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Building a culture of peace in Muslim community in Southern Thailand through family communication

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Abstract

This study is to examine role of family communication in Muslim community in southern Thailand in making a culture of peace. Specifically, the objectives are (1) to examine the significance and the role of family communication in the conflict area of southern Thailand; (2) to analyze what type of issues Muslim parents in the area communicate with their children and family members; (3) to examine communication patterns in Muslim families to build a culture of peace; and (4) to analyze how family communication can prevent children from getting involved in violence acts. It is based on interviews with members of families in the southernmost provinces in both Thai language and Melayu dialect. Purposive sampling is used to select the samples of key informants. They are members of seven families; a private Islamic school administrator, an Islamic teacher, a religious leader, a community leader, a government official, a former local politician, and a villager. The findings reveal that selected families improve good lines of communication in family by (1) creating time for talking through meal times, halaqah, a gathering in a circle where people sit and come to learn about Islam and Islamic ways, and family activity; (2) being an active listener, the most important skills for parents to get along with children and to improve positive relationships, (3) paying attention to non-verbal messages to get through children feelings and needs, and (4) greeting any members with the Islamic greeting; "Assalama Alaikum Wa Rahmatullah", peace and God’s mercy be upon you. Most selected parents talk with their children about daily experiences, what is going on, and personal problems to share and to guide children in accordance with real teachings of Islam and Islamic principles. This is the most proper way to build peace environment in family. Effective family communication is an essential factor in guiding children toward proper Islamic principles and avoiding being susceptible to movement in the on-going conflict in the south.

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1. Introduction

The security situation in Thailand’s southernmost provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and some parts of Songkhla has been deteriorating after separatist insurgents attacked the army’s Fourth Engineering Battalion in Narathiwat on January 4, 2004. Around 400 weapons were stolen, and four Thai soldiers were killed. In addition, 20 schools were torched in simultaneous arson attacks across the province on the same day. It is believed that the National Revolutionary Front-Coodinate (Barisan Revolusi Nasional-Coo rdinasi, BRN-C) was involved in this deadly. Due to these groups’ clandestine and decentralized nature, there was a lack of information concerning their political demands because it has never openly articulated its political objectives [1]. However, based on existing evidence, it was clear that they were trying to achieve independence, or at least some form of autonomy from the Thai state. Toward this goal, the armed insurgency groups have used violence aimed at Thai authorities, Thai-Buddhists, and Melayu-Muslims who were suspected of cooperating with Thai authorities. In their mobilization efforts, armed insurgency groups have infiltrated elementary Islamic schools (tadika), traditional ponoh and private Islamic schools to recruit the foot soldiers that sustain the insurgency [1]. Disguised religious teachers, who functioned as interpersonal media, persuaded young people to accept distorted principles of Islamic teachings and ultra-nationalist versions of Melayu-Muslim history.

Over the past years, the Thai government has tried to solve the problems in the South by cooperating with people in both governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Many development projects were carried out to improve the quality life of people. Some of which were targeted at children and youth by giving them opportunities to learn and share their experiences with those from other parts of Thailand through cultural exchange programs in order to broaden their minds and horizon. This helped create an atmosphere of better understanding to one another and finally peace among them. These youngsters, therefore, will expand this to others to help bring peace to today’s society, or at least share better understanding to their family and friends.

The conflict in the South has been complicating and threatening the lives of the people in the region. Over the years, this on-going conflict has made people in the southernmost provinces feel unsecured and concerned about their security. In fact, they wanted to live peacefully in their homeland. Peace belongs to individuals; everyone can make it real and tangible in everyday lives and conversation. A culture of peace could be possible, starting from family, the smallest unit in society, where a group of people should be able to communicate to each other through effective family communication. It, thus, is in everybody hands.

