

## Parenting Values and Practices among Muslim Parents in Indonesia

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Despite the fact that Muslims are fast becoming part of the world population, they are the least known group. Moreover, Muslims have been seriously misunderstood and negatively perceived because of several tragic events related to terrorist attacks or wars in the Middle East countries. In this light, the current study examined how parenting values and practices varied by importance of religion, gender, and generation, based on the questionnaire data collected from 312 Muslim fathers and mothers living in Jakarta, Indonesia. The most salient result of this study was that the religion was at the center of everyday lives. The importance of religion in their lives clearly translated in their parenting styles by engaging in religious practices with their children. At the same time, Muslim parents in Indonesia had a high level of expectation for their children's education and making happy family life as well as being faithful as Muslim. This study contributed to promoting cultural sensitivity towards Muslims by examining Indonesian Muslim parents' parenting values and practices.

*Keywords:* Muslim parents in Indonesia, importance of religion in life, parenting values, parenting practices, reciprocity, mutual understanding

As contemporary societies are rapidly becoming more multicultural and globalized than any other time in their history, understanding similarities and differences among diverse groups has become a meaningful task. Most contemporary urban societies now become culturally plural, but it is not easy to take 'value neutral' perspectives for describing and interpreting similarities and differences in human behaviors of other cultures (Berry, 2011). The idealized multicultural society is described as in balance between the maintenance of mainstream cultural identities and the full and equitable

participation of all ethno-cultural groups. Realistically, such balance is rarely made, because one group in the larger society is usually dominant over the other minority groups (Berry, 2011). Therefore, Berry emphasized that successful acculturation requires "mutual accommodation among all groups and individuals living together in the diverse society"(Berry, 2010, p.97). In other words, the reciprocity of intercultural attitudes is critical (Berry, 2006). The reciprocity of intercultural attitudes can be nurtured by understanding others first, then accepting them. The core idea for understanding changing dynamics of contemporary society through Berry's ecocultural perspectives is that the

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process of acculturation takes place in all groups and all individuals in contact.

Although Berry's theory of acculturation and ecocultural perspectives were developed through research conducted in the U.S. or Canada, experiences of these societies can provide a frame of reference in understanding rapidly changing dynamics of individual and group similarities and differences in other societies. Drawing from Berry's conceptualization of acculturation and ecocultural perspectives, the goal of this study was to increase our understanding about parenting values and practices among Muslim parents in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Muslims are the fastest growing group of population in the world. Approximately 1.6 billion Muslims live in different parts of the world. Since 1990 to 2010 the Muslim population grew on an average of 2.2% annually becoming the 23.4% of the world population. Moreover, it has been projected for the Muslim population to grow twice the rate of non-Muslim population until 2030 making up 26.4% of the projected world population of 8.3 billion in 2030 (Grim & Karlm, 2011). Despite the fact that Muslims are fast becoming part of the world population, they are the least known group. Moreover, Muslims have been seriously misunderstood and negatively perceived because of several tragic events related to terrorist attacks or wars in the Middle East countries (Sirin & Fine, 2007). In this light, the present paper attempted to improve our knowledge about Muslims as the lack of understanding is a significant barrier to promoting mutual inter-group understanding and reciprocity of intercultural attitudes for many contemporary societies with Muslim migrants.

Muslims share the Islamic faith, but they are a distinct religious group with intra-group diversity, including ethnicities, geographic regions, social and economic status, and languages (Ahmad & Szpara, 2003). Best example that challenges our misperception about Muslim is Indonesia. The largest Muslim majority country in the world is Indonesia, not a country in the Middle East (Nilan, Parker,

Bennett, & Robinson, 2011). It is necessary to provide some background information about Indonesia and its Muslim population. Indonesia is the world's 4th most populous country with approximately 13,000 islands. It stretches about 5,000 kilometers from Sumatra in the west to Jayapura in the east (Chung, 2007). Most of all, Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim country. About 88% of 240 million Indonesian people call themselves Muslims (Butt, 2010). Surprisingly, the Muslim population of Southeast Asia is greater than that of the Middle East. Simply compared, there are roughly three times as many Muslims in Indonesia as in Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan and Iraq combined (Prothero, 2008). Indonesian constitution guarantees the right to the freedom of religion, but atheists are not allowed in Indonesia. Indonesian government recognizes six official religions including Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism (Chung, 2007). Religious affiliation is marked on the official identification cards. Religion is a required subject in both public and private schools (French, Purwono, & Triwahyuni, 2011). Despite its enormously large number of islands with ethnically, linguistically, religiously, and culturally diverse population, Indonesia has developed a shared identity defined by a national language and religious pluralism within a majority of Muslim population (Chung, 2007). In that sense, Indonesia itself is an interesting region for exploring socio-cultural context and way of life in relation to religious beliefs and practices, particularly how religiousness affects the daily lives of Indonesians.

