Tunas Cendekia: Jurnal Program Studi Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini
P-ISSN 2622-0849 E-ISSN 2654-6051
Website: https://ejournal.iainpalopo.ac.id/index.php/tunascendekia
DOI: https://doi.org/10.24256/tunascendekia.v10i1.13160
Vol. 10, No. 1, 2027, pp. 127-144

Parental Ambivalence in Ibn al-ʿAdīm's *al-Darārī*: Implications for Parent Support in Early Childhood Education

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Abstract

Islamic parenting literature usually presents children as a blessing and a trust (*amānah*), leaving little room for parents' fatigue, anxiety, and doubt. Research on parental burnout, in turn, rarely engages classical Islamic texts, although early childhood education (PAUD) services meet parents of young children almost daily. This study examines how *al-Darārī fī Dhikr al-Dharārī* by Ibn al-ʿAdīm (d. 660 AH/1262 CE) acknowledges the burden of parenting without denying the value of children, and what this implies for parent support in PAUD. Using a qualitative hermeneutic analysis of the 1984 printed edition, the study combines thematic and intertextual reading of the core chapters (1–4 and 11) and supporting chapters (5–6, 8–9, and 12–13), a brief *takhrīj* of key prophetic reports, and a critical interpretive synthesis with contemporary research. Five themes emerged: arguments for the value of children, voices of reluctance, praise and complaint within one frame, anxiety and economic readiness, and textual strategies for managing ambivalence. By juxtaposing chapters of encouragement and rejection, and of praise and complaint, the book treats ambivalence as a normal part of parenthood. Several ideas converge with the balance-between-risks-and-resources model of parental burnout, whereas gender bias, the court context, and the endorsement of corporal punishment are normative discontinuities. The synthesis yields the SABAR model (*Syukur realistis*, *Akui beban*, *Bagi sumber daya*, *Atur harapan*, *Rawat relasi*), a conceptual framework that PAUD institutions can use in parent classes, in noticing parental exhaustion early, and in teacher–parent partnerships; its effectiveness requires empirical testing.

Keywords: parental ambivalence; parental burnout; early childhood education; parent support; Ibn al-ʿAdīm; Islamic parenting

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Article Information
Received: 18 October 2026
Accepted: 15 November 2026
Published: 17 November 2026

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1. Introduction

Parenthood brings both meaning and exhaustion. Parental burnout is a syndrome that arises when the demands of parenting chronically exceed the resources available to a parent; it is marked by overwhelming exhaustion in the parental role, contrast with one's former parental self, feeling fed up, and emotional distancing from the child (Mikolajczak & Roskam, 2018; Roskam et al., 2018). Its prevalence varies widely across 42 countries, and cultural individualism explains more of this variation than family factors such as the number and age of children (Roskam et al., 2021). The consequences reach children directly: parental burnout is associated with escape ideation, neglect, and violence (Hansotte et al., 2021; Ren et al., 2024), and, together with borderline personality, it was the strongest predictor of child maltreatment among the parental factors compared by Schittek et al. (2023).

Popular belief holds that children bring happiness, yet parents and non-parents in 24 European countries did not differ in overall happiness or life satisfaction (Denson & Denson, 2026), and whether parenthood raises or lowers mental wellbeing depends on gender and family policy (Nordenmark, 2021). Idealized parenthood can itself become a burden: perfectionistic concerns about being a perfect parent increase the risk of burnout (Lin et al., 2023), and parents who regret parenthood often remain silent for fear of being judged as failures (Johnson & Pétursdóttir, 2024; Piotrowski, 2021). At the same time, the choice to remain childfree has become more visible, for reasons ranging from lifestyle and freedom to health and economic concerns (Glass & Fraley, 2026; Jafar et al., 2023). In Indonesia, religious responses to this choice have taken a largely legal form, classifying it as *ḥarām* or *mubāḥ*

according to its motive (Zuhriah et al., 2023). This framework is important, but it says little about the inner experience of parents who are tired, anxious, or doubtful.

The issue bears directly on early childhood education (*pendidikan anak usia dini*, PAUD). PAUD institutions are often the public service that meets parents of young children most regularly, and Indonesian regulation positions families as partners of educational units, including through parent classes (*kelas orang tua/wali*) (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2017). International evidence suggests that this contact matters. During the COVID-19 lockdown in Finland, parents who received more support from early childhood education and care centres reported less burnout (Sorkkila et al., 2025), and in a sample of low-income preschoolers, children showed stronger social skills and fewer problem behaviours when both their teachers and their parents reported low burnout (Zehner et al., 2026). Among Indonesian mothers of children aged 2–5 years, gratitude and social support weakened the link between parental role restriction and burnout (Abidin et al., 2025). Parent support in PAUD therefore needs material that acknowledges the weight of parenting, not only its obligations; in Islamic PAUD settings, such material is likely to draw on religious sources.

Islamic educational discussions of children, however, generally centre on *tarbiyah*, *taʾdīb*, and parental obligations (Abdalla, 2025). Normative treatises such as al-Anbābī's *risālah* present the child as a trust that requires habituation and supervision from an early age (Al-Anbābī, 2011), and prophetic reports about children are commonly read as sources of character education (Hamdani, 2023). Historical studies show that classical sources record attitudes toward children more diversely than normative literature suggests (Gil'adi, 2024), but the emotional side of parenthood—fatigue, anxiety, and doubt—has rarely been studied in its own right. One text that addresses it directly is *al-Darārī fī Dhikr al-Dharārī* by Kamāl al-Dīn ʿUmar ibn Aḥmad Ibn al-ʿAdīm (d. 660 AH/1262 CE). Ibn al-ʿAdīm is known mainly as the historian of Aleppo, and his short treatise on children has received little scholarly attention. Its thirteen chapters gather prophetic reports, reports from Companions and early authorities (*athar*), sayings, anecdotes, and poems about children. Its distinctive feature is its structure: a chapter encouraging people to have children is followed by a chapter on reasons to avoid them, and a chapter praising children is followed by one on the hardships they bring (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, pp. 15–28).