2. Why study family communication

Individuals cannot deny the importance of family communication in today’s society. This is a means through which verbal and non-verbal messages and information are exchanged between parents, children and other family members to express their needs, feelings, love, admiration, and concerns to one another. It creates an atmosphere of better understanding among family members, which will eventually bring about a strong, healthy, and peaceful relationship [2]. Furthermore, good communication between parents, children, and family members is a key to build a culture of peace.

According to the 1978 UN Declaration on the Preparation of Societies for Life in Peace, a culture of peace is a set of values, attitudes, modes of behavior, and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups, and nations.

In the conflict area of southern Thailand, we can create and expand a culture of peace in small ways in our everyday lives, starting from communication within family, especially through effective communication, most particularly face-to-face communication, which is the most powerful interaction in family. This particular model of communication occurs in everyday family conversation, and it is not only a relationship but also an atmosphere that creates better understanding and peaceful relationship among family members.
In addition, good communication is a significant skill to achieve effective family communication. In the situation just like the ongoing conflict in southern Thailand, children and young adults need parents’ guidance and support. When they feel involved with a problem, parents can offer advice, share problems, and listen to their children to increase understanding to resolve problems together. Moreover, parents can guide children by using religious knowledge to show the right way of religious principles. This is the way to create trust, love, and peace among family members.

Family is a small but yet very important unit. If individuals were able to make peace possible in their family, they can at least expand a culture of peace to others regardless of nationality, religion and identity.

3. Concept of family communication

Family communication is a basic communication process of human being. It is through family communication that we started to convey our thoughts, feelings, and connection to one another. This is the way through which verbal and non-verbal information is exchanged between family members. Thames and Thomason [3] defined family communication as more than just the exchange of words between family members. It is not just the words we speak but also components like facial expressions, eye contact, body language, tone of speech and posture. Family communication, then, is about sharing information with verbal and non-verbal cues. They maintained that listening is as important as communication because it allows people to understand family member's point of view. Basically, family members communicate to share their feelings, to express love and admiration, to exchange ideas, to gain knowledge, and to increase understanding of others.

Peterson and Green [2] pointed out that family communication can be divided into two areas: instrumental and affective communication. Instrumental communication is the exchange of factual information that enables individuals to fulfill common family functions such as telling your children what time breakfast is served, or telling your spouse what time he/she will be picked up to have a special dinner. Effective instrumental communication in families is essential for making sure each person in the family is aware of important facts on a daily basis. Affective communication refers to how family members share their emotions such as anger or happiness with one another. Some family members might successfully communicate in one area but not the others. An environment with strong affective communication allows each family member to openly express their emotions in a positive and appropriate way. Individual family members may use clear, masked, direct or indirect communication, and have varying levels of assertiveness.

Peterson and Green [2] suggested seven keys to build effective family communication. These are (1) communicate frequently; (2) communicate clearly and directly; (3) be an active listener; (4) communicate openly and honestly; (5) think about the person with whom you are communicating; (6) pay attention to non-verbal messages; and (7) be positive. They further pointed out that clear, open, and frequent communication is a basic characteristic of a strong and healthy family. Family that communicates in healthy ways is more capable of problem-solving and tends to be more satisfied and peaceful with their relationships.

Communication among family members seems simple. However, it can actually be a challenge. Effective communication is not impossible. Each individual has a different personality and a different way to view the world. Different viewpoints can sometimes clash, leading to misunderstandings, fights, and creating a volatile dynamic. By encouraging good communication, you can forge a solid foundation for building a peaceful home and finally bringing peace to family members in long run.

4. Islam, peace and the media

Thailand is a predominantly Buddhist country. Next to Buddhism, Islam is the second major religion. The Muslims constitute a small minority within Thailand as a whole. However, they form a near absolute majority in
the provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and four districts of Songkhla; Tepha, Nathawee, Chana, and Sabayoy. They are Melayu with Islamic way of life.

