

Collaboration Between Parents and Teachers in the Formation of Students' Religious Character Through Islamic Religious Education Learning in the Era of Digitalization: A Case Study at SDIT

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Religious Character; Parent
Teacher Collaboration; Islamic
Religious Education;

Article history:

Received 2025-08-14

Revised 2025-10-12

Accepted 2025-12-21

ABSTRACT

This study explores the collaborative model between teachers and parents in shaping the religious character of elementary school students in the digitalization era. The research is situated within the broader discussion of character education, which emphasizes the integration of moral values, religious practice, and family-school partnership. The purpose of this study is to examine the forms, processes, and effectiveness of collaboration between teachers and parents in strengthening students' religious character through Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at SDIT Al-Maadin. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. The findings reveal that teachers play a central role as moral role models (*uswah hasanah*) by integrating religious values into daily learning activities, establishing routines of prayer, Qur'an recitation, and moral habituation. Parents, on the other hand, act as partners who reinforce school-based religious practices at home through monitoring, guidance, and communication facilitated by the student handbook and WhatsApp groups. The study shows that digitalization does not require sophisticated technological tools; instead, it highlights the strategic use of simple digital communication to strengthen family-school synergy. Collaboration between teachers and parents results in the development of students' religious character across three domains: aqidah-ibadah, moral conduct, and social values. The study concludes that consistent coordination and shared responsibility between school and family significantly enhance students' religious character, though challenges remain in ensuring consistent home practices amid varied parenting patterns and digital distractions. Future research may examine comparative models across different school settings or explore parental digital literacy in greater depth.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology in the last two decades has created major changes in the global education system. Digitalization presents easy access to information, learning flexibility, and opportunities for 21st century literacy development. On the other hand, this transformation also brings new challenges in fostering students' character, especially moral and religious values that have

been the foundation for the formation of children's personalities. At the elementary school level, children are in a phase of cognitive and social development that is highly sensitive to environmental stimulation, so the influence of digital technology both positive and negative can have a direct impact on their religious mindset, behavior, and values (Feagans & Farran, 2020). This condition emphasizes the need for intensive efforts in instilling spiritual values from an early age as a fortress to face the flow of information in the digital era.

In the context of Islamic education, religious character is an important part of the learning objectives. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has a mandate to instill faith, worship, and noble morals through consistent habituation and real examples. Religious values such as honesty, discipline, trust, good manners, and consistency in worship not only function as moral orientation, but also form the emotional stability, independence, and spiritual identity of students. Several studies in Indonesia show that the habit of worship, ranging from tahfidz, daily prayer, reciting the Qur'an, to congregational prayer activities has a significant impact on increasing children's spiritual awareness and moral behavior (Nurizah et al., 2024; Febriyanti & Khofifah, 2023). However, the process of character formation requires continuity between education at school and coaching at home so that the values instilled can be fully internalized in students.

Teachers as educators and role models have a big role in instilling religious values through teaching, habituation, and example. PAI teachers are not only tasked with transferring religious materials, but also guiding worship practices, shaping morals, and providing moral examples that students can imitate (Lickona, 1997; Lumpkin, 2008). However, the role of teachers cannot stand alone without the full support of parents. This is because the greatest amount of time spent by children is at home, and religious habits in the family are fundamental aspects in the formation of morals. Some studies show that there are still many parents who leave the responsibility for character education entirely to teachers, even though the role of the family as the "first madrasah" has a long-term influence on children's religious development (Himmah & Fitriani, 2024). Communication disconnections and lack of synergy between parents and teachers can hinder the formation of a consistent religious character, especially in the digital era that demands strict supervision of children's activities.

