



DIGITAL CULTURAL ACCULTURATION AND DA'WAH ETHIC THE ETHICAL DILEMMA OF INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN

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Abstract

Technological advances in the digital age have brought significant changes in the communication patterns between parents and children, especially in Islamic preaching. Children often feel that such surveillance intrudes on their privacy, creating tension in interpersonal relationships. This study examines the ethical dilemmas faced by parents, especially regarding the supervision of children's digital activities in the digital era. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, through interviews with 50 participants consisting of 30 parents and 20 children, it was found that most parents feel the need to monitor their children's digital activities to protect them from various risks, including cyber bullying and exposure to negative content. The findings of this study emphasise the urgency of improving digital literacy for parents and children, as well as the need to integrate Islamic values in parenting. The principle of amar ma'ruf nahi munkar serves as a guideline in building more open communication, thereby reducing conflict and strengthening mutual trust. In addition, the study revealed challenges in implementing this approach, highlighting the need for support from educational institutions and communities in providing adequate resources for parents. The conclusions of this study emphasise the importance of balancing the protection and respect of children's rights, so that parents can function as advocates for their children's development in the digital age, without neglecting moral and ethical values.

Keywords: *Ethical dilemma, parent-child communication, digital protection, freedom, Islamic preaching.*

Abstrak

Kemajuan teknologi di era digital telah membawa perubahan signifikan dalam pola komunikasi antara orang tua dan anak, terutama dalam dakwah Islam. anak-anak seringkali merasakan pengawasan tersebut mengganggu privasi mereka, menciptakan ketegangan dalam hubungan interpersonal. Penelitian ini mengkaji dilema etika yang dihadapi orang tua terutama mengenai pengawasan aktivitas digital anak di era digital. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, melalui wawancara dengan 50 partisipan yang terdiri dari 30 orang tua dan 20 anak, ditemukan bahwa sebagian besar orang tua merasa perlu untuk memantau aktivitas digital anak demi melindungi mereka dari berbagai risiko, termasuk perundungan siber dan paparan konten negatif. Temuan penelitian ini menekankan urgensi peningkatan literasi digital bagi orang tua dan anak, serta perlunya mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai Islam dalam pola pengasuhan. Prinsip amar ma'ruf nahi munkar berperan sebagai pedoman dalam membangun komunikasi yang lebih terbuka, sehingga dapat mengurangi konflik serta memperkuat rasa saling percaya. Selain itu, penelitian ini mengungkap berbagai tantangan dalam menerapkan pendekatan tersebut, sehingga menyoroti kebutuhan akan dukungan dari lembaga pendidikan dan komunitas dalam menyediakan sumber daya yang memadai bagi orang tua. Kesimpulan penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya keseimbangan antara perlindungan dan penghormatan terhadap hak anak, agar orang tua dapat



berfungsi sebagai pendamping yang mendukung perkembangan anak di era digital, tanpa mengabaikan nilai-nilai moral dan etika.

Kata Kunci: Dilema etika, komunikasi orang tua-anak, perlindungan digital, kebebasan, dakwah Islam.

I. INTRODUCTION

Parent child communication is a central element in a healthy family relationship because it enables parents to transmit moral values, provide emotional support, and guide children in making decisions. The rapid development of digital technology, however, has transformed this relationship. Children increasingly encounter religious information, social interaction, entertainment, and peer influence through digital platforms. Parents must therefore negotiate between protection and respect for privacy and autonomy.

In the context of Islamic da'wah, the dilemma is more complex because parents act as caregivers, educators, protectors, and role models. The ethical tension can be understood through four recurring dilemmas: individual interests versus collective interests, justice versus compassion, truth versus loyalty, and short-term versus long-term consequences. Monitoring a child's phone or social-media account may provide immediate protection, yet excessive surveillance can damage trust and reduce the child's sense of responsibility.

Islamic teachings place significant value on privacy and interpersonal dignity. The prohibition of *tajassus* (spying) and *ghibah* (backbiting) provides an ethical reminder that parental authority should not automatically justify secretive or humiliating surveillance. Parents should build dialogue and trust so that digital supervision becomes collaborative rather than coercive. In Indonesian Islamic family-law discourse, parental responsibility includes safeguarding children's faith, dignity, life, intellect, and property while adapting to technological change (Sonya, 2024).