This structure makes the book a valuable historical source on parental ambivalence. In family studies, ambivalence refers to contradictions in parent–child relations that cannot be fully reconciled, both in social structures and in cognition, emotion, and motivation (Lüscher & Pillemer, 1998). The concept allows love and exhaustion, or gratitude and complaint, to coexist in a parent without being treated as moral failure. Three gaps follow. First, parental burnout research has developed mainly within psychology and has not yet entered into dialogue with classical Islamic texts. Second, Islamic studies of the childfree choice in Indonesia tend to stop at its legal status, leaving the emotional experience behind the choice largely unexamined (Jafar et al., 2023; Zuhriah et al., 2023). Third, to the best of our knowledge, *al-Darārī* has not been examined in a scholarly article, and its potential for parent support in early childhood settings remains unexplored.

This study therefore asks how a classical text acknowledges the burden of parenting without denying the value of the child, and what this implies for supporting parents in PAUD. It aims to (1) identify how *al-Darārī* constructs parental ambivalence, drawing mainly on the two juxtaposed chapter pairs (chapters 1-4) and the chapter on parental anxiety (chapter 11), with chapters 5-6, 8-9, 12, and 13 as supporting data; (2) assess the convergences, tensions, and discontinuities between these ideas and research on parental burnout and childfree discourse; and (3) develop a conceptual framework for parent support in PAUD that acknowledges the burden of parenting without denying the child's value. The proposed framework is named SABAR after the Indonesian word *sabar* (patience, from the Arabic *ṣabr*), and its letters stand for five Indonesian terms: *Syukur realistis* (realistic gratitude), *Akui beban* (acknowledging the burden), *Bagi sumber daya* (sharing resources), *Atur harapan* (adjusting

expectations), and *Rawat relasi* (nurturing relationships). The model is the researchers' critical reconstruction, not Ibn al-ʿAdīm's own formulation, and it has not yet been tested as an intervention.

2. Research Methods

2.1 Research Design

This study uses a qualitative textual design: a hermeneutic analysis of a single classical work, followed by a critical interpretive synthesis with contemporary research. The hermeneutic component treats understanding as a movement between the parts of a text and the whole, and between the historical horizon of the text and the questions of the present reader (Gadamer, 2004). Individual passages were therefore read in light of the book's structure, its court setting, and its genre as an *adab* anthology, and the book as a whole was read in light of its parts. The synthesis component follows the logic of critical interpretive synthesis, which uses diverse sources to build theoretical arguments while questioning their assumptions (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006). The study does not test hypotheses and is not a systematic review; contemporary studies serve as a dialogue partner for interpreting the classical text. Because the text does not use modern psychological concepts such as burnout, the analysis attends to proximity of meaning and function without assuming that Ibn al-ʿAdīm refers to the same phenomenon as the modern construct.

2.2 Primary Source, Edition, and Corpus

The primary source is the Arabic text of *al-Darārī fī Dhikr al-Dharārī* in the edition of ʿAlāʾ ʿAbd al-Wahhāb Muḥammad (Dār al-Salām and Dār al-Hidāyah, 1st ed., 1404 AH/1984 CE; 88 pages). The editor published it under the title *Tadhkirat al-Ābāʾ wa Tasliyat al-Abnāʾ al-Musammā bi-l-Darārī fī Dhikr al-Dharārī*; the first part of this title was supplied by the editor rather than by the author (Al-Rawāḍiyah, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 53). The work was printed earlier in Istanbul by Maṭbaʿat al-Jawāʾib, and a manuscript copy is held in the Nuruosmaniye Library in Istanbul (MS 3790) (Al-Rawāḍiyah, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 53). The text was read in the digitized version of the 1984 edition in al-Maktabah al-Shāmilah (book ID 7326), which retains the printed pagination (pp. 15–88); all page references in this article refer to that printed edition. The colophon confirms the author's name and the occasion of composition (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 88). Arabic terms are transliterated following the IJMES system, while familiar words such as hadith, sunnah, and Qur'an are given in their anglicized forms. All translations are the researchers' own.

All thirteen chapters were read in full in a first pass to map the book's structure. Chapters were then selected purposively according to how directly they address the burden of parenting (Table 1). The core corpus consists of chapters 1–4, which form the two juxtaposed pairs that carry the book's ambivalence, and chapter 11, which records parental anxiety most explicitly. Chapters 5–6, 8–9, 12, and 13 serve as supporting data because each contributes a specific element—expectations, readiness, discipline, parent–teacher partnership, fairness, or fear of leaving children behind—to the themes established in the core chapters. Chapters 7 and 10 were read as context but not coded, because they consist mainly of expressions of love and of children's witty sayings, with little material on the burden of parenting.

Table 1
Corpus of the study: chapters of al-Darārī *and their role in the analysis*

Ch.	Chapter title (translated)	Pages	Role in the analysis
1	On having children and encouraging it	15–17	Core: value of children

Ch.	Chapter title (translated)	Pages	Role in the analysis
2	On refraining from having children and warnings against them	18–20	Core: voices of reluctance
3	On praising children and the blessing they bring	21–24	Core: praise; paired with chapter 4
4	On reproaching children and the toil they bring to fathers	25–28	Core: complaint and exhaustion
5	On gifted children	29–39	Supporting: expectations; a mother's narrative
6	On foolish children	40–42	Supporting: expectations; gendered statements
7	On fathers' love for their children	43–47	Context only
8	On what fathers owe their children	48–55	Supporting: readiness, education, corporal punishment
9	On fathers' instructions to their children's teachers	56–60	Supporting: parent–teacher partnership, discipline
10	On children's sayings and replies	61–77	Context only
11	On fear, compassion, and tenderness toward children	78–81	Core: parental anxiety
12	On fathers preferring some children over others	82–84	Supporting: fairness and adaptive affection
13	On those who wished to live, and disliked death, for the sake of a child	85–88	Supporting: fear of leaving children behind

Note. Page numbers refer to Ibn al-ʿAdīm (1984).

2.3 Data Collection and Extraction

Data were collected through document analysis (Bowen, 2009). The first stage examined the author's identity, the title, the chapter structure, the colophon, and the sources the author cites explicitly. The second stage extracted propositions from the primary text, recording for each relevant passage its location, the speaker quoted, the form of discourse (prophetic report, *athar*, saying, anecdote, or verse), and the attitude toward the child it expresses. These data were grouped into initial themes: the value of the child, rejection of the child, praise and complaint, anxiety and economic readiness, and the management of ambivalence. The third stage collected supporting evidence from contemporary literature, noting each study's aims, design, sample, key findings, and cultural context. Contemporary literature was searched in bibliographic databases and publisher pages using keywords such as parental burnout, parental ambivalence, parental regret, childfree, value of children, religious coping, parent involvement in early childhood education, and childhood in medieval Islam. Empirical studies were limited to the last five years (2021–2026), whereas theoretical, classic, and methodological works were not limited by year; sources whose bibliographic identity could not be verified were excluded. The comparison was not intended to prove that modern concepts appear in the classical text, but to identify commonalities, differences, and possible conceptual reconstructions.