In the violent insurgency in southern Thailand, media have portrayed the Muslims in a negative way. Islam has been regarded as a religion that promotes violence and terrorism. Over the years, journalists and reporters have had tendency to tie each violent incident to Muslim separatists or Muslim secessionist groups. As news coverage about the Muslims has been typically negative, the image presented over time was that of a group causing problems. The media have perpetuated stereotypes and prejudices about Islam and the Muslims. This in turn has influenced audience perception, relating that to such negative characteristics and stereotypes.

Islam is, in fact, a religion that promotes peace and understanding among people of all faiths. It strongly prohibits all forms of violence and aggression against all people regardless of their faith or race. The term “Islam” is derived from the Arabic root “Salama”, which refers to peace and submission; a submission to the good will of God and peace to all humanity. It is, therefore, no wonder why the Muslims all around the world greet any Muslim with the greeting of Islam: “Assalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullah”, meaning “Peace and God’s mercy be upon you” [4], as in God’s words in the Qur’an:

> But whenever you enter houses, greet one another with a blessed, goodly greeting, as enjoined by God (Qur’an, 24: 61).

In today’s society, with regard to their perception of Islam and the Muslims, people rely heavily on the media reports, which are unfortunately not always accurate. The media do not simply report events that are naturally newsworthy. In fact, news is the end-product of a complex process, which begins with a systematic sorting and selecting of events and topics, according to a socially constructed set of categories. News reports tend to play up extraordinary, dramatic, and tragic elements in each story in order to enhance its newsworthiness [5]. A news report is usually comprised of words, text, and pictures, still or moving – all combined in different ways through the practices and techniques to represent the world to audiences. They do not merely transmit but also frame and interpret messages according to their organizational factors. Not only are the media able to construct the world for us, but they also function as the machinery of representation in a modern society.

The media play a major part in shaping social reality. In the first place, the nature of the medium itself, the kind of production it generates, together with physical limitations of time and space, and the need to attract audiences, imposes constraints both on what events make the news and on the kind of treatment they receive [6]. They do not accurately reflect reality but construct and organize social reality for the public. Therefore, the media tend to define what events are important reporting in the southernmost provinces. They, then, construct the events meaningfully in discourse. The media frame for people what to think and how to understand incidents. Thus, to some extend people’s perception towards society depends on how things are framed and represented to them by the media. If the media represent Islam and the Muslims in negative ways, these would affect audience’s understanding and perception. They would interpret Islam and the Muslims related conflict according to explanatory framework in the media. In short, the media can play a significant role in defining such conflict and framing it, thereby impacting an individual’s perception.

Before blindly accepting what the media are reporting, critical thinking on such issues that pertain to violent unrest and insurgency in the south is very important for audiences. The media have the ability to define social reality and function as primary source of information of events with which people have no direct experience. Islam and the Muslims have long been presented in particular and negative ways in the media. In reality, however, Islam is a practical religion, meant to be implemented in every aspect of Muslim life. Most importantly, it is meant to promote peace and justice in the world. Islam clearly prohibits all forms of aggression and violence against anyone, except for self-defense and reaction to aggressions insulting Islam and the Muslims. In this regard, as following verses in the holy Qur’an read:

> Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, and do not transgress: for Allah loveth not transgressors (Qur’an, 2: 190).

> But if they cease (fighting you), Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful (Qur’an, 2: 192).
The verses instruct the Muslims to fight those who fight them, but not to commit aggression first, as God does not appreciate transgressors. The Qur’an also instructs the Muslims to stop fighting those who wish to cease fighting them and to accept peace with the enemy who becomes inclined towards peace. For this, God has described it as follows:

But if they incline to peace, incline thou to is as well, and place thy trust in God: verily, He alone is all-hearing, all-knowing! And should they seek but to deceive thee [by their show of peace] – behold, God is enough for thee! (Qur’an, 8: 61-62).

This wonderful principle of Islam makes it clear that there is no single person, race, or nation that is better than others. God created us all equal. Islam also teaches us to respect and to live peacefully with people with cultural diversity.