The digital era presents a paradox in character development. On the one hand, various digital platforms can be used as interesting and flexible PAI learning media, such as da'wah videos, Qur'an applications, and educational content based on Islamic values (Ginting et al., 2024). The use of classroom WhatsApp groups, *learning management systems* (LMS), and social media can be an effective means of communication between teachers and parents in monitoring children's development. However, on the other hand, digitization also provides unlimited access to content that does not conform to religious values. Children have the potential to be exposed to pornography, violence, hate speech, consumptive behavior, and cyberbullying if supervision of the use of gadgets is not optimal. Research by Himmah & Fitriani (2023) revealed that most parents have difficulty controlling the use of children's gadgets due to the lack of digital literacy and limited interaction time. This condition increases the chance of deviant behavior that is contrary to religious values. Thus, digital literacy is not only a need for students, but also for parents to be able to carry out wise supervision based on moral values.

Literature review shows that there are variations in findings related to the effectiveness of character education in the digital era. Some studies emphasize that religious habituation in schools is very effective in instilling religious values (Kartika et al., 2023), while other studies show that such habituation is less than optimal if it is not supported by the family at home (Cahyanto, 2023). Most previous research has focused on a single aspect such as the role of teachers alone, or the role of parents alone without integrating these two roles into a systematic collaborative model. In fact, the theory of educational ecology of Bronfenbrenner (1992) emphasizes that children's moral development is influenced by the interaction of various environments, and continuity between family and school is a key factor in the success of character formation.

So far, studies on the collaboration of parents and teachers in the formation of students' religious character are still limited, especially in the context of Islamic elementary schools and the era of digitalization. The research of Maulidi & Badriyah (2024), for example, only examines the integration

of PAI with digital media without highlighting the synergy between home and school. Similarly, some other studies do not discuss in depth how digital communication, worship habits, and collaborative practices can be integrated in the development of religious character comprehensively. Therefore, this study is here to fill this gap by examining the pattern of collaboration that is built between teachers and parents in shaping the religious character of students at SDIT Al-Maadin, both through school habituation programs and parental involvement at home.(Sallam & Al-Ali, 2022)

This research seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of the home-school partnership model that is relevant to the demands of the modern era. The focus of the research is not only on the description of the role of each party, but also on the synergy between the two in utilizing digital technology, developing habituation programs, and overcoming the obstacles of religious supervision in the midst of technological developments. In particular, this study aims to: (1) analyze the role of teachers and parents in shaping students' religious character; (2) explore the forms and strategies of collaboration applied; (3) identify obstacles that arise in the digital era; and (4) formulate a model of collaboration that is relevant and applicable to Islamic elementary schools.

Overall, these conditions show that the formation of students' religious character in the digital era requires a partnership pattern that does not only rely on the role of the school or family separately, but a collaboration model that is integrated, systematic, and adaptive to technological developments. The urgency of this research lies in the need to present a pattern of parental teacher cooperation that is relevant to the challenges of digitalization, especially in controlling children's religious behavior and maintaining the consistency of worship habits in two main environments, namely school and home.(Alonazi, 2023) In addition, the novelty of this research lies in the effort to fill the gap in previous research through the presentation of the analysis of the collaboration of parents teachers which is not only seen from the perspective of their respective roles, but also from how the two build real synergy through simple digital communication, religious habituation programs, and continuous supervision of worship. (Press, 2023)Thus, this study offers a more comprehensive, contextual, and applicative model of home school partnerships for Islamic elementary schools in the era of digitalization.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to obtain a real picture of the collaborative process between teachers and parents in the formation of students' religious character at SDIT Al-Maadin. Setiyaningsih et al., 2020). The choice of this approach is based on the need to understand the actions, experiences, and interactions that occur naturally between teachers, students, and parents in the practice of habituation of worship and digital communication. The research location was chosen purposively because this school implements a structured religious habituation program. The research informants consisted of PAI teachers, homeroom teachers, parents of students, and students selected based on their involvement in collaborative practices. (Sidiq & Choiri, 2019).

