SYNERGY OF THE THREE PILLARS OF EDUCATION (FAMILY, SCHOOL, AND COMMUNITY) IN DEVELOPING AND STRENGTHENING CHARACTER EDUCATION BASED ON ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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Abstract: *Effective character education is an urgent need amidst the challenges of globalization and the moral crisis. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of a three-pillar collaborative model family, school, and community in shaping students' character based on Islamic values. Using a qualitative, descriptive, and single-case study approach at Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Al-Khairiyah Tanjung Priok, data were collected through triangulation of observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The results show that the synergy between these three pillars significantly increased students' character education scores from 53-64 to 73-84. The family proved to be the pillar with the highest effectiveness, supported by the role of the school and community as environments for strengthening and actualizing values. This study concludes that the three-pillar collaborative model is an integral and sustainable strategy, whose success depends on consistent and harmonious communication. This model is highly relevant for adoption in national education policy to shape a generation with noble character.*

Keywords: *Character Education, Collaboration, Islamic Education, Synergy, Three Pillars of Education.*

Introduction

Building strong, sustainable, and meaningful character in students is not a task that can be undertaken by one party alone. Character is the result of a long process that develops naturally and continuously within a child's social environment (Sugiarti et al., 2022). In this context, the three main pillars of education family, school, and community play complementary and inseparable roles. All three must work synergistically so that the moral, spiritual, and social values that are intended to be instilled can truly take root in students and become part of their personalities (Al-Hawary et al., 2023).

The family is the initial foundation in the character-building process. The family environment is the first place where children learn about the world, form habits, and absorb basic life values. Through daily interactions with parents and other family members, children learn about compassion, honesty, responsibility, and how to treat others (Şahİn, 2023). The role of parents as role models is crucial, as children tend to imitate the behavior they see every day. If families consistently instill positive and religious values from an early age, the foundation of a child's character will grow strong. Conversely, if families are negligent, indifferent, or even set negative examples, a child's character can develop in a deviant manner (Marini et al., 2019).

Furthermore, schools function as formal educational institutions that strengthen and expand the character formation that begins in the family. At school, students not only study academic subjects but also interact socially with peers, teachers, and other school members. In this context, schools serve as important social laboratories for children's emotional and moral growth (Miranda & da Costa Lins, 2021). Through teaching and learning activities, leadership training, religious practices, and teacher role models, schools have a significant opportunity to instill values such as justice, discipline, tolerance, hard work, and responsibility. A curriculum that integrates character education into every subject, including Islamic Religious Education, will help students understand the meaning of these values and practice them in real life (Suri & Chandra, 2021).

However, the success of character education cannot be achieved solely by relying on family and school. Society, as the external environment, also has a significant influence on the development of students' character. It can strengthen or weaken the values instilled at home and school. The presence of community leaders, religious leaders, religious institutions (Kuznetsova, 2023), the mass media, and the social environment all contribute to the formation of children's attitudes and behaviors. When society participates in building positive cultures such as literacy, mutual cooperation, religiousness, and respect for differences, children will become more confident in living the values they have been taught. Conversely, if society allows violence, intolerance, hedonism, or individualistic attitudes to flourish, children's character is at risk of a crisis (Toros et al., 2023).

These three pillars family, school, and community must synergize and share the understanding that character education is not solely the responsibility of one party. Close communication, cooperation, and coordination are essential (Sugiarti et al., 2022). Parents must actively engage with teachers, schools must foster participation by parents and the community, and communities must create an ecosystem that supports children's character development. It is through this strong synergy that character education will have greater reach and resilience (Hairullah, 2023).

Character education has become a central issue in the development of holistic and integrated human resources in Indonesia. Facing the challenges of globalization, technological advancement, and an increasingly complex moral crisis, the world of education is required to produce not only intellectually intelligent individuals but also individuals with strong, resilient characters grounded in noble religious values (Rosyada et al., 2020). Amidst these conditions, character education based on Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a strategic role because it can shape noble morals, strengthen spiritual values, and foster social and moral attitudes in accordance with Islamic teachings. However, in reality, character formation for students cannot be left entirely to schools alone. The educational process is a shared responsibility involving three main pillars: family, school, and community (Popi Puadah, 2025).