2.4 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed through thematic analysis combined with intertextual reading and critical synthesis. Thematic analysis followed Braun and Clarke (2006), who view themes as patterns of meaning developed through the researcher's systematic engagement with the data; the process was iterative, so initial categories were revisited when new passages extended or contradicted earlier

interpretations. Intertextual reading distinguished the material Ibn al-ʿAdīm quotes from earlier sources from the way he arranges it. This matters because most of the book consists of quotations, so its ideas cannot be attributed wholly to the author; his contribution is visible mainly in the selection of material, the order of chapters, and the juxtaposition of themes.

In the synthesis stage, each classical theme was compared with contemporary literature and classified into one of three categories: convergence, when principles correspond after differences of context are taken into account; tension, when an idea must be reinterpreted to fit contemporary understanding; and normative discontinuity, when a historical practice cannot be recommended because it conflicts with scientific evidence or with the principles of child protection and equality. Finally, the relations among themes were synthesized into the SABAR model. For each dimension, the textual basis in *al-Darārī*, the interpretive step taken by the researchers, and the supporting contemporary evidence were recorded separately, so that readers can distinguish what the text says from what the researchers infer.

2.5 Interpretive Validity and Treatment of Hadith

Interpretive validity was sought through source traceability, coding consistency, cross-literature comparison, and explicit separation between quotations, summaries of content, findings of previous research, and the researchers' interpretations. Key passages are reproduced in Arabic with their translations in Table 3 so that readers can check the translations, and terms such as *kadd* (exhaustion) and *ḥuzn* (grief) are interpreted according to their context of use rather than solely through modern equivalents. Because *al-Darārī* cites prophetic reports without chains of transmission, and because several of these reports carry part of the argument, a brief *takhrīj* was conducted for the key reports (Table 2). The *takhrīj* identifies the main sources of each report and reports the assessments of hadith critics; it does not offer an independent judgment of authenticity. Where a report is weak or unattested as a prophetic saying, the analysis treats it as evidence of what circulated in Ibn al-ʿAdīm's milieu, not as normative proof.

Table 2
Brief takhrīj *of key prophetic reports cited in* al-Darārī

Report as cited	Page	Main sources	Assessment reported by hadith critics
Tanāsalū takthurū fa-innī ubāhī bikum al-umam yawm al-qiyāmah	15	Not located in this wording in the canonical collections. The closest is ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf* (no. 10391), from Saʿīd ibn Abī Hilāl, worded *tanākaḥū takthurū*. Its meaning is attested in *tazawwajū al-wadūd al-walūd fa-innī mukāthirun bikum al-umam* (Abū Dāwūd, no. 2050; al-Nasāʾī).	The ʿAbd al-Razzāq report is *mursal* (the Successor omits the Companion). The meaning rests on the connected report in Abū Dāwūd and al-Nasāʾī.
Inna aṭyab mā akala al-rajul min kasbih wa-inna waladahu min kasbih	15	From ʿĀʾishah: Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, and al-Nasāʾī (Ibn al-Athīr, *Jāmiʿ al-uṣūl*, no. 8137); Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*.	Accepted: Ibn Ḥibbān included it in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*.
Report of Ibn Masʿūd on a time when a man perishes at the hands of his parents, wife, and children, who	18–19	Al-Khaṭṭābī, *al-ʿUzlah*; Abū Nuʿaym, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*; a similar report from Abū Hurayrah in al-Bayhaqī, *al-Zuhd al-kabīr* (no. 439).	Weak: al-ʿIrāqī judged both routes weak; al-Albānī lists it among weak reports (*Ḍaʿīf al-targhīb*, no. 1637).

Report as cited	Page	Main sources	Assessment reported by hadith critics
"reproach him for the narrowness of his livelihood"			
Al-walad mabkhalah majbanah majhalah, with the variant *maḥzanah*	25	Ibn Mājah (no. 3666) from Yaʿlā al-ʿĀmirī, spoken as the Prophet embraced al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn; al-Ḥākim from al-Aswad ibn Khalaf, with *majhalah* and *maḥzanah*.	Sound chain: al-Būṣīrī, *Miṣbāḥ al-zujājah*, judged the chain of Ibn Mājah ṣaḥīḥ; al-ʿIrāqī judged al-Ḥākim's chain ṣaḥīḥ.
Al-walad thamarat al-qulūb (the child is the fruit of hearts)	21	Abū Yaʿlā, *al-Musnad*, from Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī, worded *al-walad thamarat al-qalb wa-innahu majbanah mabkhalah maḥzanah*.	Weak chain: it includes Ibn Abī Laylā and ʿAṭiyyah al-ʿAwfī, both regarded as weak by hadith critics. The praise and the complaint appear in the same report.
Al-banāt ḥasanāt wa-l-banūn niʿam (daughters are good deeds and sons are blessings)	21	Not located as a prophetic report. Earlier *adab* works attribute it to Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad: al-Ābī, *Nathr al-durr*; al-Thaʿālibī, *Durar al-ḥikam*; al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabāʾ*.	Not a prophetic report; it records an *adab* voice that values daughters.
Iʿdilū bayna awlādikum	82	Al-Bukhārī (no. 2587) and Muslim (no. 1623), from al-Nuʿmān ibn Bashīr.	Ṣaḥīḥ (agreed upon by al-Bukhārī and Muslim).

Note. Hadith numbers follow the standard numbering of each collection. Assessments are those of the named critics; this study does not issue independent judgments of authenticity.

3. Results

The results are presented in six parts: the context and genealogy of the text, followed by the five themes. Key passages are given in Arabic with translations in Table 3, and the themes are summarized in Table 4.