Digital media also create new opportunities for Islamic da'wah. Social-media platforms disseminate religious messages rapidly and reach audiences beyond geographical boundaries, but digital da'wah requires literacy and ethical communication because information can be distorted or circulated without verification (Abdurrahman & Badruzaman, 2023; Sukayat, 2023). Parents participate in da'wah not only through explicit religious instruction but also through everyday digital behavior.

The principles of *qawlan ma'rufan* (speaking appropriately and kindly), *qawlan layyinan* (speaking gently), and *qawlan sadidan* (speaking truthfully and correctly) are



relevant to family communication in digital environments. Parents who model these principles can help children develop responsible digital behavior and reduce the likelihood that religious guidance will be experienced as coercive (Samsudin & Putri, 2023).

Previous discussions of Islamic parenting emphasize parental adaptation, selective media use, screen-time boundaries, information literacy, and positive activities (Baharun & Finori, 2019; Dheasari, 2022). The remaining ethical question is how parents can protect children from genuine digital risks without undermining privacy, trust, and independent moral development. This study addresses that question by examining parent and child experiences through Islamic ethical principles.

II. THEORITICAL REVIEW

Ethical Dilemmas in Digital Islamic Da'wah

Digital Islamic da'wah involves tension between reach and theological integrity. YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok enable religious messages to reach large audiences, but the need for short and accessible messages can encourage oversimplification. A similar problem appears in parent-child communication: explanations that are too technical may alienate children, while excessive simplification may create misunderstanding (Simamora & Farid, 2024).

Another dilemma concerns message distortion and credibility. Children may receive religious information from social media, friends, websites, or artificial-intelligence systems. When parents are not communicatively present, external sources may become more influential even when they have not been verified. Digital da'wah therefore requires critical literacy and credible communicators (Bahrudin & Waehama, 2024).

Content production also creates ethical questions. Parents may unintentionally use fear or emotional pressure to encourage religious observance. Such approaches may produce short-term compliance but weaken long-term internalization. Ethical communication requires honesty, proportionality, empathy, and respect for developmental stage (Samsudin & Putri, 2023).

Privacy is equally important. Secretly opening private messages, sharing a child's personal problems on social media, or publicly ridiculing the child can damage dignity and trust. The ethical goal is not the elimination of supervision, but its transformation into transparent, proportionate, and educative guidance (Simangunsong & Ferizal, 2025).

Islamic Values and Digital Parenting

The principle of amar ma'ruf nahi munkar provides a normative framework for guiding children toward beneficial conduct and away from harmful behavior. It can be connected to consequence-based reasoning that seeks maslahat, rule-based reasoning that respects Islamic norms, and care-based reasoning that prioritizes empathy and compassion. Balanced application prevents parental protection from becoming indiscriminate surveillance.

Smart techno parenting emphasizes collaboration between technology and education, information literacy, screen-time boundaries, positive activities, selective media choices, and attention to children's online and offline environments (Baharun & Finori, 2019). These principles support the view that parents should facilitate children's digital development rather than merely control their devices.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to explore parent-child interaction in the digital environment of Islamic da'wah. The approach was selected because the issue involves ethical judgments, experiences of privacy, parental concerns, and the meanings participants attach to supervision and religious guidance.

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews with parents and children who actively use social media, supplemented by observation of interactions in WhatsApp groups. The participants comprised 50 people: 30 parents (60%) and 20 children (40%). Participant selection considered differences in age, educational background, and experience with digital technology.

The interview data and observations were analyzed thematically. Recurring themes concerned digital risks, parental monitoring, privacy, communication, digital literacy, and the integration of Islamic values. Ethical considerations included participant consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation.

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

Participant Profile

The participant composition consisted of 30 parents and 20 children. This distribution enabled comparison between parents' protective concerns and children's privacy and autonomy concerns.

Table 1. Participant Profile

Category	Participants	Percentage
Parents	30	60%
Children	20	40%
Total	50	100%

Parental Concerns about Digital Risks

Most parents considered monitoring necessary because children may face cyberbullying, harmful content, excessive gadget use, and privacy or data-security risks. The percentages represent the parental concerns reported in the source study; respondents could identify more than one risk.