The family, as the primary educational environment, plays a significant role in instilling fundamental life values. Parents are the first teachers to introduce religious values, morals, and social norms to their children. However, poor communication between parents and children, parents' preoccupation with work, and parents' lack of understanding of the importance of Islamic-based character education often result in an imbalance in children's character development (Cascales-Martínez et al., 2020). Meanwhile, schools, as formal institutions, are tasked with strengthening and developing these values through learning activities and teacher role models. However, Islamic Religious Education (IS) teaching often falls into a purely cognitive approach, failing to fully address the affective and psychomotor domains. As a result, students' religious understanding is not always reflected in their daily attitudes and behaviors (Omeke et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, society, which should be a social space that supports the formation of religious character, sometimes becomes a source of challenges. A permissive social environment, the influence of digital media, and the weak role of community leaders and religious institutions in fostering adolescent morality are factors that undermine character-building efforts. In this context, the disconnect and lack of synergy between family, school, and community are the main causes of failure in instilling strong character in students (Riyadi et al., 2022). All three tend to operate independently without proper coordination, so that values instilled in one environment may not be reinforced, or even conflict, with values acquired in another (Marhamah et al., 2022).

Therefore, harmonious and sustainable synergy is needed between families, schools, and communities in developing and strengthening Islamic character education. This collaboration is not only a necessity but also a necessity to create a generation that is not only academically intelligent, but also virtuous, religious, and socially responsible (Korotaeva et al., 2023). The instillation of Islamic values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, tolerance, and compassion must be carried out consistently and continuously by these three pillars of education. With solid synergy, Islamic-based character education will be more effective in shaping superior individuals and contributing positively to society and the nation (Zou, 2023).

The solution to this problem is to build a strong, planned, and sustainable synergy between families, schools, and communities (Curry et al., 2023). First, families must be empowered as centers for character formation, through parenting education, religious training, and the reinforcement of Islamic family values. Parents need to be equipped with the skills to educate their children, both emotionally, morally, and spiritually, so they can serve as role models and primary guides at home. Second, schools must integrate character education into all aspects of teaching and learning activities, not only through specific subjects, but also through a school

142

culture that supports positive habits such as congregational prayer, mutual cooperation, and moral dialogue. Teachers must be trained to be character educators, not just instructors of material (Marlow & Rehman, 2021). Third, Communities need to be activated as partners in character education by creating a healthy, religious, and conducive social environment. The role of religious leaders, community leaders, missionary institutions, and youth organizations must be strengthened in mentoring the younger generation (Werner et al., 2021). Collaboration between neighborhood associations (RT/RW), mosques, schools, and families in creating moral and spiritual development programs for children and adolescents is crucial. Furthermore, the government and the mass media also have a significant responsibility in promoting character values through educational policies and broadcasts (Sheila et al., 2021).

This study aims to analyze and formulate strategies for enhancing synergy between the roles of families, schools, and communities in Islamic-based character education. The focus of the study is to address the gap between students' cognitive understanding and the implementation of Islamic values in their daily behavior at Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Al-Khairiyah - Tanjung Priok. This research problem formulation is significant because failure to synergize these three educational pillars has the potential to undermine holistic and sustainable character building efforts. Therefore, this study isexpected to provide an effective and applicable collaboration model.

By building close synergy between these three pillars, character education will not operate in isolation but will instead reinforce each other. The values taught at home will be reinforced by the school and supported by the community. Only through this togetherness can we cultivate a generation with noble morals, responsibility, and readiness to face the challenges of the times, with a strong foundation of character and Islam.

Method
This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach with a single case study method. This approach was chosen to gain a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of the three pillars of education: family, school, and community, in developing Islamic-based character. The focus of this research was on Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Al-Khairiyah Tanjung Priok. The case study approach allows researchers to examine phenomena holistically in a single location with rich detail (Yin, 2018), while qualitative methods are considered effective for understanding complex educational issues from multiple perspectives (Doyle et al., 2020).