3.1 Context of Writing and Textual Genealogy

The colophon shows that *al-Darārī* was compiled for al-Malik al-Ẓāhir Ghāzī, ruler of Aleppo, when his son al-Malik al-ʿAzīz was born (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 88), that is, around 610 AH, when the author was about twenty-two (Al-Rawāḍiyah, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 53). Praise of the ruling house runs through the book. The author states that being the cause of the birth of a ruler like the sultan is more meritorious before God than a lifetime of supererogatory prayer and fasting (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 16), and he presents the infant al-ʿAzīz as the finest example of a gifted child (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 35). The book is thus a work of court *adab* written for an elite reader, not a legal treatise or a parenting manual for the general public. It is also highly intertextual. Ibn al-ʿAdīm collects prophetic reports, *athar* of the Companions, sayings attributed to Aristotle, verses of al-Mutanabbī, and excerpts from al-Zamakhsharī's *Rabīʿ al-Abrār* and Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih's *al-ʿIqd* (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, pp. 17, 20, 51). His contribution lies mainly in selecting and arranging this material, and the arrangement follows a consistent pattern of juxtaposition: chapter 1 encourages having children and chapter 2 gives reasons to avoid them; chapter 3 praises children and chapter 4 lists the hardships they cause; chapter 5 praises gifted children and chapter 6 mocks foolish ones. The author deliberately presents two sides of having children within one frame.

Table 3

Key passages from al-Darārī*: Arabic text and translation*

No.	Arabic text	Translation	Page
1	قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: «تناسلوا تكثروا فإني أباهي بكم الأمم يوم القيامة»	The Prophet said: “Have children and you will multiply, for I will take pride in you before the nations on the Day of Resurrection” (*tanāsalū takthurū*).	15
2	وعود مصلحة الولد إلى الوالد حياً وميتاً	… and the benefit of the child returns to the parent, both in life and after death.	16
3	يعيرونه بضيق المعيشة ويكلفونه ما لا يطيق فيوردونه موارد الهلكة	They reproach him for the narrowness of his livelihood and burden him with what he cannot bear, until they lead him to ruin.	19
4	ما حاجتي إلى من إن عاش كدني وإن مات هدني	[ʿĪsā:] What need have I of one who, if he lives, will exhaust me, and if he dies, will shatter me?	19
5	ولا تنظر إليهم شزراً فيملوا حياتك ويتمنوا وفاتك	[Al-Aḥnaf to Muʿāwiyah:] Do not look at them with a scornful glance, lest they grow weary of your life and wish for your death.	23
6	وإنما أولادنا بيننا ... أكبادنا تمشي على الأرض	Our children among us are but our livers walking on the earth (*akbādunā*, “our livers,” i.e., our innermost hearts).	24
7	«الولد مبخلة مجبنة مجهلة» ويروى «محزنة»	“The child is a cause of miserliness, cowardice, and ignorance”; it is also narrated “a cause of grief.”	25
8	الولد إن عاش كدك وإن مات هدك	A child, if he lives, exhausts you, and if he dies, shatters you.	26
9	الحمد لله على كل حسنة، ونسأل الله الزيادة في كل نعمة، ولا مرحباً بمن إن كنت عائلاً أنصبني، وإن كنت غنياً أذهلني	[Al-Ḥasan, on the birth of a son:] Praise be to God for every good thing, and we ask God for an increase in every blessing; but no welcome to one who wears me out if I am poor and distracts me if I am rich.	28
10	عذاب رعف به علي الدهر، وبلاء لا يقوم معه الصبر	[A Bedouin on his son:] A torment that fate has bled upon me, an affliction that patience cannot withstand.	40
11	لا تأت بالولد إلا بعد معيشة كافية وكفاية باقية وضيعة نامية	[Al-ʿUtbī:] Do not have a child except after a sufficient livelihood, a lasting provision, and a growing estate.	52
12	فإذا احتجت إلى أن تتناولهم بأدب فليكن ذلك في ستر لا يعلم به أحد من الغاشية فيهونوا عليهم	[ʿAbd al-Malik to his sons’ teacher:] If you need to discipline them, let it be in private, unknown to the attendants, lest they be belittled in their eyes.	57
13	إذا ترعرع الولد تزعزع الوالد	When the child grows up, the parent is shaken.	78
14	واذكر صبابتنا إليك وشوقنا ... وارحم بناتك إنهن صغار	[A Bedouin wife:] Remember our love and longing for you, and have mercy on your daughters, for they are little.	81
15	صغيرهم حتى يكبر، ومريضهم حتى يصح، وغائبهم حتى يقدم	[A Bedouin, asked which child he loves most:] The youngest until he grows up, the	83

No.	Arabic text	Translation	Page
		sick until he recovers, and the absent until he returns.	

Note. Arabic text from Ibn al-ʿAdīm (1984). In passage 9, the digitized text reads وغن, an evident typographical error for وإن, which is used here. Translations are the researchers' own.

3.2 The Value of the Child: Religious, Social, and Eschatological Arguments

The first theme, the value of children, is developed in chapter 1. Ibn al-ʿAdīm opens the book with a prophetic report encouraging people to have children (*tanāsalū takthurū*) and another stating that a man's child is part of his earnings (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 15; Table 3, no. 1). He then cites Abū Ḥanīfah's view that marriage is preferable to devoting oneself to supererogatory worship, because marriage produces children whose benefit returns to their parents in life and after death (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, pp. 15–16; Table 3, no. 2). This benefit takes three forms: the child's support for the parents during life, maintenance when they are in need, and the continuing reward of prayer, almsgiving, and supplication after their death (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 16). The value of children in this chapter is thus religious, socio-economic, and eschatological. Children appear not only as a trust to be educated but also as a source of support and continuity for their parents.

3.3 Voices of Reluctance: Reasons for Not Having Children

The second theme appears in chapter 2, whose title speaks explicitly of refraining from having children and of warnings against them. The chapter opens with the verse that some spouses and children are enemies to a person (Q 64:14) and a prophetic report advising that family and children should not be one's main preoccupation (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 18). It then cites a report, attributed to Ibn Masʿūd, about a time when a man perishes at the hands of his parents, wife, and children because they "reproach him for the narrowness of his livelihood and burden him with what he cannot bear" (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, pp. 18–19; Table 3, no. 3). This report is weak (Table 2), so it documents a circulating perception rather than a normative teaching. The chapter also records personal reasons for not having children. The Prophet ʿĪsā is reported to have said that he had no need of one who would exhaust him if he lived and shatter him if he died (Table 3, no. 4). One philosopher declined to have children precisely because of his love for children, another because he did not wish to bring others into a world he did not like for himself, and a Bedouin preferred the hardship of celibacy to the struggle of providing for a family (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 19). The reasons for reluctance in this classical text are therefore plural: economic burden, family pressure, fear of grief, a pessimistic view of the world, and ascetic choice. Yet they appear in a book that affirms the value of children as a whole, so the voice of reluctance acknowledges the heavy side of parenting rather than stating the author's final position.