Yet, culture is such a broad concept that it is very difficult to understand its complex nature. In this study, culture is defined as "a total way of life, including the history and traditions of a group, and the experiences and ways of living, perceiving and thinking of individuals and groups of people" (De Gaetano, Williams, & Volk, 1998, p.7). In order to understand other culture, we need to focus on specific aspects or behaviors of people in certain cultural groups. Since each culture has unique ways of living and

coping with life's demands, outsiders are sometimes better to detect how one culture is enacted by the insiders within the specific culture. In that sense, the authors in this study were interested in parenting and religiosity of Muslims in Indonesia. As De Gaetano and others (1998) emphasized, "the family and religion, along with schools, are primary institutions that transmit culture and its message. Parents play a crucial role in this process, because it is through their example that children acquire the deep value systems, behaviors, and preference for certain things that become characteristic of their individual culture in the broadest sense" (p.10).

An extensive research on parental influences on child development or socialization has been done (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Harris, 1998; Maccoby, 1992), and among them research on religion and parent in particular indicated that parental religiosity influences different aspects of parenting (Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar, & Swank, 2001; Vermeer, 2011). In addition, religion can be a powerful tool to interpret and make sense of social behavior of particular groups (Warnk, 2010), because religion can play a significant role for shaping individual behavior and group identity (Warnk, 2010; Takriti, Barrett, & Buchanan-Barrow, 2006).

Taken this broad concept of culture as well as the importance of parenting and religion in transmitting culture to the next generation, the current study addresses how parenting values and practices vary by importance of religious beliefs and practices, gender, and generation, based on the questionnaire data collected from 312 Muslim fathers and mothers living in Jakarta, Indonesia. The following questions were asked in relation to the impact of religion on the aspects of parenting values and practices:

*Religious practices and importance of religion*

- (1) To what extent do Muslim fathers and mothers engage in religious practices?
- (2) How important is religion to them?

*Parenting practices and values*

- (1) To what extent do Muslim fathers and mothers engage in religious practices with their children?
- (2) To what extent do they teach Islamic values to their children?
- (3) How do they discipline their children?
- (4) Are there any differences in parenting practices and values for son and daughter?
- (5) What do they expect from their children with the education and lifestyles?
- (6) To what extent do they accept the different religion of children's spouse?

**Method**

This study was part of the larger three-phase research project conducted by the SNU Multicultural Human Ecology Center (MHEC), designed to generate knowledge about understanding religious beliefs and practices on family life and parenting practices among Muslim men and women in Jakarta, Indonesia. The first phase of the project was conducted in Korea through in-person interviews with several informants including a visiting Muslim scholar from Indonesia, two daycare teachers of Muslim children from South East counties, a Muslim international student from Middle East country, and a domestic expert in Indonesian language and culture. The second phase of the project was a pilot field study conducted in Jakarta, Indonesia for five days in June, 2011. During the visit, seven research team members conducted in-person interviews with four Muslim men and six women about their daily lives and religious practices. Most of interviews were done in their workplaces, but several interviews were arranged at their homes. In addition to these interviews, our research team met with people of various SES and different religious beliefs. For the final third phase of the research, based on the information gathered from the pilot field study, the authors constructed a questionnaire reflecting demographic characteristics, religious belief,

family and parenting, clothing, health, and food culture of Indonesian Muslims.

The questionnaires were distributed to male and female employees of two manufacture companies located in Jakarta by one of the key informants in the pilot field study. A total of 481 questionnaires were collected and returned for analysis. Among them, we only used data from 312 (64.9%) questionnaires completed by Muslim men and women who had at least one child. The 66 (13.7%) out of 481 questionnaires were excluded because of missing data and insincerity. Among remained 415 questionnaires, 24 (5.0%) questionnaires were from respondents who have different religion, 79 (16.4%) questionnaires were from respondents who don't have children.

