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RIFQ AS A PRINCIPLE OF ISLAMIC CHILD EDUCATION: A Textual Analysis of Chapter Eleven of *Arba'unal Jiyad fi Tarbiyatil Aulad*

Fatih Rahmat Habib, M. Tohir Ritonga, Abdul Halim
Universitas Alwashliyah Medan
Email. fatihrahmathabib@gmail.com, tohir3754@gmail.com, abdulhalimritonga93@gmail.com

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis konsep rifq (kelemahlembutan), dasar tekstual enam prinsip pendidikan anak, dan relevansinya bagi pengasuhan kontemporer melalui Bab XI kitab Arba'unal Jiyad fi Tarbiyatil Aulad. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif studi kepustakaan dengan analisis isi. Unit analisisnya ialah narasi hadis, anjuran, dan uraian pendidikan yang dihubungkan dengan tema kasih sayang, tutur kata, doa, pembimbingan, dan keteladanan. Pengelompokan tema dilakukan dengan membedakan petunjuk yang diuraikan dalam sumber kajian dari penerapan pedagogis yang ditafsirkan peneliti. Hasilnya menunjukkan enam prinsip: kasih sayang, larangan ungkapan atau doa buruk, doa kebaikan, bimbingan tanpa kekerasan, komunikasi santun, dan keteladanan. Riwayat tentang kelembutan Rasulullah kepada anak menjadi dasar penting untuk memahami hubungan antara otoritas dan kepedulian. Kontribusi artikel ialah merumuskan hubungan antara prinsip normatif rifq, tindakan pedagogis, dan batas penerapannya dalam persoalan pengasuhan digital maupun emosional. Karena edisi serta halaman kitab primer dan sebagian rujukan hadis belum terdokumentasi lengkap, keterlacakan kutipan masih perlu dilengkapi. Sebagai studi tekstual, penelitian ini tidak membuktikan pengaruh rifq secara empiris terhadap perkembangan anak.

Kata kunci: Rifq, Pendidikan Anak Islam, Analisis Teks

Abstract

This study analyzes the meaning of rifq (gentleness), the textual foundations of six principles of child education, and their potential relevance to contemporary parenting through Chapter Eleven of Arba'unal Jiyad fi Tarbiyatil Aulad. Using qualitative library research and content analysis, it examines narrated traditions, educational instructions, and passages associated with affection, speech, supplication, guidance, and exemplary conduct. The analysis distinguishes teachings presented in the selected chapter from the researcher's contemporary pedagogical interpretations. Six interconnected principles are identified: affection, avoidance of harmful expressions and supplications, positive prayer, nonviolent guidance, respectful communication, and adult role modeling. Prophetic accounts of kindness toward children provide a central interpretive basis for balancing educational authority with compassion. The article contributes a conceptual distinction between normative ethical principles, observable educational practices, and potential applications in digital and emotional parenting. However, full edition and page details for the primary text and some hadith references are not documented in the supplied manuscript and require verification. As a textual inquiry, the study does not demonstrate causal effects on children's behavior or development.

Keywords: Rifq, Islamic Child Education, Textual Analysis

Corresponding Author	:	Fatih Rahmat Habib
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INTRODUCTION

Child education constitutes a fundamental foundation for developing human character, moral responsibility, and sustainable social civilization. The family serves as the primary educational environment where children acquire emotional security, ethical values, behavioral patterns, and interpersonal competencies. Nevertheless, contemporary parenting practices frequently reveal significant discrepancies between educational ideals and everyday interactions. Harsh discipline, verbal aggression, emotional intimidation, and physical punishment remain persistent challenges in family and educational settings. Such practices raise serious concerns regarding children's psychological well-being and long-term developmental outcomes. Research demonstrates that corporal punishment is associated with adverse behavioral, emotional, and developmental consequences rather than consistently producing constructive discipline (Gershoff, 2002; Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016). Consequently, identifying educational approaches that combine moral guidance, emotional sensitivity, and nonviolent discipline has become increasingly important.