3.4 Praise and Complaint within One Frame

The third theme emerges from the juxtaposition of chapters 3 and 4. Chapter 3 gathers sayings that the child is the fruit of the heart and a fragrance from paradise, together with verses recited by Abū Tammām describing children as *akbādunā tamshī ʿalā al-arḍ*, "our livers walking on the earth," an Arabic image for one's innermost heart (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, pp. 21, 24; Table 3, no. 6). The chapter also contains al-Aḥnaf's advice to Muʿāwiyah, who had shunned his son Yazīd: parents should be a shading sky and a gentle earth for their children and should not look at them with scorn, lest the children grow weary of their parents' lives and wish for their death. The advice led Muʿāwiyah to reconcile with his son (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 23; Table 3, no. 5). Chapter 4, by contrast, gathers expressions of the hardship children cause. A prophetic report describes the child as *mabkhalah, majbanah, majhalah*—a cause of miserliness, cowardice, and ignorance—with a variant adding *maḥzanah*, a cause of grief (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 25; Table 3, no. 7). A proverb states that a child exhausts the parent if he lives and shatters the parent if he dies (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 26; Table 3, no. 8), and ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb is

reported to have told a man carrying his son that the child would test him if he lived and grieve him if he died (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 27). The most ambivalent passage is al-Ḥasan's response to congratulations on the birth of a son: he praises God for every good thing and asks for more blessings, yet says that the child wears him out when he is poor, distracts him when he is rich, and makes him fear that the child will fall into want after his death (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 28; Table 3, no. 9). Gratitude and complaint are present in a single utterance without cancelling each other.

The same pairing recurs in chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 5 celebrates eloquent and courageous children, whereas chapter 6 records fathers' frustration with children who disappoint them; one Bedouin calls his son "a torment that fate has bled upon me, an affliction that patience cannot withstand" (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 40; Table 3, no. 10). Several anecdotes in chapter 6 mock children openly. The pairing shows that the text recognizes differences in children's abilities and that unmet parental expectations are themselves a source of burden.

3.5 Anxiety, Economic Burden, and Readiness for Parenthood

The fourth theme concerns parental anxiety, the subject of chapter 11. The chapter opens with the proverb *idhā taraʿraʿa al-walad tazaʿzaʿa al-wālid*, "when the child grows up, the parent is shaken" (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 78; Table 3, no. 13). Several poems depict fathers who worry that their children will come to depend on others, who travel from land to land for fear that poverty will overtake their children, and who lose sleep over their fate (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, pp. 79–80). Anxiety can change a parent's decisions: a father abandons a journey because of his small child, and a Bedouin cancels his travel after his wife answers him in verse, "have mercy on your daughters, for they are little" (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, pp. 80–81; Table 3, no. 14). A mother's anxiety also appears in chapter 5, where a woman recounts carrying her son "while life was harsh and provision scarce" and later guarding him, fearful, from the evil eye and from people's tongues (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, pp. 37–38). Chapter 13 extends this anxiety to the fear of dying while a child is still young and being left unprotected (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, pp. 85–86).

Economic anxiety is linked to the idea of readiness for parenthood in chapter 8. Ibn al-ʿAdīm quotes al-Zamakhsharī that a child has a right to be provided for generously by his father so that he does not fall into wrongdoing (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 51). He also cites the saying that a person who has a child before having wealth wrongs both himself and the child, and al-ʿUtbī's advice not to have a child without a sufficient livelihood, a lasting provision, and a growing estate (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 52; Table 3, no. 11). Economic burden is therefore not only voiced as a complaint but also framed as a matter of readiness.

3.6 Textual Strategies for Managing Ambivalence

The fifth theme concerns how the text manages the tension between the value and the burden of children. First, it offers a model of response that combines gratitude with an acknowledgment of burden, as in al-Ḥasan's words (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 28). Second, it emphasizes restoring relationships, as al-Aḥnaf's advice moved Muʿāwiyah from estrangement to reconciliation with his son (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 23). Third, it presents affection that adapts to each child's needs: asked which child he loves most, a Bedouin answers, "the youngest until he grows up, the sick until he recovers, and the absent until he returns" (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 83; Table 3, no. 15), and the same chapter includes the prophetic command to treat children fairly in giving (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 82). Fourth, it acknowledges that love can blind, as ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān admits that his love for al-Walīd harmed the boy's education (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 53). Fifth, it shares part of the task of upbringing with teachers. In chapter 9, fathers give their children's teachers explicit instructions: to reform themselves first because children imitate them, to teach the Qur'an without boring the children, not to move them to a new

subject before they have mastered the previous one, and to discipline them in private so that they are not belittled (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, pp. 56–57; Table 3, no. 12). Table 4 summarizes the five themes.

Table 4
Themes of parental ambivalence identified in al-Darārī

Theme	Findings in the primary source (chapters, pages)	Form of ambivalence
Value of children	Encouragement to have children; benefits of children to parents in life and after death (ch. 1, pp. 15–16)	Children as a source of reward and support
Voices of reluctance	Verse and reports on children as a trial; economic, grief-related, and ascetic reasons for not having children (ch. 2, pp. 18–20)	Acknowledgment that having children can be overwhelming
Praise and complaint	Children as the fruit of the heart; children as a cause of miserliness, cowardice, and grief; al-Ḥasan's words; gifted and foolish children (chs. 3–6, pp. 21–28, 40)	Gratitude and complaint coexist
Anxiety and economic readiness	Anxiety as children grow; fear of poverty and of dying early; a mother's vigilance; readiness before having children (chs. 5, 8, 11, 13, pp. 37–38, 51–52, 78–86)	Love that generates anxiety and caution
Managing ambivalence	Honest gratitude; restoring relationships; adaptive affection and fairness; awareness that love can blind; sharing upbringing with teachers (chs. 3, 4, 8, 9, 12, pp. 23, 28, 53, 56–57, 82–83)	Tensions are managed, not denied

Note. Researchers' thematic analysis of Ibn al-ʿAdīm (1984).