The questionnaire items analyzed in this study include the frequency of religious practices, importance of religion in life, teaching Muslim way of life to children and engaging religious practices with children, ways of discipline, and expected level of education and lifestyles for their children including religious conservation for marriage. Several questionnaire items were measured by a single-item question or several questions on a Likert-type scale. And other items were assessed by the priority responses for the statement lists or the constructed responses.

The statistical analyses were conducted for investigating the participants' general characteristics and reviewing the overall tendency of responses for items. Also, the data were analyzed for comparing the responses for items by gender (father, mother), generation (30s or younger, 40s or older), and importance of religion (item score of 1~6, item score of 7). The statistical analyses were conducted through descriptive statistics, independent t-test, chi-square test by SPSS 19.0 program.

## Results

### Demographic Characteristics of Participants and Their Family

Demographic characteristics of the sample were shown in the Table 1. There were 203 (65.1%) fathers and 109 (34.9%) mothers, twice as many fathers as mothers. Participants were 38.06 years old ( $SD = 9.60$ ) on average. The majority of the participants have one child (40.1%) or two children (38.5%). And the majority of fathers and mothers completed high school (49.3% and 38.5% respectively) or college (19.7% and 39.4% respectively). The 94.6% of the fathers and 77.1% of the mothers had jobs.

### Religious Practices and Importance of Religion

Several questions on religious belief and practices were asked for participants and the analysis results are as follows.

Islam is well known as rigorous rituals and practices. For investigating these aspects, the frequencies of the several religious practices were asked. As expected, the majority of the participants reported that they always prayed five times a day (72.0%) and always fasted during Ramadan (93.2%). The frequency of reading Quran was relatively lower and only 46.8% of the respondents reported that they always or almost always read Quran. As shown in Table 2, the mean score of fasting during Ramadan was the highest ( $M = 4.91$ ,  $SD = .34$ ), followed by prayer five times a day ( $M = 4.59$ ,  $SD = .72$ ), and reading Quran ( $M = 3.60$ ,  $SD = .85$ ). There was no significant difference by gender, generation, and importance of religion.

As expected, but still surprisingly enough, religion was significant part of participants' life. When asked the importance of religion in their lives, the overall mean score was 6.21 out of 7 as shown in Table 2. There was no significant difference in their belief by their gender and generation. Religious homogeneity was noteworthy.

Table 1  
*Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 312)*

Variables	Categories	Frequency (%) Mean (SD)		
Gender	Male (Father)	203(65.1)		
	Female (Mother)	109(34.9)		
Age	Generation 1	Less than 20s	9(2.9)	
		20s	54(17.3)	
		30s	112(35.9)	
		sub total	175(56.1)	
	Generation 2	40s	100(32.1)	
		50s	30(9.6)	
		60s	7(2.2)	
		subtotal	137(43.9)	
		Mean Age	38.06(9.59)	
	Number of Children	1	125(40.1)	
2		120(38.5)		
3 or more		67(21.4)		
Education (Father = 203) (Mother = 109)	No Education	Father	0(0)	
		Mother	1(0.9)	
	Elementary	Father	8(3.9)	
		Mother	10(9.2)	
	Middle School	Father	54(26.6)	
		Mother	13(11.9)	
	High School	Father	100(49.3)	
		Mother	42(38.5)	
	College/University	Father	40(19.7)	
		Mother	43(39.4)	
	Current Working Status (Father = 203) (Mother = 109)	Working	Father	192(94.6)
			Mother	84(77.1)
No Jobs		Father	11(5.4)	
		Mother	23(21.1)	

Table 2  
Religious Practices and Importance of Religion ( $N = 311$ )

	Mean (SD)	Gender		Generation		Importance of Religion	
		Father ( $n = 202$ ) Mother ( $n = 109$ )	$t$	Gen1 ( $n = 174$ ) Gen2 ( $n = 137$ )	$t$	Value1 ( $n = 182$ ) Value2 ( $n = 129$ )	$t$
Importance of Religion (1-7)	6.21 (1.01)	6.16 6.31	-1.19	6.26 6.15	.94		
Religious Practice (1-5)							
Prayer five times a day	4.59 (.72)	4.61 4.54	.79	4.61 4.55	.66	4.59 4.58	.08
Reading Quran	3.60 (.85)	3.61 3.57	.43	3.66 3.51	1.55	3.57 3.63	-.55
Fasting during Ramadan	4.91 (.34)	4.92 4.91	.19	4.91 4.92	-.27	4.91 4.92	-.43