The persistence of coercive parenting practices reflects misconceptions regarding authority, obedience, and effective discipline. Some caregivers interpret strictness as an essential manifestation of educational responsibility, overlooking the distinction between constructive guidance and psychological intimidation. Developmental research suggests that parenting characterized by excessive control, hostility, and inadequate emotional responsiveness may undermine children's psychological adjustment. Conversely, authoritative parenting integrates warmth, responsiveness, appropriate expectations, and consistent behavioral boundaries (Baumrind, 1966, 1967, 1991). This approach encourages children to develop autonomy, emotional regulation, social competence, and responsible behavior. Furthermore, parental acceptance and rejection have substantial implications for children's psychological adjustment across different cultural contexts (Khaleque & Rohner, 2012). These findings emphasize the importance of educational relationships grounded in affection, understanding, and mutual respect.

From an Islamic educational perspective, gentleness (*rifq*) represents an essential moral principle governing interpersonal relationships, particularly interactions involving children. Islamic teachings emphasize compassion, patience, wisdom, and exemplary conduct as integral dimensions of character formation. The Prophet Muhammad's educational practices provide meaningful illustrations of these values through compassionate responses to children's developmental needs. One particularly significant narration describes the Prophet prolonging his prostration during congregational prayer because his grandson, Hasan or Husayn, was sitting on his back. Rather than interrupting the child's activity through anger or coercion, the Prophet demonstrated patience and sensitivity toward childhood behavior. This narration, discussed in Chapter Eleven of *Arba'unal Jiyad fi Tarbiyatil Aulad*, provides an important foundation for examining gentleness as an educational methodology.

The significance of this prophetic example extends beyond affectionate behavior because it illustrates the relationship between religious ethics and developmental understanding. Children's

spontaneous actions, emotional expressions, and playful interactions require educational responses appropriate to their developmental characteristics. Contemporary research similarly recognizes that supportive parent-child relationships contribute to emotional security and behavioral development. Attachment theory emphasizes the importance of responsive caregiving in establishing secure emotional relationships (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970). Moreover, parental emotion-related socialization influences children's emotional competence and social adjustment (Eisenberg et al., 1998). These perspectives provide a conceptual framework for exploring potential connections between prophetic gentleness and contemporary child development theories without reducing Islamic educational principles to psychological constructs.

Within Islamic intellectual traditions, educational practices are inseparable from moral cultivation, spiritual responsibility, and the development of virtuous character. Islamic education encompasses intellectual development alongside ethical refinement and responsible interpersonal conduct (Halstead, 2004). Accordingly, gentleness should not be interpreted as unrestricted permissiveness or the absence of discipline. Instead, it involves balancing compassionate communication with consistent guidance and moral expectations. Research on parenting dimensions indicates that responsiveness and appropriate behavioral control contribute differently to children's developmental adjustment (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Pinquart, 2017). This distinction is particularly relevant when examining how Islamic educational principles can encourage compassionate authority without legitimizing coercive practices.

Modern parenting environments introduce additional complexities associated with technological exposure, changing family communication patterns, and children's increasing engagement with digital media. Digital parenting requires caregivers to negotiate autonomy, supervision, emotional connection, and responsible technology use. Studies indicate that parental mediation practices significantly influence children's online experiences and digital opportunities (Livingstone & Helsper, 2008; Livingstone et al., 2017). Furthermore, parenting approaches that support autonomy and psychological needs can promote children's internal motivation and adaptive functioning (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989; Joussemet et al., 2008). These developments underscore the relevance of examining gentleness as a potentially constructive framework for maintaining supportive parent-child relationships amid contemporary challenges.

The specific gap addressed here is not whether kindness benefits children in general; existing developmental studies already discuss parental warmth, emotional responsiveness, and discipline. Rather, the article examines how a particular Islamic educational chapter organizes diverse prophetic examples into a coherent set of educational obligations, and where those obligations intersect with—but remain distinct from—modern psychological categories. Prior accounts of parenting styles do not establish which statements in Chapter Eleven substantiate each proposed principle, nor do they clarify the boundary between the chapter's original normative message and contemporary extensions such as digital supervision. This distinction matters because agreement between modern theories and religious teaching is not, by itself, a new finding. The chapter is attributed in the manuscript to Sheikh Muhammad Abdul Aziz al-Huwaithan; its

publication edition, year, publisher, and page numbers remain to be verified before the primary evidence can be fully audited.

