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PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SHAPING CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS CHARACTER: A QUALITATIVE STUDY AT MADIN AL ISTIQOMAH

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Abstract

This study examines the role of parents in shaping the religious character of children aged 7 to 12 at Madin Al Istiqomah. The research aims to identify and evaluate the influence of parents on children's character development. A descriptive qualitative approach was utilized, with data collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. Findings reveal that parents act as primary introducers of religious values through strategies such as role modeling, habituation of worship practices, and utilizing leisure time for positive activities. The madrasah diniyah complements this role by providing spiritual programs, and collaboration between parents and the institution fosters a supportive environment for children's religious growth despite challenges from environmental factors and social media. This study contributes to the literature on family-based religious education and offers practical guidance for parents and educators on enhancing children's moral and spiritual development.

Keywords: *Parental Involvement; Religious Character Education; Madrasah Diniyah; Islamic Education.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini meneliti peran orang tua dalam membentuk karakter religius anak usia 7–12 tahun di Madin Al Istiqomah. Penelitian bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan mengevaluasi pengaruh pengasuhan orang tua terhadap perkembangan karakteranak. Pendekatan yang digunakanan adalah kualitatif deskriptif, dengan pengumpulan data melalui wawancara, observasi, dan analisis dokumen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa orang tua berperan sebagai pengantar utama nilai-nilai religious melalui strategi keteladan, kebiasaan ibadah, dan pemanfaatan waktu luang untuk kegiatan positif. Madrasah diniyah melengkapi peran ini melalui berbagai program spiritual. Kerjasama antara orang tua dan lembaga pendidikan menciptakan lingkungan yang mendukung pertumbuhan religious anak, meskipun terdapat tantangan dari faktor lingkungan dan media sosial. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi teoretis terhadap literature pendidikan karakter religius berbasis keluarga dan kontribusi praktis bagi orang tua dan pendidik dalam meningkatkan perkembangan moral dan spiritual anak.

Kata Kunci: Keterlibatan *Orang Tua; Pendidikan Karakter Religius; MadrasahDiniyah; Pendidikan Islam.*

A. Introduction

Character education is a fundamental element in shaping a child's personality, particularly in the religious aspect. Religious character education not only instils an understanding of religious values but also shapes children's attitudes, behaviors, and thought patterns in everyday life. According to Lickona, character education encompasses three main aspects: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action.[1] These three aspects demonstrate that character

[1]T. Lickona, *Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility* (New York: Bantam Books, 1992).

education must be implemented holistically, not only at the cognitive level but also at the affective and behavioral levels. In the context of Islamic education, religious character education aims to develop the values of monotheism, worship, and morality which are reflected in children's daily activities.[2]

In Islamic teachings, the family plays a central role as the primary educational environment in shaping a child's religious character.[3]The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized that every child is born in a state of *fitrah* (pure), and it is the parents who determine the direction of the child's beliefs and character (HR. Bukhari and Muslim).[4]The affirmation of parental responsibility is also contained in the Qur'an, as stated by Allah SWT in Surah At-Tahrim, verse 6, which commands believers to protect themselves and their families from deviant paths. From an Islamic educational perspective, the family is seen as the primary foundation for a child's moral and spiritual development, making the role of parents a determining factor in the formation of religious character.[5]

The age of 7 to 12 years is an important phase in a child's moral and spiritual development.[6]According to Kohlberg's theory of moral development, at this age, children begin to enter the stage of conventional morality, where they begin to understand prevailing social norms and moral principles. In Islam, the age of seven is also the initial stage for instilling responsible worship, as evidenced by the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which encourages parents to accustom their children to

[2]Muslim Edison, "Konsep Dasar Pendidikan Karakter Perspektif Islam," *STUDIA RELIGIA: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pendidikan Islam* 5, no. 1 (2021): 116–33.

[3]Ida Windi Wahyuni and Ary Antony Putra, "Kontribusi Peran Orangtua Dan Guru Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Islami Anak Usia Dini," *Al-Thariqah: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 5, no. 1 (2020): 30–37.