4. Discussion

4.1 Ambivalence as a Normal Experience of Parenting

The results show that *al-Darārī* places praise of and complaint about children within one frame. This pattern accords with the concept of ambivalence in family studies, which treats contradictory feelings in parent–child relations as part of the relationship rather than as a sign of failure (Lüscher & Pillemer, 1998). The juxtaposition of chapters 1 and 2, and of chapters 3 and 4, can be read as a textual recognition that having a child involves meaning and burden at the same time. The *takhrīj* strengthens this reading: the soundest report on the burden of children, *al-walad mabkhalah majbanah*, was spoken as the Prophet embraced his grandsons (Table 2), so the burden is named within an act of affection. The finding also accords with research on parental wellbeing, which shows that parents' wellbeing and burnout depend on gender, policy, economic, and social-support conditions (Nordenmark, 2021; Ren et al., 2024), and that the popular idea of children as a guaranteed source of happiness does not match the empirical evidence (Denson & Denson, 2026). Within this frame, *al-Darārī* offers what is rarely found in normative Islamic parenting literature: room to acknowledge the heavy side of parenting without diminishing the value of the child. Yet the book does not leave ambivalence unresolved. It opens by encouraging people to have children and closes with a chapter on parents who wish to live longer for their children's sake (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, pp. 15, 85). Complaints are acknowledged but framed by love and responsibility; acknowledging the burden is a way of understanding parenting more honestly, not of rejecting the child.

4.2 From Kadd to Parental Burnout: Proximity and Limits of the Analogy

The expression *in ʿāsha kaddaka* ("if he lives, he exhausts you") in chapter 4 closely relates to the exhaustion dimension of parental burnout (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 26; Roskam et al., 2018). Al-Aḥnaf's warning against looking at children with scorn likewise resembles emotional distancing, in which an exhausted parent withdraws emotionally from the child (Hansotte et al., 2021; Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 23). This proximity matters because parental burnout has specific effects on child neglect and violence beyond those of job burnout and depressive symptoms (Schittek et al., 2023). Al-Aḥnaf's remark that a parent's scorn can make a child weary of the parent's life can be read as a historical intuition about the relational cost of parental fatigue and anger; this is the researchers' interpretation, not a claim that al-Aḥnaf refers to a modern psychological construct. The limits of the analogy must also be stated. Parental burnout is a syndrome measured with validated instruments, whereas the expressions in *al-Darārī* are literary and moral discourse with no diagnostic intent. Some expressions in chapter 4 are also cynical, such as the saying that a son wishes for his father's death once the father's shirt fits him (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 26). Such expressions cannot be adopted as a way of viewing children, but they can be read as a historical record of exhaustion and disappointment.

4.3 Economic Readiness, Family Stress, and the Balance of Resources

The report in chapter 2 about a family that reproaches a man for his narrow livelihood reflects an awareness that economic pressure can damage family relationships (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, pp. 18–19). Because the report is weak as a prophetic saying (Table 2), its value lies in documenting a perception that circulated in Ibn al-ʿAdīm's milieu; the theme of economic readiness rests more firmly on the sayings of al-Zamakhsharī and al-ʿUtbī in chapter 8. The perception parallels the family stress model, in which economic stress triggers parental distress, couple conflict, and disrupted parenting (Masarik & Conger, 2017). The parallel is conceptual, as the classical text does not elaborate the psychological mechanisms linking economic stress to parenting. The balance-between-risks-and-resources (BR^2) model holds that parental burnout arises when risks chronically outweigh resources (Mikolajczak & Roskam, 2018). Al-ʿUtbī's advice to secure a sufficient livelihood before having children can be read as an effort to maintain that balance from the outset (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 52), and al-Zamakhsharī's statement on the duty to provide generously for children treats sufficient resources as part of the child's rights (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 51). Economic readiness nevertheless requires careful interpretation. For the court readers of the book, economic sufficiency was hardly a concern; for most families, individual readiness alone cannot resolve economic burden. Public policies such as paid parental leave and childcare services may narrow the wellbeing gap between parents and non-parents (Nordenmark, 2021), and support from early childhood services is associated with lower parental burnout (Sorkkila et al., 2025). A contemporary reading of chapter 8 must therefore shift readiness from an individual obligation to a responsibility shared by the family, community, early childhood institutions, and the state.

4.4 Childfree Discourse: Between Legal Binary and the Honesty of Adab

In chapter 2, *al-Darārī* shows that reasons for not having children were already articulated in classical texts, ranging from economic concerns to fear of grief and pessimism about the world (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, pp. 18–20). Some resemble those found in contemporary studies, such as economic considerations, personal freedom, and doubts about one's capacity as a parent (Glass & Fraley, 2026; Jafar et al., 2023), which suggests that the debate over whether to have children is not entirely new. The difference lies in how the reasons are handled. Studies of Islamic law in Indonesia tend to classify the childfree choice as *ḥarām* or *mubāḥ* according to its motive (Jafar et al., 2023; Zuhriah et al., 2023). Such categories provide normative certainty but risk overlooking the emotional experience behind a person's choice. Chapter 2 of *al-Darārī* does not assign legal status to the voices of reluctance; it records them and answers them in later chapters that show the meaning of, love for, and responsibility toward

children. The book thus offers an *adab* approach that complements the legal approach: the legal approach asks whether a choice is permissible, while the *adab* approach makes room to hear the reasons, fears, and experiences behind it. This approach is also relevant to parents who regret parenthood and who, as Johnson and Pétursdóttir (2024) and Piotrowski (2021) show, often face social norms that leave no room for such recognition.

4.5 Gratitude, Patience, and Religious Coping

Al-Ḥasan's words on the birth of his son show a pattern of gratitude that does not foreclose the acknowledgment of burden (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 28). This pattern accords with Abidin et al. (2025), who found that gratitude weakened the link between parental role restriction and burnout among Indonesian mothers of young children. In al-Ḥasan's words, however, gratitude does not serve to negate fatigue; gratitude and complaint appear together, so the parent's experience is acknowledged in full. The distinction matters because religious coping can take positive or negative forms (Pargament et al., 2000). Much of the evidence on religious coping among Muslim parents comes from contexts very different from everyday parenting. Abu-Raiya and Sulleiman (2021), for example, studied 204 Muslim parents who had lost children in traffic accidents and found that positive religious coping was directly associated with posttraumatic growth, whereas negative religious coping was linked to growth only indirectly. Because bereavement differs substantially from the daily burden of raising young children, this study is cited only to illustrate that religion can be a source of both strength and struggle, not as evidence about ordinary parenting; the finding of Abidin et al. (2025) is more directly relevant. When the teaching that children are a blessing is understood rigidly, tired parents may feel guilty for not feeling grateful, and the pressure to be a perfect parent is itself associated with higher burnout (Lin et al., 2023). Against this background, *al-Darārī* models a gratitude that does not require denying the burden. Where *sabar* (patience) is understood as silent endurance, the text suggests instead an active patience that names the burden and seeks support.

