah*”⁵⁶. This Hadith shows that children are born with purity and a natural curiosity that should be nurtured, not suppressed. Montessori’s approach—providing structured freedom, encouraging independence, and respecting individuality—mirrors this Islamic principle. Instead of forcing knowledge, teachers guide children, creating environments where curiosity can flourish.

The holy Qur’an also emphasizes reflection and exploration: “*Indeed, in that are signs for a people who think*”⁵⁷. This verse encourages learning through observation and reasoning, echoing Montessori’s belief in discovery-based education. The Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) also advised gradual responsibility: “*Command your children to pray when they are seven years old*”⁵⁸. This Hadith highlights how children should be guided step by step, which aligns with Montessori’s view of age-appropriate independence.

Integration of Montessori and Islamic Teaching for Fitrah-Based Education

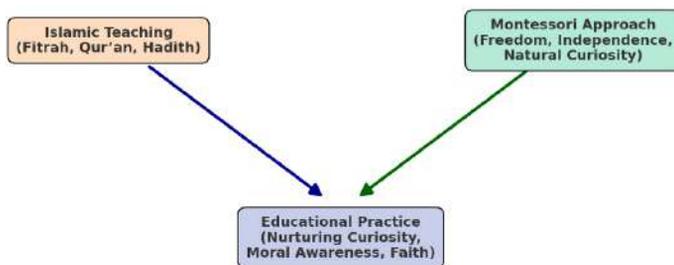


Figure 3. Self. Integration of Montessori and Islamic Teaching for Fitrah -Based Education Links

⁵⁶ Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. Hadith no. 2658

⁵⁷ Ar Ra’d, 13:03.

⁵⁸ Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān ibn al-Ash’ath al-Sijistānī. *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, Kitāb al-Ṭahārah. Edited by Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd. Ḥadīth no. 495. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, n.d.

Contemporary Islamic educators emphasize the importance of integrating spiritual and intellectual development within learning environments. Classrooms are encouraged to nurture Fitrah through moral reflection and purposeful engagement, helping students to recognize their innate potential and sense of responsibility. True education, in this view, moves beyond rote memorization to embrace approaches that cultivate curiosity, moral awareness, accountability, and faith as interconnected dimensions of human growth.

4.5. Integration of Islamic and Psychological Perspectives

Islam offers spiritual roots, while psychology explains growth stages. Each alone is incomplete, but together they enrich child development. Education gains balance when both faith and reason guide practice. A key finding across the literature is the lack of integration between Islamic and psychological perspectives. Islamic texts emphasize the spiritual and moral dimensions of childhood, while psychology explains cognitive, social, and emotional stages. Too often, the two are studied separately. This research shows that they can enrich each other and provide a more complete view of the child.

For example, Erikson's first stages of trust and autonomy align with Islam's emphasis on mercy and parental care. The Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) said: "*Whoever does not show mercy will not be shown mercy*"⁵⁹. This Hadith highlights the need for love and care in early life, which directly supports Erikson's view that trust is the foundation of growth. Piaget's stages of reasoning also align with the holy Qur'an's encouragement to reflect and think: "*Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for people of understanding*"⁶⁰. This verse affirms the value of observation and reasoning, which Piaget described as central to child development. Montessori's emphasis on natural curiosity and guided freedom also connects with the Prophet's Muhammad (SAWS) teaching: "*Every child is born upon Fitrah*"⁶¹. Montessori argued that education should nurture what is already within the child. The Hadith confirms that children are born with purity and natural inclination toward truth.

⁵⁹ Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Adab. Edited by Muḥammad Zuhayr ibn Nāṣir al-Nāṣir. Hadith no. 5997. Beirut: Dār Ṭawq al-Najāh, 1422 AH.

⁶⁰ Al Imran, 03:190.

⁶¹ Al -Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, no. 1358.