[4]Muhamad Nazar and Sitti Zahra Aulia Nazar, "Urgensi Pendidikan Keluarga Dan Sekolah Untuk Meningkatkan Kualitas Pendidikan Anak Dalam Perspektif Hadist," *Halu Oleo Law Review* 8, no. 2 (2024): 159–65.

[5]Zakiyah Darajat, *Pendidikan Islam Keluarga Dan Sekolah*, ed. PT Remaja Rosdakarya (Bandung, 2003).

[6]Muhiyatul Huliyah, *Strategi Pengembangan Moral Dan Karakter Anak Usia Dini* (Jejak Pustaka, 2021).

prayer from the age of seven (Narrated by Abu Dawud). During this phase, children have a strong tendency to imitate the behavior of those closest to them, especially their parents, making parental role models and involvement crucial in instilling positive religious habits.[7]

However, in practice, not all parents can fulfill this role optimally. Busy schedules, limited religious understanding, and ineffective communication between parents and children often hinder religious character education within the family.[8] Kia and Murniarti's (2020) research shows that parents' busy schedules and lack of religious knowledge are the main obstacles to educating children about their religious character.[9] A similar finding was reported by Sari and Lestari (2021), who stated that weak parent-child communication affected the suboptimal development of the religious character of elementary school-aged children.[10] In addition, Ramadhan (2022) emphasized that when parents' roles are not carried out optimally, children's religious character tends not to develop optimally.[11]

These various studies demonstrate that parents play a crucial role in shaping children's religious character. However, most previous studies have focused on the context of formal education or discussed the role of parents in general, without specifically examining how parents' involvement shapes the religious character of children aged 7–12 in the context of non-formal Islamic education, particularly *madin* or *madrasah diniyah* (Islamic schools). Therefore, there remains a research gap warranting further

[7]Heri Gunawan, *Pendidikan Karakter: Konsep Dan Implementasi* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2012).

[8]Aiena Kamila, "Pentingnya Pendidikan Agama Islam Dan Pendidikan Moral Dalam Membina Karakter Anak Sekolah Dasar," *Al-Furqan: Jurnal Agama, Sosial, Dan Budaya* 2, no. 5 (2023).

[9]A. Kia and Erni Murniarti, "Pengaruh Pola Asuh Orang Tua Dalam Peningkatan Prestasi Belajar Anak," *JURNAL DINAMIKA PENDIDIKAN* 13, no. 3 (2020): 264–78.

[10]D. Sari and M. Lestari, "Komunikasi Orang Tua Dan Anak Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Religius," *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan* 9, no. 3 (2021): 210–18.

[11]A. Ramadhan, "Urgensi Peran Orang Tua Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Anak," *Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter* 12, no. 1 (2022): 88–96.

exploration regarding the forms of parental involvement, the challenges encountered, and the strategies used to instil religious values in children in these environments.

Madrasah diniyah or *madin* Al Istiqomah Magetan is a non-formal educational institution that consistently provides religious education to children aged 7–12 years through the study of the Qur'an, *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *aqidah* (faith), and morals. However, religious education in *madrasah diniyah* will not run optimally without the support and continuity of religious education in the family environment. As stated by Iif Atikah (2019), the success of developing a child's religious character is primarily determined by the integration between formal or non-formal education and education within the family.[12]

Based on this background, this study aims to examine the role of parents in shaping the religious character of children aged 7–12 at Madin Al Istiqomah Magetan, including the forms of parental involvement, the obstacles encountered, and the strategies implemented to instil religious habits in the family environment. This research is expected to provide academic contributions to the development of studies on religious character education and serve as a practical reference for parents and educators in improving the quality of children's religious education.

