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THE STORY MODEL FOR PARENT–MADRASAH COLLABORATION IN CHARACTER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Although parent–madrasah collaboration plays a critical role in strengthening character education within Islamic educational contexts, research specifically addressing its managerial model remains limited. This study aims to formulate the STORY Model as a conceptual framework for managing parent–madrasah collaboration in character education. Employing a conceptual literature review design, this study examined purposively selected scholarly works on family–school partnerships, parental involvement, character education, Islamic educational management, and madrasah governance. Data were collected through document-based literature review and analyzed using thematic synthesis. The findings reveal three major patterns of collaboration: educational communication, family participation in madrasah programs, and value reinforcement at home. The analysis also identifies several managerial weaknesses, including administratively oriented communication, reactive parental involvement, unstructured participation, limited reflective monitoring, and unclear character indicators. The study concludes that the STORY Model offers a systematic, participatory, and character-oriented framework for transforming parent–madrasah collaboration into a pedagogical partnership. The contribution of this study lies in advancing

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conceptual discourse on Islamic educational management and providing a foundation for future empirical validation across diverse madrasah contexts.

Keywords: STORY Model; Parent–Madrasah Collaboration; Character Education; Islamic Educational Management; Family–School Partnership

INTRODUCTION

Parent–madrasah collaboration is a strategic issue in Islamic educational management because character education cannot be formed solely through formal classroom instruction; rather, it requires continuity of values across the home, the madrasah, and students' broader social environment (Epstein, 2018; Sheridan et al., 2019). Studies on family–school partnerships show that parental involvement is associated with students' academic development, socio-emotional growth, prosocial behavior, and well-being (Otero-Mayer et al., 2025; Smith et al., 2020). In the madrasah context, such collaboration has a more complex dimension because character education is directed not only toward behavioral compliance but also toward the formation of akhlak, religious consciousness, and students' moral responsibility (Sahin, 2018). The relationship between parents and madrasahs should therefore be positioned as part of character education governance that integrates value planning, institutional communication, family engagement, moral habituation, and the evaluation of students' development. If not managed systematically, parent–madrasah collaboration tends to remain limited to administrative communication rather than developing into a pedagogical partnership that sustains students' character formation.

The urgency of this study is strengthened by the fact that educational institutions continue to face serious challenges in students' character formation, particularly in relation to violence, bullying, weak social empathy, and inconsistencies in value formation between home and school (OECD, 2023; UNICEF Indonesia, 2020). PISA 2022 data indicate that 25% of girls and 30% of boys in Indonesia reported experiencing bullying at least a few times a month, suggesting that character-related problems cannot be understood merely as individual student issues (OECD, 2023). The Indonesian Child Protection Commission also reported 2,057 child protection complaints throughout 2024, while reports on violence in educational institutions indicate that some cases of violence against children occur within educational settings (Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia, 2024, 2025). These data show that character education requires collaborative governance capable of connecting madrasahs, families, and communities more

consistently. The central problem is not only the limited number of character education programs but also the weakness of collaborative management models that position parents as active partners in children's character formation.

Theoretically, previous studies have emphasized that school–family partnerships include two-way communication, learning support at home, parental participation in school activities, shared decision-making, and community involvement (Epstein, 2018). Meta-analyses of family–school partnerships show that collaborative interventions can improve students' academic achievement, socio-emotional functioning, and positive behavior when school–family relations are intentionally designed (Sheridan et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2020). In character education scholarship, value formation is also understood as an ecological process that requires role modeling, habituation, moral reflection, and consistency within the educational environment (Kristjánsson, 2015; Lickona, 1991). However, much of the existing research still positions parental involvement as a supporting variable for learning success rather than as part of a character education management design within the madrasah context. This gap highlights the need for a literature synthesis that not only explains the importance of parent–madrasah partnerships but also formulates a conceptual model for managing parent–madrasah collaboration in Islamic value-based character education.

The novelty of this article lies in the development of the STORY Model as a conceptual framework for managing parent–madrasah collaboration in character education. The STORY Model is formulated as an acronym for Spiritual shared vision, Two-way communication, Organized participation, Reflective monitoring, and Yielding character outcomes. These five components form a managerial sequence that connects value vision, reciprocal communication, role distribution, reflective monitoring, and students' character outcomes. The model does not position parents as mere complements to madrasah activities but as strategic partners in a process of character formation that takes place across educational spaces. The novelty of the model does not rest on the claim that parent–madrasah collaboration is an entirely new topic, but rather on the formulation of a more operational, reflective, and institutionally appropriate framework for madrasahs. Thus, the STORY Model is proposed as a conceptual response to the weaknesses of collaboration that often remains ceremonial, reactive, undocumented, and lacking clear indicators of character development.

