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Original Article

The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers and Parents in the Formation of Student Morals After the COVID-19 Pandemic at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School in 2023

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic brought significant changes to students' learning environments and social interactions, creating new challenges for moral development. This study aims to examine the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers and parents in shaping students' morals after the COVID-19 pandemic at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School in 2023. This study employed a descriptive qualitative field research design. The subjects were PAI teachers and parents of students at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and observations, while data analysis consisted of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed that PAI teachers contributed to students' moral formation by acting as organizers, correctors, motivators, and facilitators. Parents supported moral development by helping students establish positive habits, providing role models, and supervising activities related to moral values. The moral formation process was supported by teacher competence, a conducive school environment, a supportive curriculum and learning materials, and active parental involvement. However, several factors hindered this process, including negative environmental influences, the uncontrolled use of technology and social media, limited parental involvement, family conflicts, lack of parental attention, and inadequate understanding of religious and moral values. The study highlights the importance of collaboration between schools and families in fostering students' moral development in the post-pandemic era.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education Teacher, Moral Formation, Parents' Role, Post-Covid-19 Pandemic, Student Morals.

1. Introduction

Education, both in Indonesia and around the world, has been in turmoil in recent years. The sudden outbreak of a deadly disease known as Covid-19, caused by the coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), has shaken the entire world. The World Health Organization has declared it a pandemic (Dhawan, 2020). The most striking impact has been on the delivery of education from primary level through to higher education. All established practices have had to change and adapt to the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since March 2020, the Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture, has issued a directive for all educational institutions at various levels to suspend face-to-face learning. The learning process, which was usually conducted face-to-face, had to be transformed into distance

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learning or indirect face-to-face learning using communication media. This form of distance learning is more commonly known as online learning.

Beyond its impact on the delivery of academic content, this shift also carried significant consequences for the development of students' character and moral values. The nature of learning activities conducted online meant that the learning process could not be carried out to its full potential. Teachers have largely focused on transferring knowledge through the provision of materials or assignments. The development of students' character traits has naturally been less than optimal, such as positive cooperation, responsibility, and so on. Meanwhile, the role of parents as character educators during online learning has also not been as effective as it is when learning takes place at school. This is because every parent has a different background. In contrast, at school, the role of character education is clearly defined and structured.

After two years of online/distance learning (PJJ) and as the Covid-19 pandemic subsided, learning began to be conducted both in-person and online. The transition from online to in-person learning was carried out gradually. During this year of blended learning, a decline in student character has been observed, with pupils tending to be more individualistic, less able to work together, and failing to demonstrate their full potential. Pupils remain fixated on a knowledge-transfer approach centered on lectures and completing assignments. This decline in character represents a major challenge for educational institutions and schools today (Nur, 2022).

The decline in character must be taken seriously; it is the duty of educational institutions, as the frontline in character education, to address this. The delivery of character education in schools must be grounded in fundamental character values, which are then developed into higher-order values in line with the needs, circumstances and environment of the school itself.

Managing character education during this transitional period is certainly no easy task. For character education to be realized, first and foremost, the active involvement of schools and parents is required. For example, teachers must be able to serve as role models for pupils, fostering and cultivating positive character traits so that pupils are able to independently apply them in their daily lives. Teachers, as the frontline, play a vital role in guiding and setting an example in the development of students' character. Parents and teachers particularly those teaching religious education play a crucial role in instilling Islamic values; various efforts are made to instill religious values in accordance with the beliefs and ethics advocated in the Qur'an. The Qur'an contains religious guidance for all aspects of human life, leading to goodness and happiness in this world and the hereafter. This is further explained in Surah An-Nahl: 89, which reads:

وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ تِبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّ هُدًى وَّرَحْمَةً وَّبُشْرٰى لِلْمُسْلِمِيْنَ

"And We have revealed the Book (the Qur'an) to you to explain all things, and as guidance, mercy and glad tidings for those who submit."

Essentially, a child's mindset and attitude depend heavily on the guidance and teaching provided by teachers and parents; therefore, harmony is essential in the process of instilling positive values (Handayani, 2016).

In light of this issue, it has become clear that teachers are the key drivers in creating an optimal learning environment with the aim of achieving educational objectives (Sari et al., 2020). A teacher of Islamic Religious Education does not merely teach the subject of Islamic Religious Education, but also sets a good example and instils good character in their pupils

(Anas et al., 2025). Similarly, parents should not simply wash their hands of the matter and leave the teaching of moral values entirely to the school. In this regard, parents play a vital role. Within the family, parents play a vital role in their children's development both in terms of physical and intellectual growth, as well as in shaping their character (Ceka, 1952). Parents serve as role models within the family; they must also take an active interest in their children's education by providing the necessary resources, paying attention to their children's education, offering guidance and supervision, providing motivation, and helping their children with any difficulties they encounter in their studies (Sobariah, 2017). Parents therefore play a vital role in their children's moral development.