Table 2. Parental Concerns about Digital Risks

Digital risk	Parents reporting	Percentage
Cyberbullying	25	83.3%
Exposure to harmful content	20	66.7%
Gadget dependence	15	50.0%
Privacy and data security	18	60.0%

Cyberbullying was the most prominent concern (83.3%), followed by harmful content (66.7%), privacy and data security (60%), and gadget dependence (50%). Parents associated these risks with psychological harm, exposure to violence or pornography, reduced direct interaction, and vulnerability to misuse of personal information. These concerns help explain why some parents favor intensive monitoring even when children interpret such behavior as a lack of trust.

Parental Monitoring and the Protection–Privacy Dilemma

The study identified three broad monitoring approaches: strict monitoring (40%), open monitoring (35%), and no monitoring (25%). Strict monitoring reflects a protection-oriented response, whereas open monitoring emphasizes discussion and negotiated boundaries. The absence of monitoring may indicate a stronger emphasis on autonomy or limited parental capacity.

Table 3. Parental Monitoring Approaches

Approach	Percentage
Strict monitoring	40%
Open monitoring	35%

No monitoring	25%
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The central ethical dilemma is not whether parents should care about safety, but how that care should be exercised. Secret surveillance may reduce immediate risk but undermine trust. Complete non-intervention may leave children without guidance. The more ethically sustainable position is proportionate supervision: parents explain the reason for monitoring, involve children in setting boundaries, and adjust supervision according to age, maturity, and risk.

Integration of Islamic Values in Parenting

The findings indicate that parents integrate Islamic values through empathy, open discussion, religious activities, and the principle of amar ma'ruf.

Table 4. Integration of Islamic Values in Parenting

Parenting aspect	Percentage
Application of amar ma'ruf	80%
Teaching empathy	75%
Religious activities	70%
Open discussion of digital risks	65%

Parents who integrated these values tended to describe communication in terms of guidance, empathy, and shared understanding rather than punishment alone. Amar ma'ruf nahi munkar, when applied through wisdom and care, does not require humiliating the child or removing all autonomy. Parents can explain risks, invite questions, and encourage responsible choices.

Digital Literacy as an Ethical Requirement

Both parents and children expressed a need for stronger digital literacy. Parents acknowledged that they did not always possess sufficient knowledge of platforms, privacy settings, or emerging online risks, while children wanted greater understanding of safe internet use. Parental authority becomes less effective when it is based on fear of technology rather than informed understanding.

Digital literacy should therefore be treated as part of Islamic parenting. Parents can discuss verification of religious information, privacy protection, respectful commenting, consent before sharing photographs, and the consequences of forwarding unverified information. These practices operationalize qawlan ma'rufan and qawlan sadidan in everyday digital life (Sukayat, 2023; Simangunsong & Ferizal, 2025).

Ethical Strategies for Parent Child Digital Engagement

1. Teaching ethical content creation: model honesty, responsibility, respectful language, and positive content creation while avoiding manipulative or sensationalist material (Bahrudin & Waehama, 2024).
2. Strengthening critical thinking and media literacy: discuss online information, compare sources, verify claims before sharing, and encourage questions.
3. Building responsibility and accountability: establish shared agreements on screen time, appropriate content, privacy, and responses to online conflict; allow children to learn from mistakes.
4. Involving religious and educational institutions: use trusted religious content for family discussion and participate in Islamic parenting or digital-literacy programs (Sebihi & Moazzam, 2024).

Discussion

The findings confirm that digital parenting involves a genuine ethical conflict between protection and freedom. Parents' concerns are connected to concrete online risks, while children's concerns about privacy are also legitimate because excessive surveillance can weaken trust and discourage honest communication.

From an Islamic ethical perspective, the solution is not simply to choose protection over freedom or freedom over protection. *Maslahat* supports protection from serious harm, while the prohibition of *tajassus* and the emphasis on dignity require parents to avoid unnecessary intrusion. Care-based communication adds empathy, patience, and attention to developmental needs. Together these principles support transparent and proportional supervision.