Based on this background, this article aims to formulate the STORY Model as a management framework for parent–madrasah collaboration in strengthening character

education through a literature review method. This article does not seek to empirically test the effectiveness of the model; rather, it seeks to develop a conceptual foundation that can be used for future research, instrument development, and managerial practice in madrasahs. Specifically, the article analyzes literature on school–family partnerships, character education, and Islamic educational management to construct the conceptual structure of the STORY Model. Its main contribution is to expand the field of Islamic educational management from a focus on the administrative functions of educational institutions toward collaborative governance oriented to character formation. In this regard, the article offers a more systematic, participatory, and transformative conceptual model for strengthening parent–madrasah collaboration in character education.

METHODS

This study employed a conceptual literature review to formulate the STORY Model as a management framework for parent–madrasah collaboration in character education. A conceptual literature review was selected because this study does not aim to empirically test relationships among variables, but rather to develop a theoretical synthesis from various studies on school–family partnerships, character education, and Islamic educational management. Within this approach, literature is treated as the primary source for identifying key concepts, patterns of relationships among concepts, and theoretical gaps that can be used to construct a new conceptual model (Snyder, 2019; Xiao & Watson, 2019).

The data sources consisted of journal articles, academic books, institutional reports, and scholarly documents relevant to four main areas: parent–school collaboration, character education, Islamic educational management, and madrasah governance. The literature was selected based on thematic relevance, strength of argument, source reputation, and its connection to the development of a collaborative model for character education. Journal articles were prioritized from reputable publications published between 2015 and 2026, while classic works such as Lickona's scholarship on character education and Epstein's work on school–family partnerships were retained because of their foundational role in developing the conceptual framework of this study.

The literature search was conducted using several keywords, including family–school partnership, parental involvement, school–family collaboration, character education, Islamic educational management, madrasah management, and Islamic character education. The

selected literature included sources that discuss parental involvement in education, strategies for school–family collaboration, student character formation, and management functions within Islamic educational institutions. Literature that focused solely on academic achievement without a clear connection to character education, school–family collaboration, or educational management was not used as a primary source. These criteria were applied to ensure that the literature synthesis remained aligned with the purpose of the study, namely the development of a management model for parent–madrasah collaboration in character education.

Data analysis was conducted through thematic synthesis. The analytical stages included close reading of the literature, identification of key concepts, grouping of recurring themes, comparison of relationships among concepts, and formulation of the conceptual structure of the model. Through this process, the main themes that emerged included shared value vision, two-way communication, organized participation, reflective monitoring, and student character outcomes. These five themes were then synthesized into the STORY Model, which consists of Spiritual shared vision, Two-way communication, Organized participation, Reflective monitoring, and Yielding character outcomes. The model was developed in response to the limitations of parent–madrasah collaboration, which often remains administrative, ceremonial, and insufficiently oriented toward indicators of character formation.

The trustworthiness of the synthesis was maintained through conceptual triangulation across several fields of inquiry, namely educational management, school–family partnerships, character education, and Islamic education. Each concept used in constructing the STORY Model was compared with relevant literature to ensure that it did not rest merely on normative assumptions but had adequate theoretical support. Thus, the literature review method in this study functions not only as a mapping of existing scholarship but also as a foundation for constructing a conceptual model that can be used in future research and in the managerial practice of character education in madrasahs.

RESULTS

Patterns of parent–madrasah collaboration in character education

The literature synthesis shows that parent–madrasah collaboration in character education operates through three main patterns: educational communication, family participation in madrasah programs, and value reinforcement at home. These patterns indicate that collaboration cannot be understood merely as an administrative relationship between the

madrasah and students' parents. Parental involvement in education includes communication, volunteering, learning support at home, decision-making, and cooperation with educational institutions (Widaningtyas, 2022). In the madrasah context, these forms of involvement acquire a broader meaning because character education is directed not only toward social behavior but also toward the formation of akhlak, religiosity, responsibility, and students' moral consciousness.