Note. Gen1, Gen2 are the groups of 30s or younger and 40s or older, respectively. Value1, Value2 indicate the groups who reported 1~6 score, 7score, respectively in the importance of religion. The analyzed total and group frequencies are different from the whole frequencies because of the missing response.

### Parenting Values and Practices

Along with religious belief and practices, several questions on parenting values and practices were asked.

*Teaching Muslim way of life and religious practices with children.* The next question was to what extent are you engaged in the religious practices with children. Among the religious practices, teaching the Muslim ways of life was what Muslim parents conducted with their children most frequently. 75.7% of parents always taught the Muslim ways of life to their children. On a 5-point scale, the mean score of teaching the Muslim ways of life was the highest ( $M = 4.65$ ,  $SD = .07$ ), followed by daily prayer ( $M = 4.02$ ,  $SD = .97$ ), sending to Islamic school ( $M = 3.81$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ), visiting Mosque ( $M = 3.61$ ,  $SD = .84$ ), reading the Quran ( $M = 3.46$ ,  $SD = .89$ ), and teaching Arabic to read the Quran

( $M = 3.42$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ) as shown in Table 3. The scores did not vary by gender, generation, and perceived importance of religion.

In relation to teaching the Muslim ways of life to their children, more specific questions were asked. Most of the participants marked 4 or 5 out of 5 point scale as answers. As shown in Table 3, the mean scores of all 5 questions were over 4 out of 5. It is interesting that the 40s or older thought marrying someone with same Islamic belief more importantly compared to the 30s or younger. And the remarkable results were statistical group differences by perceived importance of religion. The respondents who placed more strong value on religion considered teaching children to have Muslim ways of life more importantly. The group differences were found in all 5 teaching items, such as seeing themselves as Muslim ( $t = -4.94$ ,  $p < .001$ ), having Muslim ways of life ( $t = -4.15$ ,  $p < .001$ ), marrying someone with same Islamic belief ( $t =$

Table 3  
Teaching Muslim Way of Life and Religious Practices with Children (N = 310)

	Mean (SD)	Gender		Generation		Importance of Religion	
		Father (n = 201) Mother (n = 109)	t	Gen1 (n = 173) Gen2 (n = 137)	t	Value1 (n = 181) Value2 (n = 129)	t
Religious Practices with Children (1-5)							
Daily prayer	4.02 (.97)	4.08 3.92	1.37	4.05 3.98	.67	3.97 4.09	-1.01
Visiting Mosque	3.61 (.84)	3.66 3.53	1.22	3.67 3.54	1.39	3.60 3.63	-.29
Reading the Quran	3.46 (.89)	3.44 3.49	-.44	3.53 3.37	1.56	3.39 3.57	-1.71
Teaching Arabic to read the Quran	3.42 (1.07)	3.39 3.49	-.75	3.40 3.46	-.48	3.42 3.42	.02
Sending to Islamic School	3.81 (1.32)	3.82 3.79	.21	3.83 3.78	.32	3.80 3.81	-.06
Teaching the Muslim ways of life	4.65 (.70)	4.63 4.70	-1.03	4.69 4.61	1.08	4.64 4.68	-.55
Teach Muslim Way of Life (1-5)							
Seeing themselves as Muslim	4.63 (.58)	4.62 4.64	-.37	4.60 4.66	-.95	4.50 4.80	-4.94***
Having Muslim way of life	4.45 (.87)	4.45 4.44	.10	4.41 4.49	-.77	4.29 4.66	-4.15***
Marrying someone with same Islamic belief	4.61 (.84)	4.61 4.62	-.04	4.53 4.72	-2.04*	4.47 4.82	-4.11***
Propagating Islamic belief to others	4.19 (.88)	4.21 4.16	.45	4.15 4.24	-.94	4.08 4.34	-2.48*
Living as Muslim	4.50 (.96)	4.53 4.44	.71	4.42 4.59	-1.54	4.31 4.75	-4.48***

\* $p < .05$  \*\*\* $p < .001$

Note. Gen1, Gen2 are the groups of 30s or younger and 40s or older, respectively. Value1, Value2 indicate the groups who reported 1~6 score, 7score, respectively in the importance of religion. The analyzed total and group frequencies are different from the whole frequencies because of the missing responses.