The findings are consistent with earlier discussions emphasizing digital literacy and adaptive parenting (Dheasari, 2022; Baharun & Finori, 2019). They also add an ethical dimension: digital literacy is insufficient when separated from communication quality. A technically competent parent can still damage trust if monitoring is secretive or humiliating, while a parent with limited technical skills can remain an effective guide by learning with the child and maintaining open communication.

Digital *da'wah* within the family should therefore be understood as lived practice. Children observe how parents verify information, respond to disagreement, protect privacy, and communicate online. Parents consequently "preach" through behavior as much as through explicit religious instruction.

The study is descriptive and qualitative, with data obtained through interviews and observation of parent child interactions in digital spaces. The findings therefore describe participants' experiences and perceptions within the study context and should not be interpreted as statistical generalizations to all Indonesian families.

Study Limitations

Finally, religious and educational communities should complement family efforts through training and trusted content. Fourth, parents should strengthen their own digital literacy. Because technology changes rapidly, parental authority cannot depend solely on age or family status.

Third, families should create shared agreements concerning screen time, social-media use, content, and privacy. Such agreements can make children active participants in managing their own digital behavior. They also provide parents with a consistent basis for guidance rather than relying on unpredictable reactions. Second, parents should prioritize education before restriction.

First, parents should make digital rules transparent and age-appropriate. Children should understand what is being monitored, why monitoring is necessary, and under what circumstances parental access may be required.

Recommendations for Ethical Digital Engagement

The study's reported distribution of parental approaches 40% strict monitoring, 35% open monitoring, and 25% no monitoring illustrates that families adopt different responses to the same digital risks. The findings support a gradual movement toward open monitoring because it allows parents to maintain protective involvement while creating opportunities for dialogue. This approach is consistent with the article's emphasis on empathy, mutual trust, and Islamic communication ethics.

The quantitative descriptions in the qualitative study provide a clear picture of the risks that shape parental concerns. Cyberbullying was identified by 83.3% of the parent respondents, negative content by 66.7%, privacy and data security by 60%, and gadget dependence by 50%. These figures indicate that parents' monitoring behavior is strongly connected with concrete concerns about children's digital environments.

Islamic Communication Principles in the Digital Family

The smart techno-parenting approach discussed in the source article combines technological tools with education, information literacy, screen-time boundaries, positive

activities, selective media use, and monitoring of online and offline environments. Such an approach can shift parental involvement from surveillance toward accompaniment.

The research findings show that both parents and children perceive a need for stronger digital literacy. Parents acknowledge difficulties in keeping pace with technological change, while children want greater understanding of how to use the internet safely.

Digital Literacy as an Ethical Parenting Requirement

The findings indicate that this tension can be understood through four ethical paradigms: individual versus group interests, justice versus compassion, truth versus loyalty, and short-term versus long-term consequences. A decision that appears beneficial in the short term may produce negative relational consequences in the long term.

Digital communication changes the meaning of parental guidance because parents and children do not always assign the same meaning to monitoring. From the parents' perspective, monitoring is primarily a protective practice. From the children's perspective, however, the same action may be interpreted as a lack of trust.

Ethical Tensions in Parent–Child Digital Communication

Digital Risk	Number of Parents	Percentage
Cyberbullying	25	83.3%
Negative content	20	66.7%
Gadget dependence	15	50.0%
Privacy and data security	18	60.0%

V. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that digital transformation creates an ethical dilemma for parents who seek to protect children while respecting privacy and autonomy. Cyberbullying was the most prominent concern (83.3%), followed by harmful content (66.7%), privacy and data security (60%), and gadget dependence (50%). These concerns encourage monitoring, yet children may experience intensive surveillance as a violation of trust.

A more balanced approach is possible through open communication, digital literacy, shared rules, empathy, and proportionate supervision. Islamic values especially *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*, *qawlan ma'rufan*, *qawlan layyinan*, and *qawlan sadidan* can provide an ethical framework for protecting children without reducing them to passive recipients of control.

Parents should function as facilitators of children's digital development. Educational institutions and religious communities can strengthen this role through digital-literacy

training and Islamic parenting resources. Ethical digital engagement ultimately requires continuous dialogue between religious values and technological change so that children can become safe, responsible, critical, and morally grounded digital users.

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