B. Discussion

1. Character education

Character education is a fundamental effort to shape a child's personality, particularly in the religious aspect. Religious character education is not only focused on religious knowledge, but also on forming a child's attitudes, behaviors, and thought patterns in everyday life. Lickona (1991) explains that character education encompasses three main dimensions: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action, which demonstrates that the

[12]Iif Atikah, "Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter Di Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Ponorogo" (IAIN Ponorogo, 2019).

internalization of moral values must occur holistically across the cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains.[13] From the perspective of Islamic education, religious character education aims to foster faith, worship, and morals grounded in the Al-Qur'an and Hadith, so that religious values are not only understood, but also consistently practiced.[14]

The family is the primary educational environment in shaping a child's religious character.[15] Parents play a strategic role because their involvement begins from birth and continues throughout their children's daily lives. Islamic teachings emphasize that every child is born in a state of *fitrah* (pure, natural disposition), and that parents play a crucial role in shaping their child's faith and character (as narrated by Bukhari and Muslim). Between the ages of 7 and 12, children enter a crucial phase of moral development, where they begin to understand social norms and tend to imitate the behavior of those closest to them, especially their parents. Therefore, role models, the habit of worship, religious communication, and consistent parental supervision are key factors in the success of a child's religious character education.

Madrasah diniyah, as a non-formal Islamic educational institution, complements the religious education children receive in their families and in formal schools. Through the study of the Quran, *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *aqidah* (faith), and morals, *madrasah diniyah* helps strengthen children's understanding and practice of religion.[16] However, religious character education will

[13]Thomas Lickona, *Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility* (New York: Bantam Books, 1991).

[14]Muh Aslan, Saepudin, and St Nurhayati, "Pembelajaran Akidah Akhlak Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Religius Peserta Didik Di Madrasah Aliyah Pondok Pesantren Darul Qur ' an At - Taqwa Jampue Learning of Creed and Morals in the Formation of Religious Character of Students at the Islamic Senior High S," *Ilmu Kependidikan Dan Keislaman* 20, no. 01 (2025): 96–115, https://doi.org/10.56338/iqra.v20i1.6640.

[15]Zubairi Muzakki and Nurdin Nurdin, "Formation of Student Character in Islamic Religious Education," *EDUKASIA: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran* 3, no. 3 (December 7, 2022): 937–48, https://doi.org/10.62775/edukasia.v3i3.219.

[16]Widad Sef and Intan Nurmala Indriya Indriya, Helina Amara, Haifa Nusaibah, "Eksistensi PAI Pada Madrasah Diniyah Dalam Pengembangan Pendidikan Islam Di

not be optimal without continuity between madrasah education and guidance within the family environment. Synergy between parents and the *madrasah diniyah* is key to instilling religious values sustainably, so that children's religious character can develop holistically and consistently in their daily lives.[17]

This study used a descriptive, qualitative approach to explore how parents are involved in developing the religious character of children aged 7 to 12 years at Madin Al Istiqomah Magetan.[18] Qualitative methods are used because they can help researchers understand an event in its natural environment more comprehensively and holistically, within its context, without interventions that alter the behavior of the research subjects.[19] The descriptive method is used to systematically describe how parents educate their children in religious matters and the various factors that determine success in directing their children towards behavior consistent with religious values.

This research uses a qualitative approach, with data collection through semi-structured in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation.[2021] Interviews were conducted with parents of children aged 7–12 years and *ustaz or ustazah* (Islamic teachers) at Madin Al Istiqomah to explore the forms of parental involvement, strategies for instilling religious values, and challenges faced in children's religious education. Observations were used to directly observe interactions between parents and children during religious activities, both within the madrasah and family environments. At the same time,

Indonesia," *RAUDHAH Proud To Be Professionals JurnalTarbiyahIslamiyah* 9, no. 1 (2020): 100–114.

[17]Putri Imroatul Harisa and Lailatul Fitriyah, "Strategi Pendidikan Karakter Dalam Membentuk Kepribadian Muslim Di Sekolah Berbasis Pesantren," *JIIP - Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 8, no. 5 (May 1, 2025): 4819–29, https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v8i5.7863.