This study therefore asks: (1) what conception of rifq can be reconstructed from the reported passages of Chapter Eleven; (2) which educational principles are explicitly supported by its narrated examples and which are subsequent analytic generalizations; and (3) how might these principles inform present-day parenting without equating theological norms with empirically demonstrated outcomes? Its contribution is a three-level interpretive framework linking textual warrant, pedagogical implication, and contemporary application. Unlike an effectiveness study, it does not assert that any one principle causes measurable changes in emotional well-being, independence, or creativity. This narrower purpose makes it possible to evaluate the study according to the evidence available from the text rather than the persuasive appeal of its educational recommendations.

METHOD

This study used qualitative library research with directed content analysis of Chapter Eleven of Arba'unal Jiyad fi Tarbiyatil Aulad, attributed in the supplied manuscript to Sheikh Muhammad Abdul Aziz al-Huwaithan. Its objective was to reconstruct educational meanings from a bounded textual chapter rather than to measure parenting outcomes. The manuscript reports documentary inquiry during February–August 2025; this period refers to the reported study process, not to an independently verifiable publication date of the primary book. Because the edition, publisher, year and chapter pagination of the Arabic original are not identified, textual locations cannot responsibly be supplied. These bibliographic details must be verified against the actual copy used before the manuscript is finalized.

The principal source is the selected chapter and its reported Arabic/Indonesian reading; secondary sources comprise the Quranic passage cited in the article, prophetic narrations discussed by the chapter, studies of Islamic education, and developmental-psychology literature. The analytical unit is a discrete narrated episode, instruction, or explanatory proposition with educational meaning. For each unit, the intended extraction record should contain the Arabic wording or a faithful translated excerpt, its chapter/page identifier, the cited narration or verse, an initial interpretive code, and the justification for its final theme. The supplied draft does not preserve that complete extraction sheet. Accordingly, the present article reports only traceable episodes already identified in the manuscript and does not present reconstructed Arabic quotations or precise hadith numbers as if they had been independently checked.

Documentary analysis proceeded by identifying the examples explicitly described in the manuscript: the Prophet's prolonged prostration while a grandson was on his back; affection shown toward a child and the rebuke of a lack of mercy; warnings against supplicating harm upon children; the positive prayer in Quran 3:38; the commendation of gentleness; and instructions to avoid degrading speech. These examples are not treated as interchangeable. Each was examined for its immediate normative message and then considered for a possible classroom or family-education implication. Where a proposed principle, such as creativity or digital monitoring, goes

beyond the original narrated situation, it is identified as contemporary interpretation rather than a statement directly quoted from Chapter Eleven.

The coding procedure had four stages. First, each narrated act or injunction was designated a textual unit. Second, descriptive codes were assigned to its primary content—for example, patient response to play, affection, restraint in speech, positive supplication, noncoercive guidance, or exemplary conduct. Third, related codes were grouped into the six proposed educational principles, with distinctions maintained between narrative evidence and the researcher's theoretical inference. Fourth, each principle was compared with selected parenting and developmental scholarship to identify convergence, difference, and limits of applicability. Thus, "patience during a child's play" supports a normative interpretation of responsive conduct; translating it into a digital screen-time agreement is a later practical analogy, not an original textual directive. Since no complete coding log is reproduced in the source, the analysis remains a reasoned thematic reconstruction rather than a demonstrably replicable coding exercise.