Value-of-children theory also helps explain the changing context. Kagitcibasi and Ataca (2005) show that over three decades of socio-economic change in Turkey, the value of children shifted from economic to psychological. The arguments in chapter 1 of *al-Darārī*, which emphasize children's benefits to their parents in life and after death, reflect a setting in which children had strong economic and social functions (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 16). As these economic functions weaken, meaning and relationships become more central to how children are valued.

4.6 Normative Discontinuity: Gender Bias, Court Context, and Corporal Punishment

A critical reading also identifies elements that cannot be adopted. First, the text displays gender bias. Chapter 6 states that children's silliness (*ruʿūnah*) arises from mixing with women (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 40), chapter 4 includes a pre-Islamic saying that disparages daughters (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 26), and the report of ʿUthmān, who valued the prospect of a grandson above his emaciated daughter's condition, shows a strong preference for sons (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, pp. 16–17). The text is not uniform, however: chapter 3 includes a saying that daughters are good deeds (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 21), which the *takhrīj* traces to Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad rather than to the Prophet (Table 2), and chapter 6 includes a father's praise of his generous daughter over his greedy son (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 42). Second, the court context limits generalization. The book was written for a ruler and contains political praise of the sultan (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, pp. 16, 35, 88), and the voices of men, caliphs, and elite figures dominate its record of parenting. Mothers, who in contemporary studies carry most of the burden of care, appear only occasionally, as in the Taghlibī mother's narrative in chapter 5 and the Bedouin wife's verse in chapter 11 (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, pp. 37–38, 81). Third, chapter 8 reports that Ibn ʿUmar and Ibn ʿAbbās beat their children for grammatical errors (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 48), and a poem in chapter 9 permits a teacher to strike a child up to three times (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 58). Contemporary evidence shows

that physical punishment is consistently associated with more behavioural problems and shows no developmental benefit (Cuartas et al., 2025; Heilmann et al., 2021), and exhausted parents are at higher risk of maltreating their children (Schittek et al., 2023). This study therefore does not recommend the corporal punishment recorded in the book. Within the same chapters, however, the instruction to discipline children in private so that they are not belittled (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 57) reflects a concern for the child's dignity that can be retained.

4.7 Critical Synthesis of al-Darārī and Contemporary Parenting Research

The synthesis shows that the relationship between *al-Darārī* and contemporary parenting research can be described in three categories (Table 5). Convergence includes the recognition of ambivalence, attention to economic burden, and the restoration of relationships. Tension arises where economic readiness is placed on the individual alone and where cynical expressions about children appear. Discontinuity applies to gender bias and corporal punishment. The classification separates agreement on ethical principles from approval of historical practices.

Table 5

Critical synthesis matrix and reconstruction decisions

Theme	Result of analysis	Reconstruction decision
Recognition of ambivalence	Convergence with the concept of ambivalence and with research on parental wellbeing	Developed into a normalization of parental experience
Hardships of parenting	Partial convergence with the exhaustion and emotional-distancing dimensions of parental burnout	Read as a warning sign, not a diagnosis
Economic readiness	Convergence with the family stress model and the BR² model; tension because readiness is placed on the individual	Expanded into a responsibility shared by family, community, early childhood services, and the state
Voices of reluctance	Convergence with reasons reported in childfree studies	Heard through the *adab* approach, complementing the legal approach
Gratitude and complaint	Convergence with gratitude as a buffer against burnout	Developed into gratitude that does not deny the burden
Cynical expressions about children	Tension with respect for the dignity of children	Not adopted as a way of viewing children; read as a historical record
Gender bias and corporal punishment	Normative discontinuity	Not adopted; replaced with gender equality and non-violent discipline

Note. Researchers' critical synthesis based on Ibn al-ʿAdīm (1984), Mikolajczak and Roskam (2018), Masarik and Conger (2017), Cuartas et al. (2025), and Abidin et al. (2025).

4.8 Conceptual Contribution: Deriving the SABAR Model from the Text

Based on this synthesis, the study proposes the SABAR model as a conceptual framework for parent support. The model is the researchers' construction, not Ibn al-ʿAdīm's formulation, but each dimension is anchored first in the text and only then connected to contemporary evidence (Table 6). The name follows the Indonesian *sabar*, from the Arabic *ṣabr*, understood here as active and supported resilience rather than resignation to carrying the burden alone.

Syukur realistis (realistic gratitude) is derived from al-Ḥasan's response to congratulations, in which praise for the blessing and complaint about the burden occur in one sentence (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 28), and from the report in which the burden of children is named while the Prophet embraces his grandsons (Table 2). The interpretive step is to treat gratitude as compatible with complaint; contemporary support comes from evidence that gratitude buffers maternal burnout (Abidin et al.,

2025). *Akui beban* (acknowledging the burden) is derived from chapters 2 and 4, which record exhaustion, grief, and reluctance without condemning those who express them, and from chapter 11, which treats parental anxiety as ordinary (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, pp. 18–28, 78). The interpretive step is to read these records as permission to name difficulty; the burnout literature shows why early recognition matters (Hansotte et al., 2021; Roskam et al., 2018).

Bagi sumber daya (sharing resources) is derived from the readiness sayings in chapter 8 (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, pp. 51–52), from chapter 9, in which fathers entrust part of their children's upbringing to teachers with explicit instructions (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, pp. 56–57), and from the Bedouin wife whose intervention changes her husband's decision (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 81). The interpretive step moves readiness from the individual father to the household, the teacher, and the wider community, in line with the BR² model and the evidence on early childhood services (Mikolajczak & Roskam, 2018; Sorkkila et al., 2025). *Atur harapan* (adjusting expectations) is derived from the juxtaposition of gifted and foolish children in chapters 5 and 6, which shows that children differ in ability and that disappointed expectations weigh on parents (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, pp. 29–42), and from the instruction not to move a child to a new subject before mastering the previous one (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 56). The mocking tone of chapter 6 is rejected, while its recognition of diversity is retained; contemporary support comes from evidence that parenting perfectionism raises the risk of burnout (Lin et al., 2023). *Rawat relasi* (nurturing relationships) is derived from al-Aḥnaf's advice and Muʿāwiyah's reconciliation (Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 1984, p. 23), the Bedouin's account of affection that follows each child's need (p. 83), the command to treat children fairly (p. 82), and the instruction to discipline in private so that children are not belittled (p. 57). Contemporary evidence on the links between burnout, neglect, and violence, and on the harms of physical punishment, shows why this dimension must be non-violent (Cuartas et al., 2025; Schittek et al., 2023).