[18]Muhammad Ramdhan, *Metode Penelitian* (Cipta Media Nusantara, 2021).

[19]Melyana R. Pugu, Sugeng Riyanto, and Rofiq Noorman Haryadi, *Metodologi Penelitian; Konsep, Strategi, Dan Aplikasi* (PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia, 2024).

[20]Lexy J. Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2021).

[21]Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Dan R&D* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2018).

documentation served as supporting data in the form of activity schedules, learning notes, and records of religious activities. Research subjects were selected purposively, with consideration given to parents' direct involvement in their children's religious development and the diversity of educational and occupational backgrounds.[22] The data were analyzed using an interactive model through the stages of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the role of parents in shaping the religious character of children aged 7–12 years at Madin Al Istiqomah Magetan.

In her work, "The Science of Islamic Education," Zakiah Daradjat argues that parents are the first and primary educators for children, as they are the primary source of education in a child's life. Therefore, the early stages of education take place within the family.[23] Parents are central figures who play the most important role in instilling educational values in their children. Given that parental involvement and education both have a significant influence on a child's future, parental education is a key factor in a child's development. Children gain their first educational experiences from their parents, who are their primary educators. Therefore, the family environment is the setting for the earliest educational processes. Furthermore, parents are the adults who are fully responsible for guiding their children's growth and development.[24]

According to Maulani, the role of parents begins at conception and continues consistently in responding to various stimuli, whether related to physical, moral, religious, or emotional well-being. This role reflects a set of behaviors demonstrated by fathers and mothers in carrying out their

[22]Yudistita, ILham Suwandi, and Muchamad Rifki, "Pendidikan Karakter Siswa Sekolah Dasar Dalam Perspektif Islam," *Murid: Jurnal Pemikiran Mahasiswa Agama Islam* 2, no. 1 (2024): 3.

[23]Darajat, *Pendidikan Islam Keluarga Dan Sekolah*.

[24]Hery Noer Aly, *Ilmu Pendidikan Islam* (Jakarta: Logos, 1999).

responsibilities toward their children, while also serving as role models for their children.[25]

From the moment a child is born, the potential to grow into a religious person is inherent. To realize this potential, an appropriate and continuous educational process is necessary. This educational responsibility lies not only with the mother, but also with the father as a parent, particularly in introducing divine values, the teachings of the Prophet, and the guidance found in the Quran and Hadith. The process of forming a child's personality continues from birth through maturity and independence and is greatly influenced by parenting styles and the family environment. Therefore, parents play a central role in the education and care of children at home.[26]

According to Umar, the role of parents encompasses several important aspects, namely:

a. As Educators: Parents serve as both guides and educators for their children from birth to adulthood. This includes education in daily life, religious teachings, and general education.
b. As Motivators: Parents contribute by inspiring and supporting their children to value education, thereby enhancing their academic achievements and helping them fulfill parental expectations.
c. As Facilitators: Parents provide various facilities and resources that support their children's learning, ensuring the learning process runs optimally.
d. As Guides: Parents assist their children when they encounter difficulties in learning or daily life, aiming to help them solve problems independently and with awareness.

[25]Miranda and Siti Quratul 'Ain, "Peran Orang Tua Dalam Motivasi Belajar Anak Di Kelas IV SD Negeri 004 Pelalawan," *Didaktik : Jurnal Ilmiah PGSD FKIP Universitas Mandiri* 8, no. 1 (2022): 767–75.

[26]Akhmad Muhaimin Azzet, *Urgensi Pendidikan Karakter Di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: ArRuzz Media, 2011).

In addition, the care and attention shown by parents have been proven to contribute positively and prominently in building the foundation of a child's moral and religious character. The greater the level of attention given, the stronger the influence and the better the child's moral development. This finding is consistent with Firmansyah's (2020) study, which indicates that parental care has a positive and meaningful impact on children's moral growth[27].