Data was collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were made on tahfiz activities, dhuha prayers, dzuhur prayers, tadarus, daily manners, and the use of student liaison books. Miles and Huberman (1994) Interviews were conducted with teachers, homeroom teachers, parents, and students to explore habituation strategies, forms of home-school communication, and digital challenges faced. The documentation collected includes memorization notes, habituation guides, liaison books, and communication in class WhatsApp groups. All observation and interview data were recorded through field notes and interview transcripts for analysis purposes.

Data analysis is carried out through the process of reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction was carried out by sorting out information and grouping findings into main themes such as the role of teachers, the role of parents, religious habituation practices, and the use of digital media. (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The data is then presented in the form of a structured narrative to see patterns of relationships between themes. Conclusions are obtained through interpretation of consistent findings patterns and verified through document triangulation and re-checking with informants so that the research results are accurate and accountable. (Himmah & Fitriani, 2023; Dordia et al., 2025).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research shows that the formation of students' religious character at SDIT Al-Maadin in the digitalization era takes place through strong and continuous collaboration between teachers and parents. The religious character in question includes aspects of faith in Allah SWT, discipline in carrying out worship, honesty, responsibility, compassion, tolerance, and social concern. All of these values are not only taught through the subject of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), but also internalized through various daily activities of students, both at school and at home. Teachers play the role of role models, not only by providing religious materials, but also by showing the real practice of Islamic values in daily actions. This can be seen from the habit of teachers who always accompany students in ablution, dhuha and dzuhur prayers in congregation, and participate in tahfizh and murojaah activities in the morning consistently. The teacher's example is also reflected in the attitude of discipline, polite speech, and how to reprimand students gently but firmly. In addition, religious values-based learning strategies are applied through habituation, value-based assignments, contextual approaches, and the use of simple digital media such as Islamic videos, stories of friends, and educational visuals delivered through teachers' personal laptops due to the limitations of projector facilities in the classroom.

The formation of religious character is getting stronger because teachers not only rely on classroom learning, but also create a structured religious ecosystem through routine activities such as the reading of Asmaul Husna, congregational prayers, joint salawat, and daughtership activities. This habituation program is supported by school documentation such as tahfizh schedules, murojaah recaps, and daily activity guides that show that religious values are instilled in a planned and systematic manner. Students' positive attitudes towards PAI learning, such as enthusiasm for participating in tahfizh and interest in story- and video-based learning, show the success of teachers' strategies in making religious education feel fun, relevant, and meaningful for children.

On the other hand, parents play an important role as the school's main partner in strengthening students' religious habits at home. The results of interviews with parents show that most families continue the habits of worship taught at school, such as praying on time, reading the Qur'an, memorizing murojaah, and instilling the values of manners, honesty, and responsibility. Parents use the Student/Liaison Guidebook provided by the school as a tool to monitor children's daily worship activities. The columns in the book are filled by parents to record the obligatory prayers, read the Qur'an/Iqra, and memorize them at home, then signed by the teacher at school. Thus, the formation of religious character is not only focused on schools, but is also monitored continuously through home-school cooperation. In addition to the liaison book, the school also sends habituation guidelines through the class WhatsApp group, such as memorized murojaah reminders, morning prayers, daily manners, to examples of activities that children can do with their families.

Parental supervision of the use of gadgets is an important aspect in the digitalization era. Parents try to limit their children's access to inappropriate digital content and direct them to Islamic or educational spectacle. Some parents also provide motivation in the form of praise or small gifts when children show good religious behavior. Communication with teachers through classroom WhatsApp groups helps parents to stay aware of their children's development, especially for those who work and cannot monitor directly. The WA group serves as a collaborative medium to share memorization reports, documentation of school activities, religious announcements, and even joint invitations. The language of communication used by teachers and parents is full of religious nuances such as greetings, prayers, and ukhuwah expressions, which reflect the Islamic atmosphere in school-home relations.