To bring peace to the southernmost provinces, it is most crucial that journalists and reporters understand and have a clear understanding that Islam promotes peace and justice, and stands against aggression and violence. They also need to appreciate Islam in the context of the southern region. Not only should the news reports on this sensitive area be neutral and anti-prejudice, incidents must be double-checked for accuracy. Meanwhile, people should be more careful and critical about what they receive and consume from the media. In order to assure that you do not blindly believe anything represented through the media, individuals need to get both sides of the news story on any issue before making any judgement.

As mentioned earlier, the media have time and again portrayed the Muslims in the south in a way contrary to Islamic teachings. In practice, however, the Muslims have tried to create peace in family by using Islamic guidance in their daily life, as revealed in the findings of this study, topic the author will turn to.

5. Findings and discussion

With love and understanding, talking with any family members seems simple. Contrarily, it can be difficult when family members rarely interact and spend time with one another. It is, therefore, crucial that parents establish routine communication with children. This approach could encourage children to express their needs, feelings, love, and admiration in order to satisfy their own needs. This includes decision making and problem solving. It is not only a relationship, but also an atmosphere that creates good understanding and peaceful relationship among family members. Effective communication is always found in a strong and healthy family. Here are some ways selected families do to develop good lines of communication in order to ensure that all members get along and be closer, and also develop trust and support among them.

5.1. Creating time for talking

Having communication among family members is essential to having a happy family. Parents’ communication is an important skill to effective family communication. This is particularly true when a critical situation is involved. In situation of southern conflict, children need parents’ guidance and support. When families feel involved with a problem, parents can offer advice, share problems, and listen to their children to increase understanding to resolve problems together. This is an effective way to ensure that problems get solved, ideas get heard, and feelings are expressed. This will finally create trust and love among family members. It, thus, is important for parents to make time for talking and teaching their children how to live peacefully in the situation just like the on-going conflict in the south.

Making time to communicate is a vital aspect of building strong and close relationships among family members. Living in the same house does not necessarily mean that it automatically makes its members close to one another. It is, therefore, extremely significant for families to make time to interact frequently and to plan regular family meetings.
According to Jawahir and Muhammad Sujee Tahir, couple religious teachers and parents of a 25-year-old son and a 24-year-old daughter, it is important for parents to spend at least an hour a day talking with children. Parents should talk and communicate frequently with children and be curious about them [7].

Living together has provided Jawahir and Muhammad Sujee with face to face communication with their daughter, especially at breakfast and dinner, creating opportunity to share ideas, express their love. On the other hand, they are limited only to phone communication with their son, living in the northeast.

Having breakfast and dinner together with children also happens in the family of a former local politician, Ahmad Somboon Bualuang, a father of five. Of those, two already married and live in another district but they have frequently visited family, while three other kids, 7, 5, and 2 are with his new wife, Laila [8].

A somewhat similar way to talk with children during meal times is also valued by the family of a community leader, Wae Ahmad and Wae Faziyah Salae, parents of three; two sons and one daughter. Everyday routine at 7 a.m. and 7.30 p.m., they all sit together at family breakfast and dinner table. They take this quality time to talk just about anything simple, from topics to important and/or serious issues, and to teach children Islamic knowledge, and any skills to improve family relationships. Parents try to see things from their children’s viewpoint. Further, parents guide and give advice to children, and solve problems together [9].

Spending time and engaging each family member at the table at least 30 minutes or an hour is the best time to get along with one another. Parents should ask children questions about what they learned at school or how they feel about the current southern unrest to get children’s voice and perception. This is an open and meaningful communication daily. Everyday meal time is a quality time to spend together, to share a meal, and to interact among family members. All can get a sense of being valued when having a regular meal together.

Halaqah, an Arabic term, means a gathering in a circle where people sit and come to learn more about Islam and Islamic ways, is the other way of creating an atmosphere where conversation thrives. The family of a religious leader, Ismail Lutfi and Fauziah Japakiya, parents of six have used this communication means to talk, to share ideas, and to exchange knowledge, as well as to instruct their children.