2. Parental Influence in Developing Children's Religious Character

The role of parents is a primary factor in shaping a child's religious character, while schools, teachers, and the community serve as complementary factors that strengthen this role. Parents who are actively involved in their children's religious education can shape their children's character to be disciplined, empathetic, and moral, contributing significantly to their social and emotional development. The formation of a child's religious character becomes more effective when religious education is not merely normative, but is realized through concrete practices in daily life, such as habituating worship and parental role models.[28]

The instillation of moral and religious teachings in children aged 7 to 12 at Madin Al Istiqomah is primarily driven by parents' proactive role in shaping and guiding their children's character from an early age. Insights from in-depth conversations with several parents revealed that madrasahs are not the only institutions responsible for religious education; instead, they are a fundamental element of the family's parenting approach. This education typically begins when the child is

[27]Christiani Purwaningsih, "Peran Orang Tua Dalam Keluarga," *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* 6, no. 4 (2022).

[28]Fauzatul Kamaliyah, "Parental Control in Shaping Children ' s Religios Character in Rural Communities : A Case Study of Balikbakhilir Hamlet,"*SYAIKHUNA: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pranata Islam STAI Syichona Moh. Cholil Bangkalan* 16, no. 01 (2025): 198–209.

around 3 to 5 years old, through the introduction of basic religious concepts in simple forms and the development of worship habits, such as daily prayers, performing *shalat*, and reciting the Qur'an.

3. Parents as the First and Primary Educators of Their Children

Parents have a vital role in their children's education, and their involvement can have a significant impact on their children's development, academic achievement, and lifelong learning.[29] Parental involvement, as the child's first educators, holds a fundamental role in shaping and instilling religious teachings even before the child is introduced to formal education[30]. Parental participation is a crucial factor in developing a child's character and preparing them for future life. Children often imitate their parents' behavior, as parents have a strong influence and serve as role models due to the emotional closeness and admiration children feel toward them. In this context, the family environment is the most influential factor in shaping a child's behavior, as they spend most of their time in this setting. This is reflected in how children present themselves, how they dress, and how they act and behave daily, which often mirror the habits and conduct of those around them in the family[31]. As explained by Parent A based on the interview results:

> *"Parents are indeed supposed to be the first place of learning for their children. Before a child begins learning at school or madrasah, they already start learning from us at home, whether it's learning to speak, to*

[29]Jeannette Niyonizeye, Doreen Nkirote, and Paulin Habimana, "Role of Parents' Religious Commitment in Character Building of the Children in Gitega District, Burundi," *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews* 5, no. 5 (2024).

[30]mauliza, "Peran Orang Tua Terhadap Pendidikan Islam Pada Anak Usia (7-12 Tahun) di Gampong Lam Ilie Teungoh Indrapuri Aceh Besar" (Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry, 2023).

[31]Muhammad Rezki Andhika, "Peran Orang Tua Sebagai Sumber Pendidikan Karakter Bagi Anak Usia Dini," *At-Ta'Dib: Jurnal Ilmiah Prodi Pendidikan Agama Islam* 13, no. 1 (2021): 73, https://doi.org/10.47498/tadib.v13i01.466.

pray, to behave, or to understand religious values. So, it is truly the parents' primary responsibility to educate their children from an early age, not just relying on teachers at school or religious instructors at the madrasah."

This finding is also in line with the statement from Parent C, as revealed in the interview results:

"I believe that the first ones to teach children are their own parents. Before they get to know school or teachers, they already observe and imitate their parents. So, if we want our children to practice religion well, it must start at home. We have to set the example first, then they can follow."

Parents who enroll their children at Madin Al-Istiqomah understand that they are the primary figures responsible for providing early education and have the most significant influence on their children's development. Before children begin learning at the *madin*, they are first taught by their parents.