Based on a review of previous research, it is evident that numerous studies have been conducted on the role of Islamic Education teachers and parents in shaping pupils' moral character. Research by Lahmi and Halim (2021) focuses on the role of parents in moral education during the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly in terms of their level of religious knowledge and the frequency of their interactions with their children. Meanwhile, the study by Adiprana and Widodo (2020) focuses solely on the role of teachers of Al-Islam, Muhammadiyah Studies, and Arabic (ISMUBA) in shaping students' Islamic character through habit-forming programs at school. The study by Arifatul et al. (2022) also places greater emphasis on the role of parents in fostering good moral character in children in the digital age, without examining the involvement of teachers at school. Furthermore, research into the dual role of Islamic Education teachers in primary schools focuses more on the guidance of pupils with behavioral issues, rather than on collaboration between teachers and parents in fostering pupils' moral character in the post-pandemic era (Fitri et al., 2023).

Consequently, there is a research gap regarding studies that simultaneously examine the roles of Islamic Education teachers and parents in shaping students' moral character in the post-Covid-19 pandemic era. Previous research has tended to focus on only one party, either teachers or parents, and has mostly been conducted during the pandemic or within specific contexts. Therefore, this study aims to complement previous research by examining more comprehensively the synergy between the roles of Islamic Education teachers and parents, including the supporting and inhibiting factors in the formation of students' moral character post-Covid-19 pandemic at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School.

Therefore, the role of Islamic Education teachers and parents in the process of character development in the post-pandemic period is essential. This has prompted the researcher to investigate further whether PAI teachers and parents play a role in the process of shaping students' moral character in the post-pandemic era, through this study. Based on the research background and scope of the study, this research aims to examine the role of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers and parents in shaping students' moral character in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School in 2023. Specifically, this study examines the role of PAI teachers in shaping students' moral character, the contribution of parents in supporting this process, and the facilitating and hindering factors influencing the process of shaping students' moral character following the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Role

According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, a role is the status or position expected of a person within society. A role can be defined as the regulated and expected behavior of an individual in a particular position. A role involves the creation of a series of interrelated behaviors performed in a specific situation by a group of people who are specifically entrusted with making decisions regarding the various responsibilities assigned to them (Arifin, 1991).

2.2. Islamic Religious Education Teachers

In accordance with the Minister of Religious Affairs' regulation, the role or duties of Islamic religious education teachers, as set out in Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia No. 16 of 2010 concerning "the management of religious education in schools", state in Article 1(7) that religious education teachers are professional educators whose primary duties are to educate, teach, guide, direct, train, set an example, assess and evaluate pupils. Islamic education teachers, as the custodians and those responsible for the subject of Islamic education, have other duties, namely teaching Islamic religious knowledge, instilling faith and piety in children's hearts, educating children to always be obedient in practicing their religion, and educating children to have good character (Zuhairini, 1997).

2.3. *Akhlakul Karimah*

Character: The term *'akhlak'* comes from Arabic and is the plural of the word *'khilqun'* or *'khuluqun'*, which means behavior, nature, or fundamental character. Character is also defined as a habit of the will; when one gets into the habit of doing something, that habit is referred to as character (Amin & Maruf, 1993). Furthermore, *akhlak* is also defined as the rules or norms of behavior that govern relationships between people, as well as the norms that govern the relationship between humans and their God, and even with the universe (Yunahar, 2006).

In Indonesia, the word *'akhlak'* always carries positive connotations. A good person is often described as someone of good character, whilst someone who does not behave well is described as lacking in character. In technical terms, *akhlak* is a system of values that governs patterns of human behavior and conduct on earth. The value system in question is the teachings of Islam, with the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet as its sources of values, and ijtihad as the method of Islamic reasoning. The patterns of behavior and actions referred to encompass relationships with Allah, with fellow human beings (including oneself), and with nature (Firdaus, 2017).

3. Methods

3.1. Type of Research

This study is a qualitative research study. The aim of this study is to explain the roles of Islamic religious education teachers and parents in shaping students' moral character following the COVID-19 pandemic at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School. A qualitative approach is a type of research that collects data to derive meaning objectively, thereby revealing facts and providing an understanding of what occurs in the field.