Trustworthiness in this type of textual inquiry depends primarily on accurate source attribution, attention to narrative context, transparent coding choices, and explicit separation of the primary text from external theory. Comparison with supporting hadith literature was reported in the original methods, but the exact collections, edition details and passage locations are not supplied for every narration. Therefore, such comparison cannot be claimed here as an independently audited authentication of each report. Conflicting interpretations should be resolved by checking the original chapter and authoritative hadith sources, documenting the decision, and considering plausible alternatives. Modern psychology serves as contextual dialogue, not a validation test for prophetic teaching. These qualifications delimit the findings as conceptual rather than observational or causal.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Concept of Gentleness in Child Education According to Chapter Eleven of *Arba'unal Jiyad fi Tarbiyatil Aulad*

The chapter is read here as presenting rifq not merely as avoidance of punishment but as a moral orientation governing how adults respond to children's limited experience, playfulness, and vulnerability. The textual basis described in the source includes the narration about a child on the Prophet's back during prayer and other reports emphasizing mercy, restraint of speech, and gentle instruction. The primary claim supported by these examples is normative: an educator ought to exercise authority without unnecessary humiliation or harshness. A second, pedagogical claim—that patient guidance can leave room for participation and learning—is a plausible interpretation of that norm. A third claim, concerning measurable psychological benefits, would require independent empirical evidence and is not established by the chapter alone.

A significant textual illustration involves the prophetic narration transmitted through Abdullah ibn Shaddad concerning Prophet Muhammad's interaction with his grandson during congregational prayer. According to the narration, Hasan or Husayn climbed onto the Prophet's

back while he was prostrating. Rather than immediately interrupting the child's activity, the Prophet prolonged his prostration until the child had finished. When questioned about the unusually extended prostration, he explained that he did not wish to hurry his grandson.

The prostration episode provides the clearest example of the distinction between text and interpretation. At the textual level, the narrated action is the Prophet's decision not to hurry a child during worship. At the interpretive level, it can be read as adult self-restraint and recognition that playful behavior need not be met immediately with anger. At the pedagogical level, it invites teachers and parents to adjust responses to a child's developmental situation while maintaining legitimate boundaries. This progression is the proposed analytical contribution of the article: narrated conduct → ethical meaning → possible educational action. The chapter does not, however, provide a controlled comparison of disciplinary methods or a measured psychological outcome.

Another finding concerns the distinction between gentleness and permissiveness. The analyzed material does not conceptualize *rifq* as abandoning behavioral expectations or allowing unrestricted conduct. Instead, it positions compassion as the foundation of constructive discipline. Children require consistent guidance, but such guidance should respect their developmental capabilities and emotional needs. Accordingly, gentleness becomes a means of communicating moral expectations while preserving children's dignity and psychological security.

These findings correspond with established developmental perspectives emphasizing the importance of responsive caregiving. Ainsworth and Bell (1970) demonstrated the significance of caregiver responsiveness in attachment-related behavior, while Eisenberg et al. (1998) highlighted the role of parental emotional socialization in children's socioemotional development. Although these psychological frameworks originate from different intellectual traditions, they offer complementary explanations for why emotionally responsive interactions may support children's development.

The distinction between compassionate discipline and permissiveness also corresponds with Baumrind's (1966, 1991) conceptualization of authoritative parenting. Authoritative parenting combines emotional warmth with appropriate expectations and behavioral guidance. This framework suggests that effective discipline need not depend on intimidation or excessive control. Instead, supportive relationships can provide the interpersonal context through which children gradually internalize behavioral expectations.

Furthermore, Darling and Steinberg (1993) explain that parenting styles establish an emotional climate influencing how specific parenting practices are interpreted. From this perspective, the educational significance of *rifq* extends beyond individual acts of kindness. Gentleness represents a broader relational environment in which guidance is communicated through affection, consistency, and respectful interaction.

The findings also invite consideration of moral development within Islamic educational philosophy. Halstead (2004) emphasizes that Islamic education incorporates moral and spiritual formation rather than restricting education to intellectual achievement. Consequently, *rifq* can be

interpreted as both a pedagogical strategy and an ethical obligation grounded in Islamic conceptions of virtuous character.