4. Parental Role Modeling as an Example of Religious Behavior

Parents believe that modeling appropriate conduct plays a vital role in religious education, as children typically imitate their parents' behavior, including maintaining consistent worship practices, establishing routines for reading Qur'anic verses, demonstrating good manners, and upholding proper etiquette in daily life. Parents understand that their behavior directly serves as an example for their children. Instilling faith and good behavior from an early age forms a foundation for the child's future[32]. Based on the Qur'anic teaching in Surah Luqman, verse 13, Allah says:

وَاِذْ قَالَ لُقْمٰنُ لِابْنِهٖ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهٗ يٰبُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللّٰهِ ۗاِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيْمٌ

The meaning is: "(Remember) when Luqman said to his son while advising him, 'O my son, do not associate anything with Allah. Indeed,

[32]Wahyuni and Putra, "Kontribusi Peran Orangtua Dan Guru Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Islami Anak Usia Dini."

associating others with Him is a great injustice.'" (Qur'an, Surah Luqman: 13).

Based on this verse, parents are encouraged guide their children to understand that associating partners with Allah SWT is a major sin, because only Allah SWT has full authority and nothing is comparable to Him (monotheist). Understanding Islamic character based on the Qur'an and Hadith should be taught from early childhood through practical approaches carried out by both parents and teachers. They serve as role models in the child's life, helping shape a soul that embodies Islamic character and piety toward Allah SWT.

According to Parent A during the interview, they feel pleased to send their child to Madin Al-Istiqomah because they have observed many positive changes. Their child has now memorized various prayers and short *surahs* (chapters), can recite the Qur'an, understands lessons on *aqidah* (faith) and *akhlak* (morality), and has developed greater self-confidence and good social skills with peers. Meanwhile, Parent C stated that *"their child's development has progressed very quickly, such as the habit of saying greetings when entering the house, reciting prayers before and after meals, and already being able to read qiro'ah and recite banjari."* This statement was delivered with a cheerful expression, showing pride in having enrolled their child at Madin Al-Istiqomah.

The formation of religious behavior is based on values such as love for peace, avoiding wrongdoing because every action, no matter how small, is seen by Allah SWT, practicing justice, seeking knowledge, mutual respect, honesty, helping one another, and maintaining cleanliness. Findings from interviews with parents show that the role of parents, combined with education at the *madin*, plays a significant part in teaching and applying character values rooted in Islamic teachings. They also participate in monitoring students' development and agree to ensure that these positive habits continue to be practiced in the home environment.

5. Parents' Strategies in Shaping Religious Character at Madin Al-Istiqomah

Based on in-depth interviews, direct observations, and communication with parents and teachers at Madin Al-Istiqomah, various forms of parental guidance were identified that influence their children's mindsets and behaviors in understanding and performing *shalat* (the prayer). The main findings of this study can be classified into the following categories:

a. Modeling Strategy

The strategy of setting an example or being a role model is the approach most frequently employed by parents to impart religious values to their children, as they understand that young children generally imitate the attitudes and actions of the adults around them, especially their father and mother, who serve as the most influential figures in their lives. A concrete example of this strategy can be seen in Family A. They shared that their 5-year-old child began participating in congregational prayer at home by simply imitating their parents' movements. Although the child did not fully understand the meaning of prayer, the parents believe this is an important initial step in introducing the practice of prayer to their child.

Parents fulfil their role as role models by consistently demonstrating attitudes and behaviors worthy of imitation by their children, reminding them to avoid negative actions, instilling patience, and setting limits on their interactions when they make poor decisions. They also continuously teach the importance of loving and honoring both their parents and the Creator. With God's permission, this parenting style can help children understand their parents' intentions and goals in guiding and correcting their behavior. This character-building process begins at an early age, when the parenting role is carried out entirely by the parents

themselves, not by others. The importance of this lies in children's tendency to feel closer and more emotionally connected to their parents, making it easier for parents to observe and understand their children's needs and desires. Additionally, children usually find it easier to accept guidance and teachings that are directly instilled by their parents[33].