3.2. Research Location and Subjects

The research was conducted at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School during the second semester of 2023 until completion. The subjects of this study were Islamic religious education teachers and parents of students at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School. The subjects comprised two PAI teachers and five parents, selected using a purposive sampling technique. The teachers were selected on the basis of their direct responsibility for delivering Islamic Religious Education and overseeing character-related activities at the school, while the parents were selected from families with varying backgrounds who were willing and able to provide in-depth accounts of their children's behavior and character development before and after the pandemic.

3.3. Data Collection Methods

The research data to be collected and analyzed in this study consists of primary and secondary data. Primary data is data obtained from the spoken words, gestures, or behavior of the informants. Secondary data is obtained from document studies, whether in the form of written, pictorial, or moving documents such as videos, or in any other form provided that the data enriches and supports the research. In this study, the data collection methods used are interviews, observation, and documentary analysis. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format, guided by a set of open-ended questions on the role of PAI teachers and parents in shaping students' moral character, while allowing flexibility for informants to elaborate on their experiences and perceptions. Observation was carried out by directly observing daily school activities related to character formation, such as congregational prayers, Qur'an recitation, and classroom interactions between teachers and students. Documentary analysis involved reviewing relevant school documents, including the academic calendar and records of religious activity schedules, to corroborate and contextualize the data obtained through interviews and observation.

3.4. Data Validity Techniques

The data validity technique used in this study is data triangulation. Broadly speaking, there are three types of triangulations: source, technique, and time. This study will focus more on the use of source and technique triangulation. Source triangulation aims to test the credibility of data by checking data obtained through multiple sources. Technique triangulation aims to test the credibility of data by checking data obtained through several different data collection techniques.

3.5. Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis in this study follows the process outlined by Miles, Huberman and Saldana. This process consists of four stages: data collection, data condensation, data presentation and drawing conclusions. The analysis process follows an interactive analysis model.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Research Result

4.1.1. The Role of Islamic Education Teachers in Students' Character Development Post-Covid-19 Era

The development of a child's character is of paramount importance; indeed, character education is one of the key dimensions of national education, alongside physical and intellectual education. This means that the role of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers in character development remains crucial, even in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the pandemic has altered the way we learn and interact, religious values and character development remain as relevant as ever. In this regard, PAI teachers play a vital role in shaping children's character. Their role extends beyond merely teaching religion; they also help to develop moral values, ethics, and Islamic principles in daily life. This is as expressed by GR1, as follows:

"*In my view, the role of PAI teachers in shaping children's character is extremely important. We assist parents in educating their children. So that these children will grow up to be good Muslims. We educate them at school, and we teach them about many things related to religion.*" (Interview with GR1)

A similar view was also expressed by GR2, as follows:

"In my opinion, PAI teachers play a very important role in teaching religious knowledge to children in the classroom. They reprimand and advise children when they are wrong." (Interview with GR2)

Based on the two opinions above, it can be understood that the character-building carried out by PAI teachers post-pandemic is very important because it relates to building mental and emotional resilience following the Covid-19 pandemic, which has caused many changes and challenges in students' lives, such as social restrictions, uncertainty, and health concerns. Character development by PAI teachers can help students build mental and emotional resilience, as well as help them cope with stress and anxiety more effectively.

There are differences perceived by PAI teachers in their role in shaping students' character post-COVID-19 pandemic. These differences, as stated by GR1, are as follows:

"During the pandemic, I did not fully understand the children's character, as we had limited face-to-face interaction. Post-pandemic, when they first returned, the children were somewhat quiet and very obedient to the rules; however, as time has gone on, some children have occasionally shown a lack of enthusiasm in participating in school activities." (Interview with GR1)

A similar view was expressed by GR2, as follows:

"During the pandemic, we teachers often communicated via digital media, so we were only aware of the positive aspects. Regarding the children's behavior post-pandemic, at the start of term they were obedient to school rules, but as time has gone on, that obedience has declined slightly." (Interview with GR2)

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about many changes requiring adaptation, including routines in the teaching and learning process at school; however, the role played by PAI teachers has been instrumental in helping students cope with social changes and new values. The pandemic has altered the way we interact and has had a significant social impact.

The character-building efforts of PAI teachers have helped students cope with these social changes and provided a strong moral foundation for dealing with new values that may emerge post-pandemic.