The research subjects were selected using a purposive sampling technique, which involves selecting relevant key informants. The subjects consisted of eight students (as observation subjects), one Islamic Religious Education teacher, one principal, one parent, and one community leader as interview informants. This selection of informants aimed to obtain rich and in-depth data from individuals directly involved in the student character education process, allowing the research to focus on data quality rather than quantity.ynergy between these pillars in building strong character (Popi Puadah et al., 2025; Suciati et al., 2023).

To collect data, this study employed data triangulation to ensure validity, including obseration, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to observe student behavior in three environments: home, school, and community. In-depth interviews were used to explore the perspectives and experiences of each informant (Sugiyono, 2019), in line with research demonstrating the effectiveness of interviews for exploratory research (Jain, 2021).

Furthermore, documentation such as school curricula and student activity programs were collected as supporting data to enrich the analysis (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

The data analysis process followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). The stages began with data reduction, which summarized and selected relevant data. Then, the data was presented in narrative or tabular form for ease of understanding. Finally, conclusions were drawn by validating the findings through data triangulation, which compared data from multiple sources to ensure credibility (Sundler et al., 2019). This approach is relevant to the objectives of qualitative research, where the focus is on understanding, not generalization.

In this study, the researcher served as a key instrument, assisted by structured observation and interview guidelines (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher's active role in every stage, from data collection to analysis, ensured the research's focus remained intact and allowed for in-depth data exploration.

This research is expected to yield a deep and comprehensive understanding of how collaboration between families, schools, and the community can significantly improve students' character education. These findings will not only enrich the scientific literature but also provide a practical foundation for relevant parties, such as MTs Al-Khairiyah, parents, and the government, in designing more integrated and holistic programs and policies. The findings of this study align with previous studies that emphasize the importance of the family's role (Şahİn, 2023) and the synergy between pillars in building strong and sustainable character (Popi Puadah et al., 2025; Suciati et al., 2023).

Results And Discussion

Three-Pillar Collaboration Model in Developing and Strengthening Islamic Religious Education-Based Character Education

Character education based on Islamic values cannot be implemented partially by a single formal educational institution. To produce a generation with noble morals, integrity, and spiritual intelligence, collaboration between families, schools, and communities is essential. These three are the three centers of education that complement and support each other in shaping the holistic character of students. This collaborative model is based on the realization that Islamic character education will only be successful if the entire environment of a child's life articulates the same values, provides consistent role models, and creates a space for concretely practicing religious values.

In this model, the family is positioned as the initial foundation, the place where children first learn about moral and religious values. Effective character education in the family is realized through a compassionate approach, exemplary worship, and the instilling of noble morals in daily life. Parents play a role not only as educators but also as active partners with the school and community in fostering children's character development. Open communication between parents and children, as well as involvement in family religious activities such as congregational prayer, Quran recitation, and discussions of Islamic values, are concrete forms of faith-based character education within the home environment (Isaksen et al., 2020).

Schools in this model function as reinforcers and developers of character values through a structured and systematic educational process. Schools have the capacity to develop an Islamic Religious Education curriculum that encompasses not only cognitive but also affective and

psychomotor aspects. Islamic Religious Education teachers play a central role as agents of character change, conveying values, setting an example, and fostering student behavior in various school activities. Character development programs in schools can be integrated through religious activities such as congregational Dhuha prayers, women's activities, short-term Islamic boarding schools, and value reinforcement in cross-subject lessons.

Meanwhile, the community acts as a social space that provides a platform for the actualization of Islamic character traits instilled at home and reinforced at school. The ideal society in this model is religious, participatory, and has a concrete program for fostering socio-religious moral development. Activities such as youth religious study groups, community service, Islamic studies in mosques, and community outreach programs are effective means of instilling values of togetherness, social awareness, and the spirit of enjoining good and forbidding evil. Community leaders, local religious leaders, and religious organizations must be involved as strategic partners in fostering a healthy and religious social environment (Rohman & Huriyah, 2022).