The first pattern is educational communication among teachers, homeroom teachers, and parents. This communication should not be reduced to the delivery of academic reports, school activity information, or disciplinary notifications. Research on parent–teacher conferences shows that meetings between teachers and parents can function as a space for evaluating learning experiences and developing shared responsibility in supporting children's development (Tholchah, 2025). This finding indicates that communication has both diagnostic and formative functions in character education. Madrasahs hold information about students' classroom behavior, social interaction, discipline, and religious activities, while parents hold information about children's habits at home, personal responsibility, digital device use, and consistency in worship practices.

The second pattern is family participation in educational activities and the strengthening of madrasah culture. Literature on school, family, and community collaboration in Islamic educational management shows that parental involvement in madrasah activities can strengthen institutional relationships and support Islamic educational practices (Kamil & Abdullah, 2025). Studies on Islamic school partnerships also emphasize that partnership strategies can improve the quality of Islamic education when school–family–community relations are not incidental but are directed toward strengthening students' identity as knowledgeable and morally grounded individuals (Winarti et al., 2021). Therefore, family participation should be understood as part of a character quality management strategy.

The third pattern is value reinforcement within the family environment. Studies on religious education and character development show that parental involvement can support the creation of a collaborative learning climate that strengthens students' character (Aini et al., 2024). Similar findings appear in studies of local wisdom-based character education, which position teachers, parents, and communities as collaborative actors in value formation (Yusuf et al., 2024). These findings show that character does not emerge from isolated moral

instruction, but from the consistency of values experienced by students across different social spaces.

Managerial weaknesses in parent–madrasah collaboration

The synthesis also identifies five managerial weaknesses in parent–madrasah collaboration: the dominance of administrative communication, reactive involvement, unstructured participation, limited reflective monitoring, and unclear indicators of character outcomes. Studies on the challenges of family–school collaboration in online learning show that weak family–school relationships can limit the effectiveness of parental involvement when such relations are not built openly and participatively (Wahyuni et al., 2022). This finding indicates that the problem of collaboration is not only related to parents' willingness to be involved, but also to the institutional design that determines how involvement is planned, facilitated, and evaluated.

The first weakness is the dominance of administrative communication. In many madrasah practices, communication with parents often takes the form of meeting invitations, grade reports, activity announcements, disciplinary warnings, or parental summons when students encounter problems. Although this communication is important for coordination, it is insufficient for sustaining character formation. Studies on family–teacher collaboration in Madrasah Aliyah curriculum development show that parent–teacher forums, curriculum literacy, and digitalized family–school communication can strengthen educational relationships (Lailatussaadah et al., 2025).

The second weakness is the reactive nature of parental involvement. Parents are often more intensively involved when issues arise, such as disciplinary problems, declining academic performance, social conflict, or specific behavioral cases. A study on collaborative strategies between schools and parents in preventing sexual violence at MAPN Koya Barat shows that madrasah–parent collaboration is important as a preventive strategy for student protection (Misire et al., 2026). This finding indicates that collaboration should not wait until problems emerge, but should be developed from the stages of planning, habituation, and value supervision.

The third weakness is the lack of systematically organized parental participation. Studies on deep partnership based on Epstein's theory show that parent–school partnerships become stronger when they are designed through consistent, structured programs with clear forms of activity (Rahmah et al., 2026). Similar findings appear in studies on structured parental

involvement in madrasah education, which emphasize that school–family partnerships in Islamic educational contexts require a stronger structure of participation (Munawaroh et al., 2026). This means that parental participation cannot rely solely on individual willingness or ceremonial activities.

The fourth weakness is limited reflective monitoring of character development. Educational evaluation remains more strongly focused on academic achievement, formal discipline, and records of misconduct, while character development as a process of value habituation is not always monitored dialogically. Research on ecosystem-based bullying prevention shows that students' behavior is influenced by classroom climate, peer culture, parental involvement, teacher responses, and school policies (Komalasari & Gaffar, 2026). Therefore, character monitoring cannot be conducted from one side alone; it requires reflective dialogue between the madrasah and the family.

The fifth weakness is the absence of clear indicators for evaluating collaborative character education. The success of collaboration is often measured through parental attendance, responsiveness to teacher messages, or support for madrasah activities. These measures remain formal and participatory, but they do not necessarily indicate an impact on students' character. Studies on digital character education in madrasah ibtidaiyah show that family–school partnerships need to be directed toward character formation in digital spaces, including supervision, literacy, and the habituation of responsibility (Putra et al., 2026). Other studies on strengthening adab through Islamic religious education also emphasize the importance of synergy among schools, families, and communities so that character education does not stop at formal instruction (Wisiyanti, 2024).