The process of character-building is an ongoing activity undertaken by children in their daily lives, thereby becoming a good habit. Character is the result of education, training, guidance, and the struggle to cultivate habits, encompassing aspects of moral development, religious values, and character. This outcome can be achieved, in part, through the role played by educators both in formal education within educational institutions such as schools by teachers, and in non-formal education within the family by parents. In formal educational institutions, particularly schools, teachers play a key role in character formation. During the difficult times of the pandemic and the post-pandemic period, teachers have been instrumental in shaping character. In this context, Islamic Education teachers believe that the transition in habits following the pandemic can be navigated, thereby minimizing the difficulties students may encounter. This view is echoed by GR1 as follows:

"The children's behavior following the pandemic has, thank God, been good; there have been no difficulties in carrying out various Islamic activities at school. Our pupils are a reflection of us as teachers, so all of us teachers, not just those teaching Islamic Education, always accompany the children in various Islamic activities. We carry out both obligatory and recommended practices together." (Interview with GR1)

A similar view was expressed by GR2 regarding efforts to strengthen pupils' moral character following the COVID-19 pandemic; here is their statement.

"Since the pandemic, the children's moral character at our school has been good. Teachers at our school must set an example for their pupils, starting with accompanying them during both obligatory and recommended prayers in congregation. Arriving at school before 07:00, entering the classroom on time, and practicing a smile, greeting and salutation." (Interview with GR2)

Based on the two statements above, it can be seen that teachers of Islamic Education at Muhammadiyah Plus Junior High School in Salatiga perceive a difference in pupils' moral conduct during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the post-pandemic period. According to the Islamic Education teachers at Muhammadiyah Plus Junior High School, the most noticeable difference relates to compliance with school rules. There are three efforts to shape moral character undertaken by PAI teachers at Muhammadiyah Plus Junior High School in Salatiga, namely, moral character towards Allah SWT, moral character towards fellow human beings, and moral character towards the environment. The PAI teachers at Muhammadiyah Plus Junior High School in Salatiga foster all these aspects of moral character not only through general classroom teaching but also through training and habit formation. This is based on the opinion of G1, as follows:

"We schedule Islamic activities every day, including voluntary prayers, recitation of memorised verses and obligatory prayers. Whether in class or outside class, if anyone makes a mistake, we always gently correct them. Sometimes, when there are activities in the mosque, we slip in words of advice relating to both the hereafter and this world." (Interview with GR1).

Complementing the above opinion, GR2 provided a statement regarding the habits instilled in the process of character building for students at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School. The following is the statement provided by GR2.

"The habits we instill at school include encouraging children to arrive at school on time, performing voluntary prayers, performing obligatory prayers in congregation, arranging their shoes before entering the mosque, queuing during lunch, being honest when paying at the canteen, and various other daily routines. We always advise the children when they make mistakes; for instance, if they eat whilst standing or use their left hand, we reprimand them immediately. Sometimes we also provide guidance or advice after the Duha prayer, often regarding friendship or honesty. This is because children must always be reminded when they are wrong and guided towards the right path." (Interview with GR2)

Based on the two statements above, it can be concluded that in shaping the character of students at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School in the post-pandemic period, PAI teachers perform several key roles, including the following:

A. Organizer

Teachers draw up the schedule of activities during school hours, and some of the regular activities initiated by the Islamic Education teachers at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School include congregational *Dhuhr* prayer, congregational Friday prayer for male students, Quran recitation, charity contributions, and others. As well as other activities that have been previously determined in accordance with the educational calendar or the schedule set by the school.

B. Supervisor

In the process of shaping students' character post-COVID-19 pandemic at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School by PAI teachers, in addition to fostering habits through various activities, PAI teachers also continue to carry out supervision. Supervision is carried out to ensure that all activities are carried out as expected. This supervision is important as a form of correction for both teachers and students themselves. Students, who are essentially human beings, still often make mistakes or errors. Correcting the errors made by students is one of the roles of teachers in the development of students' character.

C. Motivator

The role of teachers at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School as motivators is very important. They inspire students to fulfil all their obligations as Muslims, as conveyed in their advice.

D. Facilitator

As a facilitator in the development of students' character, the PAI teacher helps to make it easier for students to participate in various activities at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School. The teacher plays a role in providing support to facilitate students' learning processes, both inside and outside the classroom.

4.1.2. Data Analysis and Research Findings on Students' Character Development Post-Covid-19 Era

Based on the results of the data analysis conducted with Islamic Education teachers at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School, it was found that the role of Islamic Education teachers in shaping students' moral character is:

A. Organizer

As an organizer, this is another essential aspect of a teacher's role. In this capacity, teachers are responsible for academic management, drawing up school rules and regulations, compiling the academic calendar, and so on. All of these tasks are organized to ensure that students' learning is as effective and efficient as possible (Djamarah, 2008). The Islamic

Education teacher has devised a range of activities aimed at fostering good character among pupils at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School.