This collaborative model emphasizes the importance of ongoing coordination and communication between these three pillars. Regular meetings between parents, teachers, and community leaders should be facilitated to jointly design programs, evaluate student character development, and align the vision and values instilled. Activities such as Islamic parenting seminars, teacher training in character education, and student involvement in cross-community socio-religious activities are part of the implementation strategy of this model.

Conceptually, this three-pillar collaborative model aims not only to shape students' moral and spiritual character but also to create a harmonious and synergistic educational ecosystem that fosters holistic development of individuals who are faithful, knowledgeable, and possess noble character. The success of this model is largely determined by the active involvement of all parties, a shared commitment, and policies that support cross-sector collaboration in strengthening character education based on Islamic Religious Education.
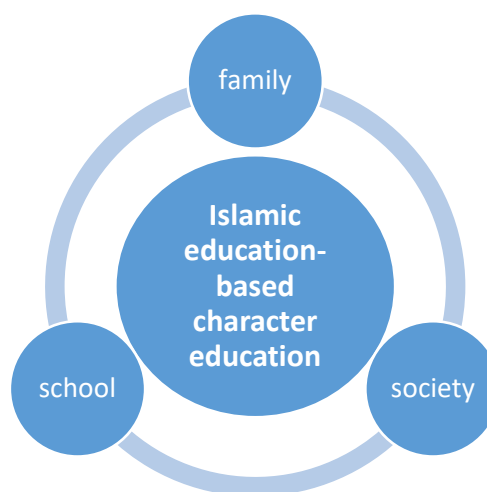
Figure 1: Three-pillar model of character education based on Islamic education

This collaborative model is based on the principle that a comprehensive and sustainable character education process can only be realized if all parties in a child's life play an active role and work together. The family, as the child's first and closest environment, serves as the initial

foundation for moral formation. This is where children first learn to imitate, emulate, and accept life's values. Education within the family is carried out through parental example, habituation to worship, moral supervision, and the instilling of Islamic values in daily life. When parents are able to be consistent figures in practicing religious teachings, children's Islamic character will grow naturally and become firmly rooted.

Character education based on Islamic values is a fundamental requirement in shaping a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also morally and spiritually superior. Character education, from an Islamic perspective, is rooted in Quranic moral values and the exemplary behavior of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which must be instilled from an early age through an integrated and sustainable educational process. In this context, the collaborative model of the three pillars of education family, school, and community is seen as a solid foundation for building the character of students with noble morals.

The results of the research, conducted using a qualitative approach, indicate that the synergy between these three pillars is crucial for successful character formation. Data were obtained through field observations and in-depth interviews with various informants, including parents, Islamic Religious Education teachers, school principals, and community leaders. One informant, Mrs. MA, a housewife who actively supports her children's education, stated that the family is the first environment to introduce religious and moral values. She said, *"I try to get my children used to praying on time, reading the Quran every night, and we often discuss the stories of the prophets. These values cannot be taught only in school; they must begin at home."* This statement emphasizes that the family has the primary responsibility as the initial foundation for character education, and the role of parents is crucial in determining the direction of a child's core values formation.

From the school perspective, an interview with Mr. AR, an Islamic Religious Education teacher at Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs), emphasized the importance of the school's role in developing character values through formal learning processes and consistent habituation. He explained, *"Every day we get our students used to reciting prayers together, attending a religious sermon after the Dhuha prayer, and in Islamic Religious Education lessons, we not only provide material, but also instill its moral meanings in life."* He further stated that the success of character education will not be optimal without the support of parents and the students' surrounding environment.

Meanwhile, the role of the community is equally important. Mr. BU, a community leader and youth activist at the local mosque, explained that the community must become a social space that guides and fosters youth through positive activities. He said, *"In our neighborhood, every week there are youth religious studies, Islamic leadership training, and social activities. Children who actively participate in these activities tend to have more empathy and responsibility for their environment."* This statement demonstrates that the community can be a vehicle for practicing character values, while also reinforcing the character education instilled by families and schools.