b. Habituation Strategy or Repetitive Training

The statement can be explained as follows: habituating children to engage in religious activities means regularly involving and inviting them to participate in various religious practices with the family. These activities include performing *shalat jamaah* (congregational prayers) at home—that is, praying together with family members simultaneously to foster a sense of togetherness and discipline in worship. Additionally, children are encouraged to regularly recite or read the Holy Scriptures to become familiar with religious teachings and deepen their spiritual understanding from an early age. Other activities done together include praying as a family, where all family members gather to pray together, creating strong emotional and spiritual bonds while also helping children develop habits aligned with faith principles in their daily lives. By regularly practicing these activities, children will be guided to lead a consistent religious life and to develop a strong spiritual awareness.

c. Leisure Time for Positive Activities

The increasing number of students unable to use their leisure time for positive activities, both within and outside the school environment, has become an issue requiring immediate attention. This is caused by students' low awareness of the importance of managing free time, as well as by insufficient supervision and care from both the

[33]Kurniati, "Peran Orang Tua Dalam Membentuk Karakter Religius Aanak (Studi Kasus Keluarga Desa Batu Panco Kecamatan Curup Utara)" (Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Curup, 2023).

school and the family regarding the students' activities. As a result, students tend to engage in harmful behaviors that continue to rise each year. Therefore, schools, parents, and the surrounding community must recognize the kinds of activities and support facilities students need to be guided toward more positive pursuits[34].

To build children's religious character, one step is providing education at Madin Al-Istiqomah. At Madin Al-Istiqomah, children are not only taught to recite the Qur'an; they also participate in many other religious activities such as prayer practice, *qiro'ah* and speech activities, *banjari*, and more. With the variety of religious activities at the *madin*, the children's religious character improves significantly.

6. Parental Obstacles in Shaping Children's Religious Character at Madin Al-Istiqomah

Various obstacles or challenges hinder the process of instilling religious principles by parents to their children through Madin Al-Istiqomah, namely:

a. Influence of the Environment and Peer Pressure

The environment has a significant influence on a child's development because learning begins in the family environment, personality is formed, and initial guidance in life is provided. Since it is within the family that a child first learns, develops character, and receives direction, the family environment serves as the core environment for a child's early education. In addition, society, comprising people from various cultures, ethnicities, beliefs, economic levels, and social positions, interacts and blends in daily social life[35]. In an increasingly secular modern environment, children may experience pressure or influence that encourages them to

[34]M. Noor Idris, "Pemanfaatan Waktu Luang Peserta Didik Sekolah Menengah Atas," 2017, 119.

[35]Tetiana Ovia Rahayu, "Pengaruh Lingkungan Kerja Terhadap Kinerja Karyawan Di Rumah Sakit Islam Siti Aisyahmadiun Tahun 2021" (UIN Jakarta, 2021).

drift away from religious practices[36]. This is supported by a statement from a direct conversation with Parent D, who said that:

> *"The external environment also has a significant influence on a child's religious character. Even if we, as parents, have set a good example, if the children are influenced by the outside environment, they can still be easily swayed. That's why, as parents, we must continuously supervise and guide our children to ensure they stay on the right path according to good teachings."*

A similar statement was also expressed by Parent B, who stated that:

> *"Friends also influence a child's character. If a child builds friendships with individuals who exhibit positive behavior, they will be indirectly encouraged to imitate and follow that positive behavior. Good behavior will also have an impact on the child's religious character."*

b. Influence of Social Media and Digital Content

Social media is one of the main challenges in religious education. Exposure to content that contradicts religious teachings can negatively shape a child's way of thinking. Therefore, the proactive involvement of parents in supervising and guiding to their children when using social media is essential. These findings are supported by the interview results with Parent B:

> *"Children nowadays prefer playing with their phones rather than playing outside. As parents, we need to pay close attention to what our children are watching and whether it aligns with our religious values. That's why I enrolled my child in Madin Al-Istiqomah, so that they can develop strong religious values, have many friends, and gain broader knowledge."*

[36]Ahmad Hendra Kurniawan and Jazuli, "Peran Orang Tua Dalam Pendidikan Agama Anak Di Era Modern," *ELEMENTARY PEDAGOGIA* 1, no. 3 (2024).

c. Lack of Time Awareness

Children tend to become immersed in their own world, such as using social media on their phones or riding motorcycles recklessly with friends. As a result, they often neglect the duties and responsibilities they are expected to uphold as a trust from their parents. In addition, many parents also sometimes lose track of time. Children are not given enough attention in their daily lives, so they do notrealize whether their actions reflect religious values. Therefore, a close and active relationship between parents and children must be established, along with setting aside time together so that children feel cared for by both parents.