B. Corrector

As a corrector, teachers must be able to distinguish between good values and those that are not good or are bad. These two distinct values must be fully understood in the context of life within society. Students may already possess these values, and they may well have been influenced by them before entering the school environment, as well as by the socio-cultural background of the communities in which they live, which vary according to their individual circumstances. Teachers must uphold all good values and eliminate all bad values from the students' minds and characters. If teachers allow them to persist, it means they have neglected their role as correctors, who assess and correct all the attitudes, behavior and actions of their students (Djamarah, 2008). In shaping the character of pupils at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School, teachers correct any behavior exhibited by their pupils.

C. Motivator

The role of the teacher as a motivator is crucial in the learning process; it sparks interest and guides pupils to engage in activities related to their own needs or desires, which are intrinsically linked to their personal interests. In this regard, the teacher creates specific conditions to ensure that pupils always feel the need and desire to continue learning (Hanafiah, 2012). The Islamic Education teacher at Muhammadiyah Plus Junior High School in Salatiga motivates and encourages their pupils to fulfil all their obligations as Muslims and to demonstrate good character in their dealings with God, their fellow human beings and the environment.

D. Facilitator

As a facilitator, a teacher's role is to help make learning easier for pupils. Teachers therefore need to understand their pupils' characteristics, including their learning styles and the basic skills they possess (Sanjaya, 2019). The same applies to the process of character development for pupils at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School. Islamic Education teachers provide various facilities to help pupils carry out various activities at school.

This study will provide insights into the role of Islamic Education teachers in shaping pupils' moral character following the challenges and changes brought about by the pandemic. In particular, this study highlights the role of Islamic Education teachers in shaping pupils' moral character. Within the context of Islamic education, Islamic Education teachers play a central role in providing instruction and guidance on good moral character.

In the current context, this research is highly relevant. In the post-pandemic period, students' mental, moral and social well-being are a key concern. This research will provide a better understanding of the role of Islamic Education teachers in shaping students' moral character, which can serve as a foundation for developing effective strategies and programmes to address future challenges.

4.1.3. The Role of Parents in Shaping Moral Character Post-Covid-19 Era

The process of character development is an activity that children engage in continuously in their daily lives, thereby turning it into a good habit. Character is the result of education, training, guidance and the effort to cultivate habits, encompassing aspects of moral development, religious values and ethics. This outcome can be achieved, in part, through the role played by educators, both in formal education within educational institutions such as schools by teachers, and in non-formal education within the family by parents. A student's initial moral education should naturally be acquired from their immediate environment, namely the family, with parents playing a key role.

Parents of pupils at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School are aware of their role in character development, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The changes brought about by COVID-19 were a new experience for everyone, including the pupils at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School. Having endured difficult times during the COVID-19 pandemic, parents have strived to the best of their ability to continue playing a role in character development, as they realize that good character makes it easier to face various trials. Following the pandemic, marked by the resumption of face-to-face teaching and learning activities, parents have not simply washed their hands of the matter and handed over the entire responsibility for character development to teachers, particularly PAI teachers. Parents still feel they have a role to play in shaping their children's character. This is implied in the following statements made by several parents regarding the role of parents in shaping the character of students at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School.

"Parents play the most important role in shaping a child's character. Parents are there for their children from the moment they wake up until they go back to sleep. Parents are the most important influence in shaping a child's character." (interview with CK)

"Parents play a very significant role in shaping a child's character. Because we will be held accountable for this in the afterlife." (interview with EY)

"Our role is extremely important because we are the first to teach children about many things, which shapes their lives." (interview with SH)

"Parents play a vital role in shaping a child's character. Parents set a good example because children will imitate what their parents do. If the parents' character is good, then so too will be that of their child." (interview with YW)

"Parents play a vital role in shaping character. As parents, we teach and educate our children to have good character, both at home and outside the home. We remind and correct them when they are wrong." (interview with SR)

Based on the various statements above, it is clear that the parents of pupils at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School are aware of their role in shaping their children's character. This awareness of the need to continue playing a role in character development extends not only to the period when pupils had to study at home during the pandemic but also to the post-pandemic period when teaching and learning activities have resumed at school. Nevertheless, it was found that parents hold their own views on good character and its relationship to the development of their children's character.