Other findings from the interviews also indicated that there are still gaps and a lack of commnication between the three pillars. Some parents admitted to never being actively involved in communication forums with teachers and not being aware of their children's character development at school as a whole. Similarly, schools sometimes do not involve community leaders in character development programs. The principal of MTs Al-Khairiyah,

Mr. JA, acknowledged that, *"We still need to bridge the collaboration between parents, teachers, and community leaders. We want to build a structured synergy so that all parties feel a shared responsibility."*

From these interviews, it is clear that the collaborative model of the three pillars of education is not merely complementary, but rather the primary foundation for developing and strengthening character education based on Islamic values. Each pillar has its own unique strengths: the family as the instiller of core values, the school as the systematic reinforcement, and the community as the arena for practicing these values.

This model will only be successful if it fosters intensive communication, strong commitment, and active participation from all three elements. Schools need to design programs that integrate the roles of family and community, such as Islamic parenting, educational discussion forums, and community-based character training. The community must also create conducive spaces for adolescents to channel positive energy and learn to socialize in an Islamic manner.

Therefore, the three-pillar collaborative model provides a solid and strategic foundation for developing students who are faithful, have noble morals, and possess comprehensive Islamic social skills. This is the answer to the challenges of modern education, which often focuses solely on cognitive aspects, without in-depth character development. Through continuous synergy, these three pillars can create a Qur'anic generation ready to build a peaceful, just, and dignified Islamic civilization.

Changes and Improvements to Character Education Using The Three-Pillar Model Approach

In the face of globalization and the disruption of socio-cultural values, character education has become an urgent need in the world of education. The moral crisis affecting the younger generation, such as the decline of politeness, low social awareness, and increasing cases of violence and misuse of technology, demonstrates that education oriented only to the cognitive aspect is insufficient. Therefore, an approach that touches the affective and spiritual dimensions comprehensively is needed. One approach that has proven effective and relevant to addressing these challenges is the three-pillar model approach: family, school, and community, as a collaborative basis for building and improving character education.

The most fundamental change in this approach is the shift in responsibility for character education from being solely the responsibility of schools to a shared responsibility that actively involves families and communities. Thus, character education is no longer a separate program but is integrated into all aspects of students' lives. This approach shifts the educational paradigm from formalistic to holistic and participatory.

The role of the family is increasing, not only as a place for children to grow biologically and emotionally, but also as the "first madrasah" (school) with the primary power to instill basic life values. Through the three-pillar approach, attitudes have shifted from some parents who were previously passive to more directly involved in the process of educating their children about character. They are beginning to recognize the importance of instilling values such as honesty, responsibility, patience, and discipline through consistent role modeling and supervision at home. For example, parents are beginning to regulate their children's screen time, making it a habit to pray in congregation at home, and guiding their children in understanding Islamic teachings in their daily lives.

Schools, as formal institutions, are undergoing a transformation in their curriculum and learning approaches. The character education curriculum is now not only part of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum but is also integrated into all school subjects and activities. Teachers no longer play the role of mere instructors but also serve as character builders, serving as role models and fostering a religious and humanistic school culture. Schools are beginning to implement character-based programs such as moral literacy, the development of noble character, religious mentoring, and awards for positive student attitudes and behavior. These changes are transforming schools into centers for strengthening values, not simply places to pursue academic excellence.

In this approach, the community experiences an increased role as a supporting agent and reinforcer of socio-religious character. With the development of the three-pillar approach, the community is no longer positioned as a passive setting, but rather as a vital part of the character education system. Supportive social environments, such as the presence of active mosques, Islamic youth groups, religious study groups, and community outreach programs, become arenas for learning Islamic social values. This change is marked by increased collaboration between schools and community leaders in holding joint activities, such as community service, outreach camps, or Ramadan safaris. The community becomes a place for actualizing the values instilled at home and reinforced at school (Hasan & Nurhuda, 2023).

This three-pillar model approach also fostered improved coordination and communication mechanisms. Schools began holding regular meetings with parents and community leaders, forming cross-community character development teams, and developing joint programs targeting student character development both inside and outside of school. This synergy increased the effectiveness of character education because the messages and values children received became consistent and aligned across their various environments (Suciati et al., 2023).