7. The Role of Madin Al-Istiqomah in Shaping Children's Religious Character

The presence of Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliyah Awaliyah plays a key role in maintaining the sustainability of Islamic education while also shaping the character of the community through the instillation of Islamic moral and ethical values[37]. Its support for the growth of Islamic education is evident through initiatives such as learning the Qur'an, studying Islamic classical texts, and Arabic language instruction. The role of Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliyah in advancing Islamic education encompasses several aspects: a) as an institution for delivering religious knowledge; b) as a means of preserving Islamic teachings; c) as a place for the development and instillation of *akhlaqul karimah* (noble character); d) as a platform for early introduction and education in Islam; e) as one of the foundations of Islamic education; and f) as a complement to religious education in public schools. The process of cultivating noble character in children at *madrasah diniyah* is carried out by

[37]Anis Khusnul Inayah, "Social Science Academic," *Upaya Meningkatkan Minat Belajar Anak Melalui Bimbel Tunas Ceria Dukuh Krajan Desa Bedrug Pulung Ponorogo* 1, no. 2023 (2023): 123–31.

instilling moral awareness during both classroom instruction and extracurricular activities[38].

Similarly, the findings of this study indicate that Madin Al-Istiqomah serves as an educational institution that teaches religious subjects including prayer, Qur'an recitation, Banjari (Islamic drumming), public speaking, and more. The programs offered at this madrasah have successfully brought about significant improvements in the behavior and character of the students. One notable impact is the growing sense of religious awareness among students, as reflected in their discipline during worship, recitation of Qur'anic verses, and their habit of praying. The Islamic values delivered through these programs have been well instilled, encouraging students to be more consistent in practicing them in everyday life. In addition to instilling religious principles, the programs also contribute to improved students' social behavior, discipline, and sense of responsibility. This statement is consistent with the results of an interview with Parent C:

> *"I enrolled my child in Madin when they were 3 years old. The goal was to help them better understand religion, learn how to recite the Qur'an, perform prayers, and more. Additionally, I wanted them to have many friends. This Madin is already well-known for its high-quality education."*

This was also stated by Parent D:

> *"Although I already teach religious education at home, it's not the same as what is taught at the madin. At home, it's usually just the basic principles. However, when studying at the madin, the knowledge is much broader, allowing the child to have a deeper understanding of religion from an early age."*

At Madin Al-Istiqomah, the religious activity programs are highly diverse, which contributes to the development of the children. With parents actively in collaborating with the *madin*

[38]Abdul Aziz, "Jurnal Jendela Bunda," *Journal Jendela Bunda PG PAUD UMC* 8 (2020): 56.

teachers, students become better individuals, and their level of religiosity continues to increase.

B. Conclusion

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that parents play a central role in shaping the religious character of children aged 7–12 years at Madrasah Diniyah Al Istiqomah Magetan. Parents function as the first and primary educators, role models of religious behavior, and mentors in instilling Islamic values from an early age. The formation of children's religious character occurs effectively when parents are actively involved in religious education through role models, habituating worship, utilizing free time for positive activities, and monitoring social interactions and digital media use. This study also found that the main strategies parents employ to shape their children's religious character include role models, consistent worship habits, and involvement of children in various religious activities, both within the family and at Madrasah Diniyah. The synergy between religious education at home and the religious program at Madin Al Istiqomah is effective in shaping children's religious behavior, including discipline in worship, the habit of reading the Quran, politeness, and social responsibility.

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