"Being devout in one's religion, that is, practicing worship. Maintaining a good relationship with God and with fellow human beings: habluminsaannas and hablumminallah." (interview with CK)

"Taking responsibility for oneself and being mindful in various matters without being told to do so." (interview with SH)

"Obeying one's parents, following religious commands and avoiding religious prohibitions." (interview with YW)

"Applying the teachings of Islam to daily life. Behaving politely both at home and outside the home." (interview with SR)

Based on the views expressed above, the parents of pupils at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School consider good moral character to be obedience to religious teachings, respect for parents and care for the environment. Parents are fully aware of their responsibility to play a role in shaping their children's character. As has been explained, the pandemic has brought about many changes that have had a significant impact not only on

children's physical health but also on their mental well-being. This is reflected in parents' statements, which indicate that children have exhibited behavioral changes following the COVID-19 pandemic; the relevant statements are as follows.

"Before the pandemic, children socialized with those around them. However, when the pandemic struck and restrictions on leaving the house were imposed, children began to prefer spending time alone in their rooms, keeping themselves occupied. Unfortunately, this behavior has continued to this day." (interview with CK)

"During the pandemic, my child was glued to their mobile phone, which cut them off from the outside world. Many negative influences affected my child. After the pandemic, phone use decreased slightly as they returned to school as usual. However, upon returning home, the child became engrossed in their phone again, causing them to delay fulfilling their duties as a Muslim." (interview with EY)

"During the pandemic, with the child at home, we monitored all their activities. Once the pandemic ended, the child enjoyed playing outdoors, but sometimes became so absorbed in these activities that they neglected their religious duties." (interview with SH)

"During the pandemic, my child was too relaxed, so they often put off fulfilling their religious duties. Once the pandemic ended, the children became more organized and disciplined in their worship because they had less time to relax." (interview with YW)

"*During the pandemic, as the children were learning at home, we as parents took full responsibility for their education. When the children were at home, we as parents had to constantly remind them about their prayers, both the obligatory and the recommended ones. Alhamdulillah, my child was able to follow my rules. Once the pandemic ended, the child was busy with school activities but did not neglect their prayers without being told to do so, as they had already established a routine during the pandemic."* (interview with SR)

The statement above illustrates one of the ways in which parents help to shape their children's character, namely by instilling good habits through constant reminders and encouraging them to perform acts of worship as a good Muslim should.

4.1.4. Data Analysis and Research Findings on the Role of Parents in Shaping Moral Character Post-Covid-19 Era

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of parents in shaping pupils' character has become even more important and challenging. Thematic analysis of the parent interviews presented in the preceding section reveals five recurring patterns in how parents perceive and enact their role during this period, summarized below.

Setting an example in difficult situations which is shown from the data that parents acted as the primary role models for their children in dealing with difficult situations following the pandemic, a pattern reflected in YW's observation that children imitate their parents' behavior and that good parental character produces good character in children. Informants described demonstrating calmness, resilience and firmness in the face of challenges; by doing so, parents reported being able to inspire their children to develop strong and resilient character.

Reinforcing moral values was another important role reported by parents in this study. Parents actively reinforced moral values in their children's daily lives, consistent with SR's description of reminding and correcting children when they made mistakes. In post-pandemic situations, such as the loss of a family member, financial hardship, or major changes to daily routines, parents explained the importance of values such as honesty, empathy, and resilience. They believed that these values helped children cope with challenges and maintain positive relationships with others.

Effective communication was also identified as an essential aspect of character development in the post-pandemic era. Several parents emphasized the importance of maintaining open and effective communication with their children. For example, SH described closely monitoring her child's activities during this period. More broadly, the informants reported listening empathetically and providing opportunities for their children to express their thoughts, feelings, and concerns. Through this approach, parents believed they were better able to provide guidance, offer advice, and help their children understand and apply positive values in new and challenging situations.

Supervision of technology use emerged as another important parental role in supporting students' character development. Consistent with EY's account of her child becoming absorbed in mobile phone use during and after the pandemic, sometimes at the expense of religious responsibilities, parents emphasized the need to supervise and guide their children in using technology in healthy and responsible ways. Several informants reported teaching digital ethics, emphasizing the importance of responsible technology use, and monitoring the content their children accessed to protect them from negative influences.

Collaboration with schools and the community was also recognized as an important aspect of character development. Although this role was not explicitly described by all informants, the strong sense of parental responsibility expressed by CK and EY suggested an expectation that parents should work together with schools and the broader community to support students' character development. Such collaboration may include participating in school programs that promote moral values, including religious activities, community service, and mentoring programs. Parents believed that these collaborative efforts provide consistent guidance and create a supportive environment that strengthens students' character development.