The collaboration between teachers and parents is increasingly visible through joint activities such as commemorations of Islamic Holidays, PAI competitions, Tahfiz Camps, Ramadan Islamic boarding schools, and other social and religious activities. In this activity, parents are not only present as participants, but also participate in supporting the smooth running of the event, motivating children, and helping to prepare for activities. Tahfiz Camp is a strong example of how school and family collaboration results in deep religious habituation, where students are fostered to memorize the Qur'an intensively for several days, then display the memorization results in front of

their parents at the close of the activity. The tahfidz teacher guides the students spiritually and technically, while the parents are present to provide moral support and continue the habit of memorization at home.

Research also shows that communication and joint evaluation are an integral part of collaboration. Evaluation of student development is carried out through liaison books, parent meetings, daily reports via WhatsApp, and observation of student behavior at school. Parents provide input on children's behavior at home, while teachers convey academic and religious developments at school. This two-way relationship creates a shared understanding that the formation of religious character is a shared responsibility, not just a school or a family.

As a result of this collaboration, students' religious character develops in three main dimensions: religiosity (faith and worship), morality, and social values. Students show the habit of praying on time, getting used to reading the Qur'an, understanding daily prayers, and showing enthusiasm in participating in religious activities. In the moral aspect, students show good manners, respect for teachers, honesty in actions, discipline, and responsibility for school and home assignments. Meanwhile, in the social aspect, students show care, cooperation, empathy, and mutual help which can be seen in activities such as Free Meals Together, Friday alms, and sharing Ramadan takjil.

Although collaboration is generally effective, research still finds obstacles, especially in the consistency of habituation at home. Some parents have a high level of busyness or different parenting styles, so not all religious habits carried out at school are applied consistently at home. The homeroom teacher stated that some parents still completely leave character education to the school, so that children do not get enough religious assistance at home. Digital challenges also affect children's behavior, such as the tendency to postpone worship or memorization because they are tempted to play gadgets. Schools are trying to overcome these obstacles through strengthening communication, reminders via WhatsApp, and emphasizing the importance of continuous habituation between school and home.

Overall, this study confirms that the formation of students' religious character at SDIT Al-Maadin cannot be separated from a harmonious and structured collaborative model between teachers and parents. Teachers create a strong religious environment at school, while parents extend the habit at home. Digitalization is not completely an obstacle, but is used as an effective means of communication that supports the synergy of Islamic education between schools and families. This intensive and continuous collaboration proves that the formation of children's religious character requires the simultaneous and complementary involvement of two main environments.

This research integrates field findings with theories about character education, school-family collaboration, and Islamic education in the digitalization era. Through this approach, it can be understood how the formation of students' religious character at SDIT Al-Maadin is the result of a strong synergy between teachers and parents, as well as how the practice is in accordance with the concept of character education that develops in the scientific literature. This chapter discusses three main aspects, namely the role of teachers, the role of parents, and collaborative models in strengthening religious character, and is associated with the challenges of the digital age.

A. The Role of Teachers in the Formation of Religious Character: Example and Habituation

The findings of the study show that teachers play a very fundamental role in shaping students' religious character through example and worship habits. This finding is in line with the concept of character education according to Lickona (1997) who emphasizes that character is built through *moral knowing*, *moral feeling*, and *moral action* and all three can only develop effectively if teachers become real role models. At SDIT Al-Maadin, teachers not only deliver PAI material theoretically, but are also directly involved in religious practices such as ablution, dhuha prayer, tahfizh, murojaah, daily prayer, and the recitation of Asmaul Husna. This shows that teachers carry out the function of moral and spiritual exemplary as outlined by Al-Ghazali who emphasizes that the best education occurs through imitation of the behavior of the idolized person (Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' Ulumuddin*).

The habituation approach applied by teachers is in line with the theory of character according to Ibn Miskawaih which states that morality can be formed through *habituation* or continuous practice so that it becomes a habit (Miskawaih, 1998). The process of getting used to dhuha prayers, congregational prayers, and daily tahfizh carried out at SDIT Al-Maadin reflects the real implementation of the concept of habituation-based character formation. The conditioning of the religious environment is also in line with Kohlberg's (1984) idea of *the moral atmosphere*, namely that moral values can thrive if students live in an environment that supports daily ethical practices.