Integration of Islamic and Psychological Perspectives

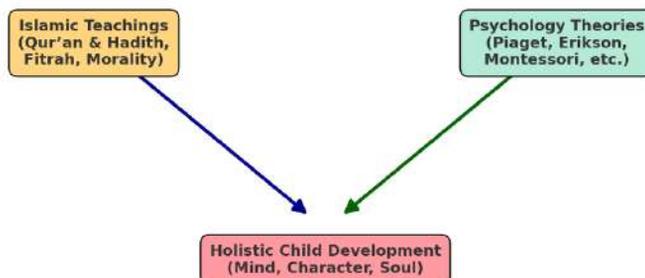


Figure 4. Self- Integration of Islamic and Psychological Perspectives

The finding is that combining these perspectives creates a balanced view of childhood. Children are not only cognitive learners or social beings; they are also souls with an inner compass. Education that respects both dimensions can protect *Fitrah*, strengthen faith, and develop human potential.

4.6. An Integrated Model of Fitrah-Aligned Development

The results of this study led to the development of an integrated model that illustrates how *Fitrah* serves as the foundation of child development within an Islamic framework. The model consists of three interrelated layers, each contributing to the holistic growth of the child.

At the innermost core lies *Fitrah*—the child’s natural inclination toward truth, goodness, and awareness of the Creator. This corresponds to the Qur’anic description: “*The Fitrah of Allah upon which He created mankind*”⁶² and “*He inspired it with its wrong and its right*”⁶³. The inner core provides the divine motive and direction that underpins all learning and moral growth. Surrounding this core are the growth lines, which represent the unfolding of cognitive, social, and moral stages as the child matures. These stages correspond with the developmental frameworks proposed in psychology, such as those articulated by Piaget, Erikson, and Kohlberg. Their work explains the natural processes by which reasoning, identity, and ethical understanding emerge through experience and interaction. In this model, these psychological processes are viewed not as substitutes for spirituality, but as the outward expressions of an inner moral and intellectual design. Encircling both layers is the nurturing ring, symbolizing the external influences that protect and guide the child’s *Fitrah*. This ring represents the family, educators, and wider community whose role is to preserve the purity of the child’s heart through moral education,

⁶² Ar Rum, 30:30.

⁶³ Ash Shams, 91:08.

compassion, and example. Classical scholars such as Al-Ghazali compared the child's heart to a polished mirror that must be kept clear of moral stains, while contemporary thinkers like Sahin and Rothman emphasize the importance of spiritual well-being and holistic development within educational settings. Together, these perspectives underline that nurturing is not limited to academic growth but includes emotional and spiritual safeguarding.

These three components—core, growth, and nurturing—operate in harmony. The *Fitrah* provides intrinsic motivation and spiritual orientation; developmental processes structure how children think, act, and relate; and the nurturing environment sustains purity and purpose. This integrated model offers a framework for educational design, parenting strategies, and teacher training that unites psychological understanding with Islamic spirituality. By aligning instruction and care with the child's innate nature, education becomes a balanced process that cultivates both the mind and the soul.

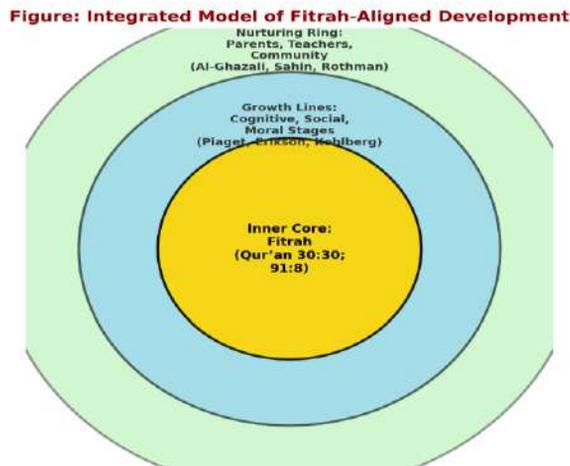


Figure 5. Self- Integrated Model of Fitrah-Aligned Development

4.7. Implications for Parents and Teachers

Parents and teachers share the trust of shaping children's *Fitrah*. Islam makes this duty both a spiritual and social responsibility. Practical guidance can help protect purity while supporting growth. The findings of this study suggest that parents and teachers carry a shared responsibility in nurturing *Fitrah*. Parenting in Islam is more than providing care. The holy Qur'an calls children a gift and responsibility: "And give them from the wealth of Allah which He has given you" ⁶⁴.