The findings also qualify the relationship with developmental theory. Responsive caregiving and authoritative parenting offer useful concepts for considering emotional safety and appropriate expectations, but the purposes and epistemic grounds of these frameworks differ from those of prophetic exemplarity. Rifq is advanced as a religiously grounded ethical obligation; psychological models explain associations observed among families. Similarity in recommended practices does not establish the equivalence of the theories or prove the effectiveness of any religiously framed intervention. The conceptual contribution is therefore an articulated point of dialogue between distinct frameworks, rather than a claim that modern research has verified the religious text.

Overall, the analysis indicates that *rifq* represents an integrated educational approach characterized by compassionate authority, developmental sensitivity, emotional restraint, and exemplary conduct. Its distinctive contribution lies in connecting moral responsibility with respectful treatment of children. This understanding provides a conceptual foundation for examining the educational principles embedded within Chapter Eleven and considering their relevance to contemporary family education.

Fundamental Principles of Gentleness in Child Education According to Chapter Eleven of *Arba'unal Jiyad fi Tarbiyatil Aulad*

Six themes can be reconstructed from the examples described in the manuscript, but their degree of direct textual support varies. The narrated display of affection toward a child grounds compassionate treatment; the warning against harmful supplication grounds restraint during anger; Quran 3:38 illustrates positive prayer; statements praising gentleness support noncoercive guidance; warnings against humiliation inform respectful speech; and the Prophet's conduct during prayer illustrates exemplary patience. These alignments are interpretive links, not a newly discovered list reproduced verbatim as six headings in Chapter Eleven. To establish full traceability, a final edition should pair each theme with the exact Arabic passage, page number, and hadith citation from the copy actually analyzed.

First, affectionate treatment is supported in the manuscript by the account of the Prophet kissing Hasan ibn Ali and responding to a man who claimed not to kiss his children. The ethical focus is mercy shown in an actual interaction, rather than kindness merely asserted as a parental intention. As an educational interpretation, affectionate conduct may provide a relational context for instruction. The article does not derive a prescribed quantity of affection or a measured developmental effect from the narration. The canonical hadith source and precise numbering should be inserted only after verification of the relevant text.

Second, the reported prophetic warning against invoking harm upon children provides an explicit basis for restraint in parental speech and supplication. A distinction is necessary: a negative supplication is a religious act with theological implications, while insulting language is an

interpersonal behavior with potential psychosocial effects. The two should not be treated as identical constructs even when both point toward emotional self-control. The pedagogical inference is that anger should not authorize damaging expressions; the specific narration and its location in the selected book still require full bibliographic verification.

Third, the manuscript cites Quran 3:38 as an illustration of positive supplication for righteous offspring. The educational principle is the caregiver's hopeful spiritual orientation and continuing sense of responsibility. Prayer, however, should not be represented as a substitute for attentive guidance, material care, or ethical communication. Nor should it be reduced to a psychological reinforcement technique. The Qur'anic source can be located by chapter and verse, but confirmation is still needed that the selected textbook chapter explicitly deploys it in the manner described by the article.

Fourth, compassionate instruction is linked in the manuscript to a prophetic commendation of gentleness. Its pedagogical implication is not the abolition of rules but the use of explanation, proportionate correction, and respect for the learner's capacity. This reading should be distinguished from an empirically tested curriculum: the chapter supplies ethical justification, not an intervention protocol or evidence of learning gains. The original hadith wording and collection must be documented before treating any translated formulation as a direct quotation.

Fifth, avoiding insult and humiliation follows the broader textual concern with responsible speech; sixth, exemplary conduct is illustrated by the narrated patience and mercy of the Prophet. These principles overlap but are analytically distinguishable: respectful speech specifies what adults say, whereas exemplarity concerns the congruence between their words and actions. The manuscript should avoid assigning both principles to an identical passage without explaining that the same narrative can support different interpretive codes. Neither category establishes that a child will imitate the example in a predictable or measurable way.

These findings indicate that *rifq* integrates emotional, behavioral, and spiritual dimensions of education. The emphasis on affection corresponds with research examining parental acceptance and children's psychological adjustment. Khaleque and Rohner (2012) identified substantial associations between perceived parental acceptance and psychological well-being across cultural contexts. Their findings support the broader importance of emotionally supportive relationships without establishing that particular religious practices independently produce specific psychological outcomes.