Table 6

Derivation of the SABAR model and its application in PAUD

Dimension	Textual basis in *al-Darārī*	Contemporary support	Application in PAUD
S — *Syukur realistis* (realistic gratitude)	Al-Ḥasan's words: praise and complaint in one utterance (p. 28); burden named while embracing grandsons (Table 2)	Gratitude buffers maternal burnout (Abidin et al., 2025)	Parent-class sessions that pair gratitude reflection with space to name what feels heavy, without moral judgment
A — *Akui beban* (acknowledging the burden)	Voices of reluctance and complaint recorded without condemnation (chs. 2, 4); anxiety as ordinary (ch. 11)	Dimensions and consequences of parental burnout (Roskam et al., 2018; Hansotte et al., 2021)	Teachers notice signs of parental exhaustion and refer families to counsellors or health services; parent sharing groups
B — *Bagi sumber daya* (sharing resources)	Readiness sayings (pp. 51–52); fathers entrusting upbringing to teachers (pp. 56–57); the wife's intervention (p. 81)	BR² model (Mikolajczak & Roskam, 2018); support from early childhood services (Sorkkila et al., 2025)	Involving fathers and extended family in PAUD activities; linking families to community and public services
A — *Atur harapan* (adjusting expectations)	Gifted and foolish children juxtaposed (chs. 5–6); pacing learning to mastery (p. 56)	Parenting perfectionism raises burnout risk (Lin et al., 2023)	Sharing information on the diversity of child development at parent–teacher meetings; reducing

Dimension	Textual basis in *al-Darārī*	Contemporary support	Application in PAUD
			comparison between children
R — *Rawat relasi* (nurturing relationships)	Al-Aḥnaf's advice and reconciliation (p. 23); adaptive affection (p. 83); fairness (p. 82); private, dignified discipline (p. 57)	Burnout, neglect, and violence (Schittek et al., 2023); harms of physical punishment (Cuartas et al., 2025)	Practising repair after conflict and non-violent discipline consistently at home and in the classroom

Note. Researchers' conceptual formulation based on the analysis of *al-Darārī* and the synthesis of contemporary parental burnout research. Page numbers refer to Ibn al-ʿAdīm (1984).

Theoretically, the model shifts the emphasis from requiring parents always to be grateful and patient to recognizing that parents' resources are limited. Its five dimensions are interrelated: acknowledging the burden makes realistic gratitude possible, sharing resources and adjusting expectations reduce the risks that the BR² model identifies, and nurturing relationships protects children from the relational costs of parental exhaustion.

4.9 Implications for Early Childhood Education

The SABAR model has several implications for PAUD. First, parent classes, which Indonesian regulation recognizes as a form of family involvement (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2017), can include sessions in which religious material on children as a blessing is paired with honest acknowledgment of fatigue, drawing on passages such as al-Ḥasan's words or the report of the Prophet embracing his grandsons. Such material may be more credible to tired parents than exhortations to gratitude alone. Second, PAUD teachers are often the first professionals to notice signs of strain in a family. They are not in a position to diagnose parental burnout, but they can notice signs of exhaustion, respond without blame, and refer families to counsellors or health services; this requires training and clear referral pathways. Third, chapter 9 of *al-Darārī* presents parents and teachers as partners who share the work of upbringing under agreed principles. A contemporary PAUD partnership can build on this image while replacing the book's acceptance of corporal punishment with consistent non-violent discipline at home and in the classroom. Fourth, because teacher and parent burnout jointly shape children's social–emotional outcomes (Zehner et al., 2026), parent support in PAUD should be accompanied by attention to teachers' own wellbeing. Fifth, the dimension of adjusting expectations offers a basis for parent–teacher conversations about the diversity of child development, which may reduce the comparison between children that feeds parental perfectionism (Lin et al., 2023). These applications are proposals derived from a conceptual analysis and require empirical testing.

4.10 Limitations and Further Research

This study has several limitations. First, the analysis relies on the 1984 printed edition, read through its digitized version; the edition has not been collated with the Nuruosmaniye manuscript (MS 3790), and a critical edition would strengthen future readings. Second, the study focuses on a single work of court *adab*, so its findings cannot be generalized as representative of the Islamic tradition as a whole. Third, the search for contemporary literature was purposive, so the study is not a systematic review. Fourth, the *takhrīj* covers only the key prophetic reports and relies on the assessments of earlier critics.

Further research can validate the content of the SABAR model with experts in Islamic education, family psychology, and early childhood education; develop measurable indicators; and test its effectiveness in PAUD-based parent programmes using appropriate intervention designs. Comparative studies of other classical works, such as Ibn Abī al-Dunyā's *Kitāb al-ʿIyāl* and Ibn Rajab's *Tasliyat*

Nufūs al-Nisāʾ wa al-Rijāl ʿinda Faqd al-Atfāl, are needed to determine whether the recognition of ambivalence is distinctive to *al-Darārī* or a broader pattern in the *adab* tradition.

5. Conclusion

Ibn al-ʿAdīm's *al-Darārī fī Dhikr al-Dharārī* acknowledges the burden of parenting without denying the value of the child. It does so less through the author's own statements than through the arrangement of quoted material, juxtaposing encouragement with reluctance, praise with complaint, and gifted with foolish children. The analysis shows that this ambivalence converges with contemporary research on parental burnout, family stress, and gratitude, whereas the book's gender bias, court perspective, cynical expressions, and acceptance of corporal punishment cannot be carried over. The study's contribution is the SABAR model—*Syukur realistis*, *Akui beban*, *Bagi sumber daya*, *Atur harapan*, and *Rawat relasi*—which is anchored in the text and offers PAUD institutions a framework for parent classes, early recognition of parental exhaustion, and teacher–parent partnership, with the wellbeing of parents and the dignity of children as its limits. The relevance of classical Islamic sources to contemporary parenting depends on critical reading rather than on adopting every historical provision. Validating the content of the SABAR model and testing it empirically in PAUD settings is the next step.

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