In addition to example and habituation, religious values-based learning strategies applied by teachers are in accordance with the *value-based education approach* that emphasizes the integration of religious values into the entire learning process, not just in certain subjects (Halstead & Taylor, 2000). PAI teachers and homeroom teachers at SDIT Al-Maadin use methods that combine concept explanations, inspirational stories, Islamic manners, and simple digital media to strengthen students' understanding. Although digital facilities are limited, teachers try to utilize technology as needed, which is in line with the principle of *technological pedagogical content knowledge* (TPACK), which is the use of technology adequately to support pedagogical goals (Mishra & Koehler, 2006).

Thus, the role of teachers in this study is in line with modern character education theory and classical Islamic education traditions that place teachers as the center of exemplary and moral development (*uswah hasanah*).

B. The Role of Parents as Key Partners in Character Building: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Perspective

The findings of the study reveal that parents play an important role in strengthening the religious character of students at home. This is in line with the developmental ecological theory of Bronfenbrenner (1992) which places the family and school as the two closest environments (*microsystems*) that affect children's development. The harmonious interaction between the two environments, called *the mesosystem*, is an important factor in the effectiveness of children's education.

In the context of SDIT Al-Maadin, the collaboration of parents in accompanying worship habits, monitoring memorization, and filling out liaison books shows that there is continuity between home and school education. Parents continue to strengthen religious values through the practice of congregational prayer, reciting together, and daily manners. This is consistent with Epstein's (2018) research which states that parental involvement in education increases children's motivation to learn, positive behavior, and moral development.

The system of connecting books and habituation guides shared through WhatsApp groups shows that there is a *shared responsibility* in character building, according to the concept of education *partnership* which emphasizes sustainable synergy between home and school (Hornby, 2011). Parents are not only the recipients of child development reports, but also provide feedback and are involved in monitoring children's worship and behavior at home.

In the era of digitalization, the role of parents has become increasingly complex because they have to supervise the use of gadgets and exposure to digital media. The findings that parents limit cellphone use time and direct children to Islamic content are in accordance with *the digital parenting theory* that requires parents to be active supervisors as well as a responsible technology use model (Livingstone & Helsper, 2008). This digital challenge is what makes parent-teacher cooperation even more important so that children are not affected by negative content that interferes with religious habits.

C. Teacher-Parent Collaboration: Community of Practice Perspectives and Integrated Islamic Education

The forms of collaboration found in this study include intensive communication through WhatsApp groups, coordination of worship habits, evaluation of child development, and involvement in religious activities such as Tahfiz Camp, PHBI, and Friday alms activities. This pattern of collaboration describes a *community of practice* as proposed by Wenger (1998), in which

groups (teachers, parents, and students) share a common goal, namely the formation of religious character, with repetitive social practices and continuous interaction.

In the context of Islamic education, this collaboration is in accordance with the concept of *the tri-center of education* (Ki Hajar Dewantara) which emphasizes that children's education involves the family, school, and community environment. SDIT Al-Maadin applies this principle in the form of active parental involvement in school activities and daily communication through digital media. The system of strengthening worship that involves the signing of daily reports by parents and teachers shows that this collaboration is structural and systematic, not just spontaneous.

The coordination between PAI teachers and homeroom teachers in guiding worship activities shows that religious education in schools is not the responsibility of one teacher, but a collective. This is in line with the principle of *uswah jama'iyah* (collective example), which is that all educators become models of Islamic values so that students see moral consistency from all directions. This approach is very effective in shaping the character of children at an elementary age who are still at the stage of moral imitation (Piaget, 1965).