The prohibition against degrading speech is also relevant to research on harsh discipline. Gershoff (2002) and Gershoff and Grogan-Kaylor (2016) documented associations between corporal punishment and unfavorable developmental outcomes. Although these studies primarily examined physical punishment, they strengthen the rationale for considering nonviolent alternatives. Furthermore, Grusec and Goodnow (1994) argued that children's internalization of parental values depends partly on how disciplinary messages are perceived and understood.

The principle of compassionate instruction can also be interpreted through self-determination theory. Grolnick and Ryan (1989) demonstrated relationships between parenting

approaches and children's self-regulation, while Joussemet et al. (2008) emphasized autonomy-supportive parenting. These perspectives suggest that children benefit when caregivers provide meaningful guidance without unnecessary psychological pressure.

Similarly, the importance of parental emotional composure corresponds with Eisenberg et al. (1998), who examined how parental responses to emotions contribute to children's emotional socialization. Research by Lunkenheimer et al. (2020) further highlights the dynamic nature of parent-child emotional interactions. Together, these studies suggest that children's emotional development involves reciprocal interactions rather than one-directional instruction.

A distinctive dimension of the Islamic framework concerns positive supplication. Unlike behavioral reinforcement, prayer constitutes a spiritual practice through which parents express dependence upon God and concern for children's well-being. Its theological significance should therefore be distinguished from experimentally established psychological mechanisms.

Together the six principles suggest a three-level Islamic pedagogical model: an ethical orientation of rifq; practices of affectionate communication, self-restraint, positive prayer, explanation, and exemplarity; and potential developmental aims such as dignity, moral understanding, and responsibility. The first two levels are the article's textually informed conceptual synthesis; the third consists of educational aims, not measured results. The contribution is to clarify how moral authority can remain firm without being coercive and how religiously motivated care differs from permissiveness. Its limitation is the absence of fully indexed primary quotations and the lack of direct observational evidence.

The Relevance of Gentle Parenting Methods in *Arba'unal Jiyad fi Tarbiyatil Aulad* to Contemporary Parenting Challenges

The contemporary relevance of rifq is developed as an interpretive extension rather than a finding located literally in a historical religious chapter. Three contexts are considered: supervision of digital media, children's emotional experiences, and the cultivation of age-appropriate autonomy. The linking principle is proportional, respectful guidance—adults remain responsible for safeguarding children, but their intervention should take account of age, vulnerability, and explanation. These applications are illustrative proposals informed by contemporary literature. Because the corpus contains no digital-parenting observations or intervention outcomes, the study cannot demonstrate that any suggested practice improves mental health or technology use.

The first area concerns parenting in the digital environment. Contemporary children encounter digital devices, social media platforms, online entertainment, and educational technologies from increasingly early developmental stages. These circumstances require parents to establish appropriate boundaries while maintaining communication and emotional trust. The principle of *rifq* suggests that digital supervision should involve patient explanation, collaborative decision-making, and consistent guidance rather than intimidation or unexplained restrictions.

Within this interpretive framework, parents can establish age-appropriate screen-use agreements, discuss online content, and encourage children to evaluate digital information critically. Such practices reflect the broader educational principle that effective guidance requires understanding children's perspectives while maintaining parental responsibility.

The second area concerns emotional well-being and psychological adjustment. The analyzed material emphasizes recognizing children's emotional experiences without immediately responding through criticism, rejection, or punishment. When children experience frustration, sadness, anxiety, or disappointment, gentle parenting encourages attentive listening and emotionally supportive communication.

This interpretation positions emotional validation as a practical expression of compassion. Parents may acknowledge children's feelings while continuing to establish appropriate behavioral expectations. For example, a child's anger can be recognized as an understandable emotional experience without permitting aggressive behavior toward others.

The third area involves developing independence, creativity, and personal responsibility. The principle of gradual guidance, commonly associated with *tadrij*, provides a conceptual foundation for allowing children to develop competencies progressively. Rather than immediately imposing solutions, caregivers can encourage exploration, provide manageable choices, and support problem-solving activities.