As a well known person, Ismail Lutfi has been occupied with his various routines. That has made it difficult for him to engage in meaningful with his children on a daily basis. However, his family has created time to talk through halaqah.

“As a father, I try my best to communicate with children openly and honestly to guide and to teach them Islamic principles. Alhamdulillah, halaqah is a key to resolve the unavoidable problems between me and my children” [10].

Halaqah provides a unique opportunity to connect with children to learn more about one another, and to have open and honest conversations on different matters. Children feel comfortable opening up to their parents, and feel supported, valued and loved. Parents themselves take this special time to talk with children to make them feel safe, healthy and happy. Supportively, Peterson and Green [2] pointed out that an environment with strong affective communication allows each family member to openly express their emotions in a positive and appropriate way.

Engaging in family activities during weekend is one way to spend times with family members. This happens in the family of a government official, couple Ansoree and Arin Saidi, parents of four. Busy schedules during weekdays have made it difficult for their family to engage in meaningful conversations. Ansoree and Arin work in different provinces. The husband lives in Songkhla, while the rest of the family lives in Pattani. The whole family only gathers on weekends. It is, therefore, is a great time for everyone. They are somewhat busy with various routines on weekends. These include praying, cooking, reading the holy Qur’an. They usually start their meaningful time by praying subuh (Islamic morning praying) together in the early morning [11].

Assistant Professor Arin Saidi, a late mother of four, was a great role model of raising quality children; (1) Arina, a medical doctor, (2) Adib, a Master student in Manufacturing Engineer at the International Islamic University Malaysia, (3) Amini, a Master student in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) at the La Trobe University, Australia, and a recipient of Australian government scholarship, and (4) Amin, a
medical student. The author talked to Assistant Professor Arin several times about how to raise quality children. She had mentioned that family time for talking and spending together with all family members was the most important. Due to weekends as family times, she tried her best not to have any appointment, except for inevitable meetings. She completely dedicated all her times on weekends for her beloved family. Those were quality times being with her loved ones.

Spending times with family is important to building and maintaining relationships with one another. This provides family members with feeling of love, support, and productive life. Arin also added that during family time, she would ask her children about upcoming tests and other matters they would like to share and let others know. They felt loved, which boosted their self-confidence. It was always worthwhile. Family time, thus, has a degree of emotional quality; that is why her children performed well in school and become successful persons.

“We take family time to observe our children, to hug and kiss them, to encourage, and to enjoy one another. When we are together, we feel comfortable and relaxed. This is valuable time being with family” [12].

Being close to family is not difficult to achieve; it can be closer if family members are able to commit to family time for communicating. Each family member should have an opportunity to speak, constantly engage, and feel valued. Time together with all of family is the best way to ensure a happier family.

5.2. Being an active listener

Effective family communication involves proper timing and both talking and listening. When children have a problem, parents’ efforts to listen often result. Listening is one of the most important skills parents should have in order to improve positive family relationships through fostering understanding, and strengthening cooperation. By becoming a better listener, parents will improve, then, ability to influence and to persuade children. They will also avoid conflicts and misunderstandings. These are all necessary factors to successful family relationships, which will eventually bring a strong and healthy family.

Generally, most parents want their children to feel free to talk to them. It helps if parents are able to actively and patiently pay attention to what children are saying. Becoming a good listener is not so difficult. It is essential for parents to practice active listening. This is when parents do not only make an effort to listen to what is being said but also try to understand the message. More importantly, this enables children to know that parents are interested in understanding the message conveyed. This also makes them feel important while they are talking. Parents should listen to children in the way they like to be listened to. As a result, problems can be solved and even prevented when parents take the time to use active listening.

Nurjilan and Muhammad Binhajiabubakar, couple private Islamic school administrators and parents of five believed that listening is a vital skill to get along with children. Parents, who are not listening, are not trying to understand their children. Their minds are closed and fail to have opportunity to know their children well. Due to a generation gap between parents and children, listening facilitates family communication. It also helps parents to learn new information and to give them insights of children thoughts and behaviors. This in turn makes it easier to deal with them [13].