-4.11,  $p < .001$ ), propagating Islamic belief to others ( $t = -2.48, p < .05$ ), and living as Muslim ( $t = -4.48, p < .001$ ). There was no statistical difference by gender.

*Disciplinary methods and differences in discipline for son and daughter.* When asked to mark all the items that they think are acceptable for disciplinary methods, most of Muslim parents selected the item of talking to children (85.2%) and some checked the item of curfew (11.9%) as shown in Table 4. The great majority of parents expressed that any physical punishment should not be used and virtually all of them objected to any type of physical punishment, particularly providing the information that spanking by stick was not used at all (100.0%). Muslim parents disciplined their children through talking and behavioral regulations, and they rarely used physical punishment. It is interesting that the tendencies of responding the curfew as the possible disciplinary methods vary by the perceived importance of religion ( $\chi^2 = 7.12, df = 1, p < .01$ ). The participants who placed more strong value on religion marked the curfew ( $n = 29$ ) more than the expected ( $n = 21.5$ ). On the other hand, the participants who placed less strong value on religion marked the curfew ( $n = 8$ ) less than the expected ( $n = 15.5$ ). There was no significant difference between groups according to gender and generation.

In order to explore how parental values and expectations were translated in their everyday parenting, we asked any preference for boys or girls and more specific questions on discipline. When asked the preference for boys, the mean level of responses was 5.97 ( $SD = 1.23$ ) out of 7 points. There were statistical differences only by gender. More fathers tended to prefer to have boys ( $t = 2.26, p < .05$ ). The level of preference for boys did not vary by generation and perceived importance of religion.

When asked whether different disciplinary methods should be applied according to the gender of children, the majority of 72.3% answered that same disciplinary methods should be used for both boys and girls. And this

tendency did not vary by gender, generation, and the importance of religion as shown in Table 5.

*Expected level of education.* When asked the expected level of education for children, the majority of participants reported the college (54.9%) or graduate school or over (38.2%) as the expected education level for children (Table 6). Although there was no statistical difference of expected education level for children by gender and generation, it was noteworthy that there was statistical difference by the perceived importance of religion ( $\chi^2 = 9.63, df = 3, p < .05$ ). The respondents who placed less strong value on religion expected high school ( $n = 13$ ) or college ( $n = 97$ ) as the adequate level of education for children more than the expected ( $n = 8.5, n = 91.8$ , respectively). However, the respondents who placed more strong value on religion expected graduate school or over ( $n = 58$ ) as the adequate level of education for children more than the expected ( $n = 48.2$ ).

It is also noteworthy that 46.0% of the group who valued more on religion expected their children to be educated up to graduate school or more. In the expected level of education for son and daughter, majority of respondents reported the same expected level (77.9%) and some of respondents expected the higher level of education to son (17.0%). There was no group difference by gender, generation, and perceived importance of religion.

*Expected lifestyles of children.* In addition to the expected level of education, the participants were asked about the expected lifestyles of their children. As shown in Table 7, participants most expected children to live by doing what they wish ( $M = 4.85, SD = .59$ ) and the following expected lifestyles were living with financial stability ( $M = 4.82, SD = .71$ ), making a happy family ( $M = 4.50, SD = 1.01$ ), achieving higher social status ( $M = 4.48, SD = .95$ ), and being faithful to the role of a Muslim ( $M = 3.93, SD = 1.34$ ). It is interesting to note that fathers expected their children to make a happy family more than mothers ( $t = 2.83, p < .01$ ) and group of strong religiosity expected more from their