These findings suggest that *rifq* can accommodate children's growing autonomy without eliminating parental guidance. However, the documentary evidence does not establish specific improvements in creativity, emotional regulation, or digital behavior attributable to this approach.

The relevance of *rifq* to digital parenting can be understood through contemporary research on parental mediation. Livingstone and Helsper (2008) examined parental strategies for regulating children's Internet use, highlighting different approaches to supervision and communication. Livingstone et al. (2017) further demonstrated the importance of children's digital skills and parental mediation in navigating online opportunities and risks.

These findings suggest that supportive communication can complement protective restrictions. Nevertheless, gentle parenting should not be interpreted as eliminating necessary safeguards, particularly when children encounter harmful content, online exploitation, or age-inappropriate digital environments.

Regarding emotional well-being, Pinquart (2017a) synthesized associations between parenting dimensions and externalizing behavioral problems; a separate meta-analysis examined internalizing symptoms, including anxiety and depression (Pinquart, 2017b). These findings provide empirical context but do not establish that rifq itself produces a specific psychological effect.

Hajal and Paley (2020) additionally emphasized parental emotional regulation as an important consideration in children's emotional socialization. This perspective corresponds with the Islamic educational expectation that caregivers demonstrate patience and restraint before attempting to regulate children's behavior.

The relationship between gentleness and independence can be examined through research on autonomy-supportive parenting. Joussemet et al. (2008) explained how parenting practices that support children's psychological needs may facilitate motivation and adaptive development. Similarly, Grolnick and Ryan (1989) identified relationships between parental approaches and children's self-regulation.

These theoretical connections indicate that compassionate guidance and appropriate autonomy are compatible rather than contradictory. Children can be encouraged to make decisions while remaining accountable for their actions.

Importantly, the present study does not demonstrate that *rifq* produces predetermined psychological improvements or measurable increases in creativity. Such claims would require observational, longitudinal, or experimental research.

The article's theoretical contribution lies in distinguishing three propositions that are often conflated: rifq as a norm of Islamic educational ethics, gentle guidance as an enactment of that norm, and favorable child development as a potential but unmeasured outcome. This distinction creates space for critical dialogue with authoritative parenting and attachment perspectives without treating religious teachings as psychological hypotheses already proven. On that basis, the relevance of rifq to digital boundaries, emotional communication, and autonomy is plausible but inferential. Future analysis should verify the original chapter and hadith citations before testing concrete parenting practices in empirical settings.

CONCLUSIONS

This textual study reconstructs rifq as an ethical principle of Islamic child education in Chapter Eleven of Arba'unal Jiyad fi Tarbiyatil Aulad. The reported narratives portray patience with children, affectionate conduct, restraint in speech, and responsible moral guidance. Their contribution is not a demonstration that gentle parenting produces specific psychological outcomes, but a normative account of how educational authority can be exercised without intimidation and humiliation. By separating religious teaching from its pedagogical interpretation, the study offers a clearer basis for evaluating claims about child education.

Six interconnected principles were identified: affection, avoidance of harmful expressions and supplications, positive prayer, noncoercive guidance, respectful communication, and adult exemplarity. The interpretive framework differentiates the textual illustrations supporting these principles from contemporary educational applications. Some themes draw on overlapping narrations; consequently, the list should be read as an analytical categorization, not necessarily as six discrete prescriptions originally enumerated by the author of the chapter. Exact passage citations remain necessary to make each thematic inference auditable.

Rifq can inform proposed practices in digital supervision, emotional communication, and the gradual development of autonomy when combined with clear and appropriate boundaries. This is a conceptual contribution to Islamic educational pedagogy rather than evidence of practical effectiveness. Its principal limitation is incomplete bibliographic information for the primary book and insufficiently specified hadith locations, alongside the absence of field data. The most

important next step is to verify each narrated passage against the edition actually used, reproduce a concise text-to-code matrix, and subsequently investigate selected pedagogical practices through observational or comparative research.

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