D. The Impact of Collaboration on Students' Religious Character: An Analysis Based on Moral and Moral Theories

The results of the study showed that students showed the development of religious character in three dimensions: worship values, personal morals, and social values. In the aspect of worship, the habit of praying on time, reading the Qur'an, memorizing murojaah, and following congregational prayers are manifestations of the success of habituation and example of teachers and strengthening parents. This behavior reflects a more mature stage of moral development, in which the child begins to act not only because of rules, but because of internal beliefs (Kohlberg, 1984).

In the moral aspect, students show good manners, respect for teachers, honesty, discipline, and responsibility for their duties. This is in accordance with the concept of morality in Islam according to Ibn Qayyim (2005) who emphasizes that morality is reflected in the habit of behaving well in daily interactions. The teacher's consistency in providing example and moral strengthening through gentle dialogue shows the practice of moral development in accordance with the method of the Prophet PBUH. In the social aspect, the habit of helping each other, giving greetings, cooperating, and participating in social activities such as sharing takjil and Friday alms shows that students have internalized the value of *ukhuwah islamiyah* and social empathy. The cultivation of social values is in line with the concept of holistic Islamic education which emphasizes the balance between human relations with Allah (*habluminallah*) and human relations (*habluminannas*) (Madjid, 2002).

E. The Challenges of the Digitalization Era: Religious Approaches and Digital Literacy

Digitalization provides both an opportunity and a threat in the formation of religious character. Even though schools limit the use of gadgets, children are still exposed at home. The finding that some students imitate behavior or language from digital media shows the relevance of Bandura's (1986) social learning theory which states that children learn through observation and imitation, including from the media. Therefore, the synergy between teachers and parents in providing guidance on technological manners is very important. Teachers remind students about the etiquette of using gadgets, while parents try to limit the duration and direct them to positive content. This step reflects the principle of *Islamic digital literacy*, namely the ability to use technology responsibly and according to religious values (Hidayat & Khalika, 2019). With intensive collaboration, digital challenges can be managed and do not hinder character building.

Overall, this discussion emphasized that the formation of students' religious character is the result of integration between teacher examples, parental assistance, and structural collaboration that utilizes digitalization wisely. The findings of the study are in line with modern character education theory and classical Islamic educational teachings, and prove that character education is most effective when family and school work together consistently. The model applied by SDIT Al-Maadin can be an example for other schools in building effective

collaboration in the era of digitalization without having to rely on advanced technology, but focusing on values, habituation, and example.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the formation of students' religious character at SDIT Al-Maadin in the era of digitalization is formed through strong, systematic, and continuous collaboration between teachers and parents. This collaboration does not only occur in the learning of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), but also through the habituation of worship, moral strengthening, and moral value assistance that is carried out consistently at school and at home. Students' religious character develops through a combination of teacher example, active family involvement, and conducive learning environment support, including the use of simple digital media in communication and monitoring the development of student worship.

The findings of the study show that teachers play a role as the main actor in shaping students' religiosity through example, worship habits, and the creation of a religious school atmosphere. Parents play the role of partners who ensure the sustainability of these habits at home through worship assistance, filling out liaison books, and actively communicating with teachers via WhatsApp. The integration of these two roles results in an effective collaborative model in shaping the three dimensions of students' religious character, namely the values of *aqidah* and worship, moral values, and social values such as care and cooperation. However, this study also identified several challenges, including unequal parental involvement, differences in parenting, and less controlled use of gadgets at home. This challenge shows the need to increase parental digital literacy and strengthen collaboration mechanisms so that religious habituation can take place more consistently and evenly.

Conceptually, this research contributes to the development of collaboration-based character education in the digital era and shows that technology can be used as an effective connecting medium as long as it is ethically directed and values-oriented. Further research can be directed to comparative studies in other schools to see variations in collaboration patterns based on different school cultures, or through longitudinal studies to explore the long-term impact of religious habituation on students' moral development. In addition, the development of an Islamic digital literacy model for parents and quantitative research to measure the effectiveness of collaboration models on aspects of worship discipline or students' social behavior will be an important contribution to strengthening character education in the digital era.

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