Furthermore, this approach encourages continuous evaluation and reflection on the character education process. Families, schools, and communities share information, observe children's behavioral development, and provide constructive feedback. This creates an educational ecosystem that not only guides but also accompanies and shapes children as they become individuals with noble character. Changes and improvements in character education through the three-pillar model approach have had a significant impact on shaping a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also morally strong, possesses high integrity, and is prepared to become responsible citizens. This model has proven capable of addressing the challenges of the times with a more humane, spiritual, and collaborative approach, making character education based on Islamic values the primary foundation for building a dignified future for civilization.
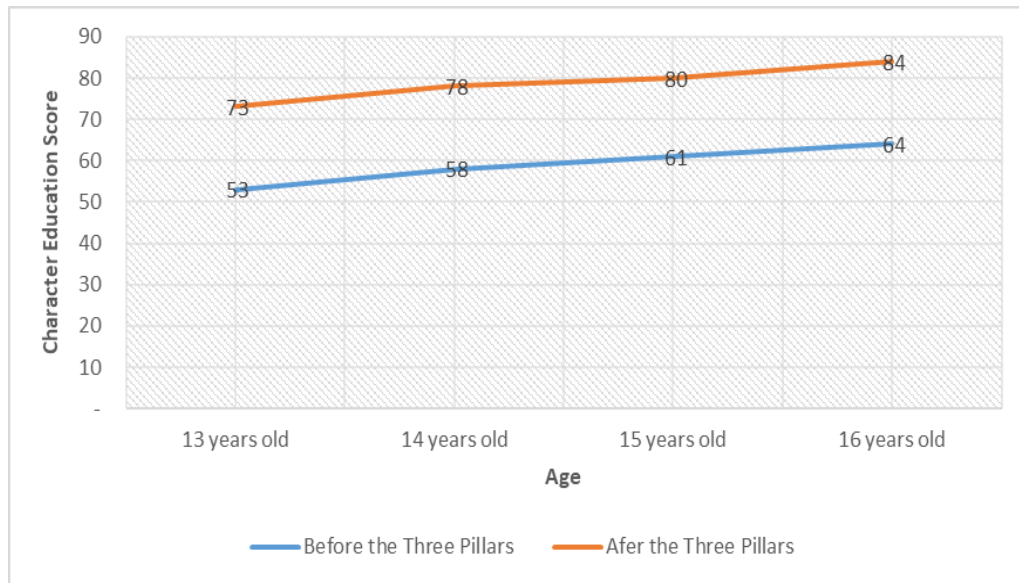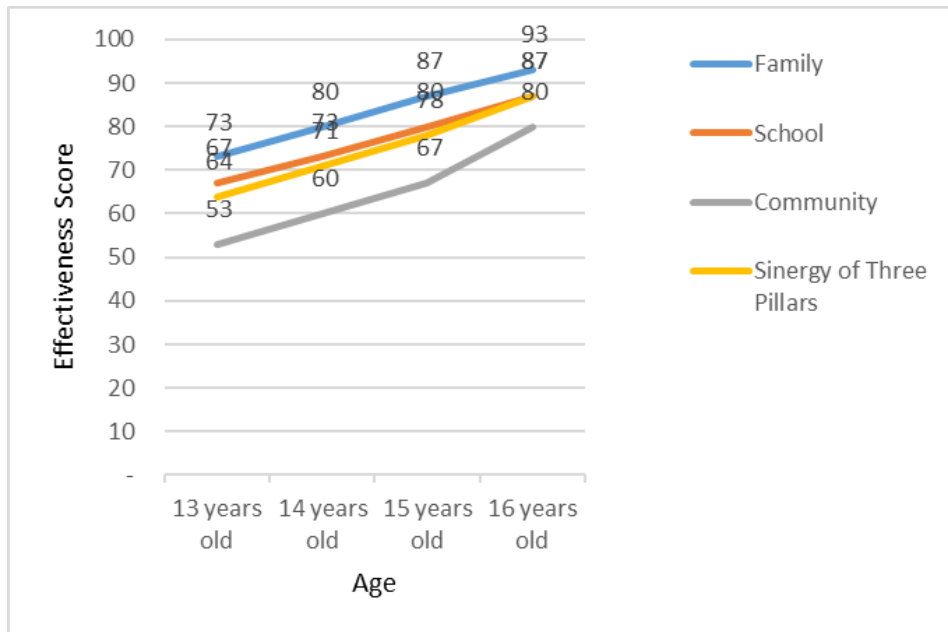
Figure 2: Graph of changes in character education for children aged 13-16 through a three-pillar approach