This verse implies that children, like wealth, are a trust to be cared for. The Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) said: "Each of you is a shepherd, and each of you is responsible for his flock" ⁶⁵. Parents must nurture honesty, prayer, and mercy at

⁶⁴ An Nur, 24:33.

⁶⁵ Al -Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Hadith no. 893.

home. Teachers must guide thinking while protecting purity. It is a trust (*amanah*) that includes guiding a child's natural state toward faith and good character. Parents should create a home environment that models' honesty, kindness, and worship. These practices protect the child's purity and strengthen trust, which Erikson⁶⁶ identified as central in the earliest stage of development. For teachers, the implication is that classrooms should not only transfer knowledge but also nurture morality and spirituality. The holy Qur'an encourages reflection and thinking Allah (SWT) says "*Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for people of understanding*"⁶⁷. This perspective makes even with the view that genuine education supports cognitive, moral, and spiritual growth together. Teachers can design lessons that integrate critical thinking with moral reflection, encouraging both intellectual curiosity and ethical awareness. An emphasis on independence within structured learning mirrors the Islamic understanding of gradual responsibility. Allowing children to make choices within guided boundaries respects their Fitrah while building confidence and self-discipline. Educational policy in Muslim contexts can also benefit from such integration. Curricula that focus exclusively on technical skills risk neglecting the soul, while faith-based programs that overlook developmental psychology may miss effective strategies for holistic growth. A balanced approach combines both perspectives, recognizing that nurturing Fitrah leads to human well-being by connecting intellectual, emotional, and spiritual development. Ultimately, families and schools share the responsibility of viewing children not merely as learners but as souls endowed with natural purity. Through cooperation between parents and educators, this Fitrah can be protected and guided, helping children grow in faith, character, and knowledge.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

This study examined the Qur'anic concept of Fitrah and its implications for early childhood development. Islamic sources teach that every child is born pure, with an innate awareness of God and a natural sense of right and wrong. Classical scholars emphasized that preserving this purity is a sacred responsibility entrusted to families and educators. Within the field of modern psychology, various models explain how children develop cognitively, socially, and morally. These include influential frameworks that describe stages of intellectual growth, emotional maturity, and moral reasoning. Yet, such models often overlook the spiritual dimension that forms the foundation of human nature in Islamic thought. The concept of Fitrah bridges this gap by providing a deeper basis for understanding growth, while psychological

⁶⁶ Erikson, *Childhood and Society*.

⁶⁷ Surah al Imran, 03:190.

theory offers tools to nurture it. Integrating both perspectives offers a more complete view of the child—one that recognizes children not only as learners but as souls brilliant with an inner compass. Education that honors both the intellect and the spirit nurtures growth in faith, character, and knowledge. Children are a divine trust, born with *Fitrah*, a natural state of purity and belief. When parents and teachers safeguard this gift and guide it with wisdom and kindness, they help raise balanced individuals. Teaching that unites the mind and the soul not only serves the child's general development but also maintains the values of faith.

5.2. Recommendations

For Parents

- Pray with children and talk about meaning in simple words.
- Model honesty, patience, and care each day.
- Tell stories of the Prophets and discuss choices.
- Limit harmful media and set calm routines.
- Praise effort and truthfulness, not only grades.

For Teachers

- Link lessons with short moral reflections.
- Use inquiry tasks that invite thought and dialogue.
- Give choice within a clear structure.
- Add calm corners for quiet focus and prayer breaks.
- Assess growth in skills and character together.

For Schools and Policy Makers

- Design curricula that blend skills with values.
- Train teachers on *Fitrah* and child development together.
- Provide time for worship and reflection in school life.
- Use service projects to connect learning with community needs.
- Create family workshops on faith and parenting habits.

For Researchers

- Test *Fitrah*-aligned lesson plans in classrooms.
- Study parent routines that support inner purity.
- Explore measures of spiritual growth that respect faith.
- Compare outcomes across different Muslim settings.
- Build tools that help teachers plan integrated lessons.