Table 4  
Acceptable Disciplinary Methods for Misbehavior

Area	Agreement	Total Frequency (%) (N = 310)	Gender		Generation			Importance of Religion			
			Father (n = 203)	Mother (n = 107)	χ <sup>2</sup>	Gen1 (n = 174)	Gen2 (n = 136)	χ <sup>2</sup>	Value1 (n = 180)	Value2 (n = 130)	χ <sup>2</sup>
Talking to Children	Yes	264(85.2)	177(87.2)	87(81.3)	1.92	152(87.4)	112(82.4)	1.51	152(84.4)	112(86.2)	.18
	No	46(14.8)	26(12.8)	20(18.7)		22(12.6)	24(17.6)		28(15.6)	18(13.8)	
Curfew	Yes	37(11.9)	24(11.8)	13(12.1)	.01	18(10.3)	19(14.0)	.96	29(16.1)	8(6.2)	7.12**
	No	273(88.1)	179(88.2)	94(87.9)		156(89.7)	117(86.0)		151(83.9)	122(93.8)	
Taking Children's Personal Goods(toys)	Yes	2(0.6)	0(0)	2(1.9)	3.82	1(0.6)	1(0.7)	.03	0(0)	2(1.5)	2.79
	No	308(99.4)	203(100.0)	105(98.1)		173(99.4)	135(99.3)		180(100.0)	128(98.5)	
Time out/Standing in the Corner	Yes	(N = 309)	(n = 202)	(n = 107)	.00	(n = 173)	(n = 136)	.14	(n = 180)	(n = 129)	4.23
	No	3(1.0)	2(1.0)	1(0.9)		2(1.2)	1(0.7)		0(0)	3(2.3)	
Spanking by Hand	Yes	7(2.3)	3(1.5)	4(3.7)	1.62	5(2.9)	2(1.5)	.68	5(2.8)	2(1.5)	.53
	No	303(97.7)	200(98.5)	103(96.3)		169(97.1)	134(98.5)		175(97.2)	128(98.5)	
Spanking by Stick	Yes	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	-	0(0)	0(0)	-	0(0)	0(0)	-
	No	310(100.0)	203(100.0)	107(100.0)		174(100.0)	136(100.0)		180(100.0)	130(100.0)	

\*\*p < .01

Note. Gen1, Gen2 are the groups of 30s or younger and 40s or older, respectively. Value1, Value2 indicate the groups who reported 1-6 score, 7score, respectively in the importance of religion. The analyzed total and group frequencies are different from the whole frequencies because of the missing responses.



Table 6  
Expected Level of Education for Children

Categories	Total Frequency (%)		Gender		Generation		Importance of Religion	
	Father	Mother	Gen1	Gen2	Value1	Value2	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2$
Expected Level of Education for Children (N = 293)	(n = 196)	(n = 97)	(n = 161)	(n = 132)	(n = 167)	(n = 126)		
To Middle School	5(2.6)	0(0)	3(1.9)	2(1.5)	3(1.8)	2(1.6)		
To High School	7(3.6)	8(8.2)	12(7.5)	3(2.3)	13(7.8)	2(1.6)		9.63*
To College	113(57.7)	48(49.5)	92(57.1)	69(52.3)	97(58.1)	64(50.8)		
Graduate School/ over	71(36.2)	41(42.3)	54(33.5)	58(43.9)	54(32.3)	58(46.0)		
Differences of Expected Level of Education for Son and Daughter (N = 289)	(n = 193)	(n = 96)	(n = 160)	(n = 129)	(n = 165)	(n = 124)		
Same	225(77.9)	79(82.3)	126(78.8)	99(76.7)	122(73.9)	103(83.1)		
Higher to Son	49(17.0)	12(12.5)	28(17.5)	21(16.3)	33(20.0)	16(12.9)		5.60
Higher to daughter	10(3.5)	2(2.1)	3(1.9)	7(5.4)	8(4.8)	2(1.6)		
Don't know	5(1.7)	3(3.1)	3(1.9)	2(1.6)	2(1.2)	3(2.4)		

\*p < .05

Note. Gen1, Gen2 are the groups of 30s or younger and 40s or older, respectively. Value1, Value2 indicate the groups who reported 1~6 score, 7score, respectively in the importance of religion. The analyzed total and group frequencies are different from the whole frequencies because of the missing responses.