In the dynamics of adolescent development, the ages of 13 to 16 are a critical phase in character formation. At this age, children begin to develop their identity, develop a strong sense of independence, and begin to experience complex social challenges. Therefore, comprehensive character education interventions are essential, particularly through collaboration between families, schools, and the community.

The implementation of the Three Pillars of Education Model has been proven to significantly improve the quality of character education. Based on data obtained from observations and assessments at several Islamic educational institutions, there has been a consistent increase in children's character scores after the implementation of this collaborative approach. Before the Three Pillars Model approach was implemented, children's character education scores were in the range of 53–64 on a scale of 100. This reflects that although children receive formal education, character values have not yet been fully embedded or deeply internalized. However, after a synergy program between families (through the instillation of values at home), schools (through the curriculum and teacher role models), and the community (through the social environment and religious activities), character education scores increased dramatically to 73–84.

This improvement demonstrates that when the three pillars of education work synergistically and support each other, the process of character formation in children is more effective and comprehensive. Children not only learn religious and moral values at school, but also practice them at home and actualize them in their social lives. Thus, the Three Pillars Model approach is not only an alternative strategy but also a strong foundation for building a young generation with Islamic character, resilience, and morals to face the challenges of the times. This model is relevant for wider replication in the context of national education, which emphasizes character building based on religious values.

Figure 3 Graph of the effectiveness of the three pillar model approach

The graph displayed shows data on the effectiveness of the role of each pillar in character education for children aged 13 to 16 years. From this data, it can be seen that:

- The family's role demonstrated the highest effectiveness, ranging from 73% at age 13 to 93% at age 16. This indicates that education starting at home provides a solid foundation for shaping a child's character.
- The role of schools also increased from 67% to 87%. Schools, as formal environments, play a crucial role in internalizing character values through the learning process, teacher role models, and moral development programs.
- The role of the community demonstrated lower effectiveness but consistently increased, from 53% to 80%. The community provides a space for the actualization of values, particularly through social and religious activities and social relationships that support positive habits.

The overall average effectiveness increased from 64% at age 13 to nearly 87% at age 16. This demonstrates that an integrated and collaborative approach across the three pillars can produce significant changes in the character development of students. The Three Pillars Model not only prioritizes academic aspects, but also shapes the whole person—one who is faithful, moral, and highly competitive. This increasing effectiveness each year is proof that collaboration between families, schools, and communities is crucial and worthy of being used as a strategic model in national and local education policies, particularly in building character based on Islamic religious education.

Conclusion

The Three Pillars of Education model, involving family, school, and community, has proven to be an effective and efficient approach to instilling and strengthening Islamic character values in students. These three elements form an interconnected, mutually supportive, and reinforcing educational ecosystem, shaping children with noble character, religious character, responsibility, and social empathy. Research shows that the strong synergy between these three pillars creates a holistic and transformative educational atmosphere. The success of this model is not only evident in changes in student behavior, leading to more religious, polite, and caring

behavior, but also in increased parental participation, the increased effectiveness of character education in schools, and the growth of social awareness in the community. It can be concluded that the Three Pillars of Education collaboration model is an integral and sustainable strategy for building character education based on Islamic values. Its success lies not only in the program itself, but more in the consistency of communication, synergy of roles, and the role models provided by families, schools, and communities in daily life. This model deserves to be replicated and further developed as part of a national Islamic-based character education policy.

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