The role of parents in shaping students' character in the post-Covid-19 era faces new challenges. However, through setting a good example, effective communication, appropriate supervision of technology, and collaboration with schools and the community, parents can help children develop good and resilient character to face the complexities of a changing world.

In the first stage, the role of parents in their children's education is to provide them with religious education, such as teaching them to perform religious rituals, teaching them to read, and encouraging them to take part in positive activities. In the second stage, the role of parents in their children's education is to teach them social values, such as behaving politely, showing affection towards siblings, greeting one another, living frugally, forming good friendships with siblings and others, and adopting a fair attitude. In the third stage, the role of parents in a child's education is to teach moral values, such as instilling honesty and patience in children. However, the role of parents in a child's education has not yet been fully realized. Parents often allow children to behave inappropriately, such as underperforming in their studies, acting rudely in front of guests, arguing in front of guests, frequently lying, and becoming angry when their mother tries to advise them.

This study specifically examines the primary role of parents in shaping values and morality in children's daily lives. It explores in greater depth how their roles can complement and influence one another in shaping students' character. In the post-pandemic context, students' mental, moral, and social well-being have become a primary concern. This research will provide a better understanding of the role of parents in shaping students' character, which can serve as a foundation for developing methods to address future challenges.

4.1.5. Factors that Hinder and Support the Development of Students' Moral Character by Islamic Education Teachers

Character development is one of the key roles of teachers in schools. However, in carrying out this task, there are several hindering and supporting factors that can influence the success of students' character development. The following are the supporting factors in students' character development.

A. Teacher competence: Teachers who possess the necessary skills and a sound understanding of religious and moral values can deliver effective teaching. Teachers who are able to communicate these values clearly and in a way that is relevant to pupils' lives will help to strengthen the development of their character.
B. Curriculum and teaching materials: The availability of an appropriate curriculum and teaching materials on religious and moral education is a key factor in the development of good character. A curriculum that provides scope for the development of moral and ethical values and offers practical examples from everyday life will help pupils to understand and internalize the desired moral values.
C. A supportive school environment: A safe, harmonious school environment that promotes good ethics will have a positive impact on the development of pupils' character. Clear rules, consistent discipline and a school culture that encourages positive behavior will facilitate the process of developing good character.
D. The role of parents and family: The role of parents and families is vital in supporting the development of pupils' character. Cooperation between teachers and parents in instilling consistent moral values and setting a good example will strengthen the development of pupils' character both at school and at home.

Furthermore, the factors hindering the development of students' moral character are as follows:

A. A negative environment: A social environment rife with negative behavior, such as violence, drugs and the bad influence of peers, can act as a hindrance to the development of students' moral character. An environment that does not uphold moral values can expose students to behavior that is at odds with the values taught at school.
B. Technology and social media: Uncontrolled use of technology and social media can influence the development of students' moral character. Exposure to immoral or unethical content on social media can influence students' views and behavior.
C. An excessive academic workload: Teachers must spend time planning and preparing lessons that align with the curriculum and pupils' needs. They need to compile teaching materials, source resources and develop effective teaching strategies. This preparation requires significant time and effort outside of teaching hours. In addition to in-class duties, teachers are often assigned to supervise extracurricular activities, school events, or parent-teacher meetings. They may also be given additional responsibilities, such as acting as a form tutor, program coordinator, or school committee member. All of this adds to their workload outside of teaching hours. In addition to salaries that cannot be described as high, private school teachers often face a lack of allowances and facilities. Private school teachers do not receive allowances such as health insurance, pension contributions or other benefits that are usually provided to teachers in state schools.

4.1.6. Factors that Hinder and Support the Development of Students' Character by Their Parents

The development of students' character is a shared responsibility between schools and parents. The role of parents at home is essential in shaping their children's character. Several factors support parents' efforts to develop students' character at home. One of the most important is setting a good example. Parents who demonstrate positive behavior in their daily lives help shape their children's moral character. When children observe values such as honesty, patience, and empathy in their parents' actions, they are more likely to imitate and internalize those behaviors.

Another supporting factor is communication and values education. Parents who actively discuss moral and religious values with their children help strengthen character development. Conversations about values, ethics, and morality provide children with a better understanding of how to apply these principles in their daily lives. Guidance and mentoring also play an important role. Parents who are actively involved in guiding and mentoring their children reinforce moral character by teaching the importance of responsibility, respect for others, and good deeds. In addition, consistency and fairness contribute to a stable home environment. When parents consistently apply moral and ethical values and treat their children fairly and equally, children are better able to understand and practice the expected moral character.