Talking on the phone requires even greater concentration to be an active listener. When communicating, parents make an effort to listen carefully with an open mind and try to understand the message being sent by children to make them feel important. The above family discovers that how well parents listen influences how well children listen to them. Active listening gives them great opportunity to provide guidance and advice to their children to solve problems for themselves. Further, they learn that dealing with children, active listening helps them to accomplish their goals.

As Thames and Thomason [3], listening is as important as communication because it allows people to understand family member’s points of view. Similarly, Peterson and Green [2] suggested that being an active listener involves trying your best to understand other members’ views.
Adib and Amini Saidi, children from the family of a government official, strongly supported that being an active listener is the most significant for parents to strengthen quality family relationships [14]. They value the relationships with family and feel free anytime they talk to their parents who know them best. During conversations, parents pay full attention to what their children are saying. They not only use empathy to understand their children’s feelings and point of view but also respect what they wanted to do. They encourage open communication by being good listeners and give positive feedback. Children take advantage of opportunity to tell parents what is happening in their lives while parents can help dealing with social world. This improves mutual understanding, trust and close relationships among them. It is also a sign of family love and respect.

Parents who are good listeners are often the best advisors because they have taken time to understand what children truly need. Paying attention to children very carefully enables parents to pick up non-verbal languages; gestures, facial expressions, and other body languages.

Active listening is a learned skill. Although it does not come naturally to us, individuals can improve to be an active listener by trying to listen with care and empathy. That will eventually foster loving and respectful family relationships.

5.3. Paying attention to non-verbal messages

In addition to listening carefully to what is being said, effective communicators also pay special attention to the non-verbal behaviors of other family members [2]. Non-verbal messages occur simultaneously with verbal communication. These are, for instance, tone of voice cues, the use of space, facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, and other variables. Some parents are unaware of these more subtle processes because they are paying close attention to the words spoken than those unspoken. Most people rarely take notice of non-verbal behaviors. However, they tend to pay attention to non-verbal messages when they are inconsistent with one another or with the words being spoken. For example, if, with an angry tone, someone says something, it is most likely that the tone is noticed. Generally, people tend to believe non-verbal messages rather than verbal ones.

Parents’ ability to understand and use non-verbal communication can be a powerful tool that will help them connect with their children, express what they really mean, and build better family relationships.

The parents of five, Nurjilan and Muhammad pointed out that body language is a vital form of family communication [13]. When interacting with children, all non-verbal behaviors; the gestures they make, the way they sit, how fast or how loud they talk, how close they stand, how much eye contact they make, these send strong messages to parents. By contrast, the way parents listen, look, move, and interact tell children whether or not parents care and how well they are listening. Those non-verbal behaviors signal and cues communicate their interest, trust, and desire for connection.

They make quite an impact on the quality of family relationships, facilitating parents to accurately read children’s mind and emotions. Kalsom Masaejanae, a single mother of seven, noted that she always paid more attention to non-verbal behaviors when communicating with her children. With full concentration and attention, she has been able to accurately pick up on cues that her children are sending. She once experienced a difficult situation in her life. In 2004, one of her children, Ahmad Masaejanae, a 36-year-old, was convinced to take part in a violent wrong doing. As an active mother, who pays special attention on non-verbal messages, she made an effort to prevent her son from getting involved with the violence [15].

Ahmad, Kalsom’s son said that his mother and siblings were very close to him because of daily interactions through family communication. Mother is often portrayed as being a good communicator. She enhances her ability to communicate with children by paying close attention to children’s non-verbal messages. What has happened or even something is wrong to children, mother could interpret from children’s behavior. They communicate frequently, openly, clearly, and honestly. Therefore, all are obedient and value mother’s communication efforts to foster understanding, and strengthen relationships to build a culture of peace in family [16].
Successful non-verbal communication in family depends on emotional awareness and an understanding of the cues sent and received. This requires parents’ full concentration and attention. Parents need to stay focused on moment-to-moment experience in order to fully understand what is going on in children’s lives. This is a powerful means to get through children’s feelings and needs. It also makes an important impact on family relationships.