Table 7  
Expected Lifestyles of Children (N = 311)

Expected Lifestyles (1-5)	Mean (SD)	Gender		Generation		Importance of Religion	
		Father (n = 203) Mother (n = 108)	t	Gen1 (n = 175) Gen2 (n = 136)	t	Value1 (n = 181) Value2 (n = 130)	t
Being Faithful to the Role of a Muslim	3.93 (1.34)	4.01 3.80	1.30	3.87 4.02	-1.00	3.94 3.92	.14
Making a Happy Family	4.50 (1.01)	4.63 4.25	2.83**	4.49 4.50	-0.07	4.50 4.48	.16
Achieving Higher Social Status	4.48 (.95)	4.46 4.54	-.72	4.44 4.54	-.93	4.40 4.60	-1.99*
Living with Financial Stability	4.82 (.71)	4.85 4.76	1.10	4.76 4.90	-1.80	4.80 4.85	-.59
Living by Doing What He/She Wishes	4.85 (.59)	4.84 4.88	-.51	4.87 4.84	.44	4.81 4.91	-1.63
Religious Conservation for Marriage (1-5)	4.72 (.75)	4.71 4.74	-.42	4.69 4.75	-.73	4.68 4.78	-1.14

\*p < .05 \*\*p < .01

Note. Gen1, Gen2 are the groups of 30s or younger and 40s or older, respectively. Value1, Value2 indicate the groups who reported 1~6 score, 7score, respectively in the importance of religion. The analyzed total and group frequencies are different from the whole frequencies because of the missing responses.

children to achieve higher social status than the other group ( $t = -1.98, p < .05$ ). There was no significant difference by generation.

Marrying someone with the same Islamic belief was also very important. For the question of allowing the children's marriage with the spouse having different religion, the overwhelming majority participants (95.4%) answered "Objection" or "No acceptance at all." The overall mean score on a 5-point scale was 4.72 ( $SD = .75$ ) and there was no significant difference by gender, generation, and importance of religion.

### Discussion

The most salient result of this study was the religion seemed to be at the center of everyday life. The group average of 6.21 on a 7-point scale indicating the importance of religion in their lives clearly illustrated how much Muslim participants in this study value their Islamic faith. These beliefs were fully supported by their everyday religious practices as well. 93.2% of participants reported that they always fasted during Ramadhan and 72% always prayed five times a day. Furthermore, the consistency in religious homogeneity across gender and generation was noteworthy. Our study confirmed that religion is an important part of everyday life in Indonesia. And three religious groups out of six in all, which are Muslim, Christian and Hindu Indonesians, take their religious practice seriously (Adney-Risakotta, 2009; Nilan, Parker, Bennett, Robinson, 2011). The Muslim parents' beliefs in the importance of religion were well translated in their parenting styles with gentle approaches to their children without any use of physical punishment. It is known that most families in Jakarta use religious teachings as the standard of good and bad behaviors (Schwalb, Schwalb, Hyun, Chen, Kusanagi, Satiadarma, & Mackay, & Wiley, 2010).

It is expected that there are socialized gender roles in Indonesia. Fathers are responsible for symbolic and spiritual leadership in the family, while mothers are expected to take care of

practical details of running the family life (Adeney-Risakotta, 2009). Therefore, the following results of this study should be interpreted with caution. Since it is the mother who usually brings up children, the responses about parenting practices in this study could be inconsistent with their actual parenting. In other words, the answers may tend to be biased to the socially expected attitudes or principles rather than showing their actual parenting attitude.

Although some fathers expressed their preference for boys, the participants in this study showed consistently high expectations about educating their children. Especially the younger the parents were, the higher the expectations were. 43% of parents in 20s and 30s expected that their children to be educated up to graduate schools and more. These findings in parents' values on education was supported that well-educated person is highly respected in Indonesia and the symbolic value on education has long historic root due to their colonial period (Nilan et al, 2011). In addition to their strong desire to higher education, the most significant finding was their expected lifestyles of their children. The participants of this study most strongly want their children to be faithful to the role of a Muslim, followed by having a happy family life, achieving higher social status, financial stability, and the life by doing what children wishes.

The current study was limited in its descriptive nature, but it was a pioneering work in the sense that we just began to generate knowledge about Muslim families in Indonesia through the first-hand survey data. Indonesian Muslim parents in this study offered us a lens into understanding their parenting practices and values, and the findings can be used to promote cultural sensitivity toward Muslims.

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Received July 16, 2012

Revision Received August 3, 2012

Accepted August 6, 2012