Several factors may also hinder parents' efforts to shape their children's moral character. Lack of attention and involvement can limit children's opportunities to receive guidance and develop an understanding of moral values. When parents devote insufficient time to discussing these values or fail to participate in activities that reinforce moral character, children may not receive the support they need. Conflict and tension within the family can also interfere with character development. Disharmony between parents may cause children to experience confusion or stress, which can affect their moral development. Another obstacle is negative environmental influences. Peers or social environments characterized by negative behavior may undermine the moral values taught at home. In addition, a lack of understanding of religious and moral values among parents may reduce the effectiveness of their guidance. Parents need to continue developing their understanding of these values so they can provide more effective support for their children.

In fostering students' character, cooperation between schools and parents is essential. Supporting factors should be strengthened, while obstacles should be addressed so that character development can be successfully promoted both at school and at home.

4.2. Discussions

The findings presented above can be interpreted through the lens of social learning theory, which posits that moral behavior is acquired and sustained through observation, imitation, and reinforcement within significant relationships (Bandura, 1977).

In relation to PAI teachers, the roles identified including organizer, corrector, motivator, and facilitator, correspond closely to the modelling and reinforcement functions central to this framework. As organizers, teachers structure the environment within which observational learning occurs, scheduling religious activities such as congregational prayer and Qur'an recitation that provide students with consistent behavioral models. As correctors and motivators, teachers reinforce desirable conduct and discourage undesirable conduct, processes that, according to social learning theory, are essential for behaviors to be internalized rather than merely observed. This extends Adiprana and Widodo (2020) findings on habit-forming program by demonstrating that, in the post-pandemic context, such habituation plays a particularly important role in re-establishing routines disrupted during distance learning.

A parallel pattern emerges in the role of parents. The interview data indicate that parents perceive themselves as primary role models, a perception consistent with social learning theory's emphasis on the family as the first and most influential source of behavioral models for children. Parents' accounts of providing constant reminders, supervision, and correction further reflect the reinforcement processes through which observed behaviors become habitual. These findings reinforce Lahmi and Halim (2021) conclusion that parental religious knowledge and the frequency of parent-child interaction are central to children's moral education while extending this work to the post-pandemic period.

Taken together, the findings address the research gap identified in the introduction. Whereas previous studies examined the roles of teachers (Adiprana & Widodo, 2020; Fitri et al., 2023) and parents (Lahmi & Halim, 2021; Arifatul et al., 2022) largely in isolation, this study demonstrates that these roles function as complementary components of a single modeling and reinforcement system. The supporting factors identified in this study, including teacher competence, a supportive curriculum, a positive school environment, and parental involvement, represent the conditions under which this system operates coherently across school and home. Conversely, the inhibiting factors, including negative peer environments, uncontrolled technology use, and inconsistent parental involvement, represent disruptions to this system by introducing competing or absent models that weaken the consistency required for character traits to be reliably internalized (Bandura, 1977). These findings suggest that effective character education in the post-pandemic period depends not only on the individual efforts of teachers or parents but also on the alignment and consistency of the models and reinforcement they provide.

5. Conclusion

This study set out to examine three interrelated aspects of moral character development at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic: the role of PAI teachers, the contribution of parents, and the facilitating and hindering factors shaping this process. The findings address each of these objectives in turn. Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers play a vital role in shaping students' moral character in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School through their roles as organisers, correctors, motivators and facilitators in guiding students' behavior at school. Furthermore, parents also make a significant contribution to the development of students' moral character by setting a good example, providing supervision, fostering good communication, and instilling moral and religious values within the family environment. This study also found that factors supporting the development of students' moral character include teacher competence, a conducive school environment, parental involvement, and the instilling of religious values. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors include the influence of a negative environment, uncontrolled use of technology and social media, and a lack of parental attention and involvement in fostering students' moral character.

This study has limitations as it was conducted solely at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School; therefore, the results may differ if applied to other educational institutions. Furthermore, the study also has limitations in terms of methodology and research findings, necessitating further research on the role of Islamic Education (PAI) teachers and parents in the development of students' moral character. Therefore, it is recommended that there be more intensive collaboration and communication between PAI teachers and parents in guiding students, a strengthening of character education based on religious and moral

values, and attention to students' mental well-being post-pandemic. Furthermore, there is a need to develop programs and training for PAI teachers and parents so that the process of shaping students' moral character can proceed more effectively and sustainably.

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