5.4. Greeting any members with the Islamic greeting

Islam covers every aspect of life; it even teaches the Muslims the best way to greet one another. The Islamic greeting; “Assalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullah”, refers to peace and God’s mercy be upon you. The response to this is “Wa Alaikum Assalam”, which means “may His peace also be upon you.” This is a normal form of greeting mostly used in Muslim community all over the world.

In Muslim communities in the southernmost provinces of Thailand, most people try to establish peace and friendly relations through the greeting of peace, starting from family, the basis but most important unit in society to make a culture of peace possible.

To build a culture of peace, parents should encourage children to make a peaceful environment in a family. This is good lines of communication as the family of a religious leader make it happen through family communication by greeting one another with the Islamic greeting [10]. A similar environment happens in the family of a government official [11] and a former local politician [8]. They start their daily life with the greeting of peace.

To communicate with family members, it is good to start with the Islamic greeting, which is the basic and fundamental element of religion. It is an easy and good Islamic manner to practice. This is a Muslim custom that distinguishes the Muslims from other people. It holds a high position in Islam and is one of the defining criteria of belief.

Giving “salaams” to any family members as a means to attain peaceful relationships among its members. Parents should try to apply it and to train children at their early age to exercise, so that they can benefit from it. This is a way to create a culture of peace in Muslim family in the south. Making this small effort to greet one another with peace and blessings improves better relationships and foster understanding, which will finally bring peace to family.

6. Type of issues that Muslim parents communicate with children

Family is vital in everyone life. People are all very much shaped by their parents and/or guardian who raised them. Parents should be a person of support and encouragement. They should also get along with children, care and to understand what is going on with them. Additionally, they are advised to practice good communication skills by actively listening to their children. Diverse topics of communication are required to successfully meet challenges of family life. Certain issues cannot only affect relationships but also lead to conflicts. However, communicating and listening to one another to share stories with all family members is important to establish a family bond.

Such issues that affect family life and increase relationships should be simple to discuss like sharing a personal or family experience. This is the easiest topic to share with family members. Parents should create an open environment to facilitate children for communicating their own values, listen to them, be patient, and use everyday opportunities to talk in order to improve better understanding, and to strengthen family bonds.

Most selected Muslim parents in the southernmost provinces talk with their children about daily experiences, what is going on, and personal problems in order to find solutions together.

Sharing experience among family members raises feelings for mutual help and understanding between them. This could be one of most proper ways to develop a peaceful and healthy environment in a family. In addition,
teaching Islam to children is an important Islamic duty for Muslim parents as they are expected to give more time to supervise or at least to teach children knowledge of Islam, and to guide their children’s study.

The best way for Muslim parents is to talk and to teach children knowledge of Islam. Teaching Islamic knowledge is one of the most important keys to raising righteous and successful children. It is a must that Muslim parents should educate their children with Islam since Islamic knowledge determines families’ and children’s success or failure. It is also the best education and the best means to fight ignorance and drive away evil.

Muslim parents are expected to guide children to Islamic knowledge. It is not just duty but expectation rewards for raising righteous children. The Muslims believe that if they want children to be righteous and successful, parents must learn and teach children authentic knowledge of Islam, and most importantly, be the best of examples to them.

Talking about Islamic issues in family brings parents and children closer, improves relationships and creates mutual love, respect, and understanding. Children learn more from parents as they are spending time together at home. They avoid recurring problems prevalent among youths in the south such as school delinquency, drug addiction, smoking, gambling, involvement in insurgency, and other social problems.

7. Conclusion

In the current southern situation of unrest, good communication among family members could establish good lines of communication that lead to build a culture of peace in family. It is possible through effective family communication.

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