Construction of the STORY model

Based on these patterns and weaknesses, this study formulates the STORY Model as a management framework for parent–madrasah collaboration in character education. STORY is an acronym for Spiritual shared vision, Two-way communication, Organized participation, Reflective monitoring, and Yielding character outcomes. The model was developed in response to collaboration that remains administrative, participation that is not yet structured, monitoring that is not yet reflective, and character outcome indicators that remain unclear.

The first component, Spiritual shared vision, emphasizes the importance of shared value orientation between the madrasah and the family. This component becomes the basis for aligning character priorities, such as religiosity, adab, honesty, responsibility, politeness,

social care, and discipline in worship. The second component, Two-way communication, emphasizes the importance of reciprocal communication between the madrasah and parents. Communication does not merely function to transmit information, but also serves as a means of understanding students' character development more comprehensively.

The third component, Organized participation, emphasizes that parental involvement must be systematically designed through role distribution, parenting programs, worship mentoring, digital ethics supervision, and support for socio-religious activities. The fourth component, Reflective monitoring, stresses the need for character monitoring that reads students' processes, obstacles, and behavioral changes dialogically. The fifth component, Yielding character outcomes, positions character outcomes as the final orientation of collaboration, including religiosity, adab, responsibility, self-discipline, empathy, honesty, and social care.

Table 1. Synthesis of Findings and Construction of the STORY Model

Synthesized Findings	Interpretation of Findings	STORY Component	Managerial Implication
Parent–madrasah collaboration remains centered on information delivery, meetings, and responses to student problems.	Collaboration has not fully become a pedagogical process that sustains character formation.	Two-way communication	Madrasahs need to build dialogic, regular, and character-development-based communication.
Character education requires continuity of values among the madrasah, family, and social environment.	Values taught in the madrasah become weak if they are not reinforced through family habituation.	Spiritual shared vision	Madrasahs and parents need to agree on priority character values as the basis for shared guidance.
Parental participation is often ceremonial and lacks a clear role design.	Family involvement needs to be managed through role distribution, structured programs, and targeted indicators.	Organized participation	Madrasahs need to design parenting programs, worship mentoring, and structured support for character activities.
Students' character development is influenced by the madrasah ecosystem, family, peers, and digital spaces.	Character evaluation cannot rely only on records of misconduct; it requires reflective monitoring across environments.	Reflective monitoring	Teachers and parents need to conduct regular dialogue, character records, and evaluation of value habituation.
The success of collaboration is often measured by parental attendance rather than by changes in students' character.	Success indicators need to shift from formal participation to observable character outcomes.	Yielding character outcomes	Collaboration needs to be directed toward religiosity, adab, responsibility, self-discipline, empathy, and social care.

Table 1 shows that the STORY Model was constructed from the synthesis of recurring patterns and managerial weaknesses in parent–madrasah collaboration. Each component of the model corresponds to a specific problem identified in the literature: administrative communication is addressed through Two-way communication; weak value continuity is addressed through Spiritual shared vision; ceremonial involvement is addressed through Organized participation; limited evaluation is addressed through Reflective monitoring; and unclear measures of success are addressed through Yielding character outcomes. Thus, the table demonstrates that the STORY Model is not merely a conceptual acronym, but a structured managerial framework that translates literature-based findings into practical directions for strengthening character education in madrasahs.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study show that parent–madrasah collaboration in character education operates through three main patterns: educational communication, family participation in madrasah programs, and value reinforcement at home. These findings directly address the objective of this study, namely to formulate a conceptual model for managing parent–madrasah collaboration in character education. The results indicate that collaboration cannot be reduced to administrative contact between teachers and parents, such as invitations, academic reports, or disciplinary notices. Rather, collaboration should be understood as a pedagogical and managerial process that connects the values taught in the madrasah with the moral habits practiced in the family. In this sense, character education requires continuity across institutional, familial, and social environments.

These findings are consistent with previous studies on school–family partnerships, which emphasize that parental involvement contributes to students' academic development, socio-emotional growth, prosocial behavior, and positive behavioral outcomes when collaboration is intentionally designed (Epstein, 2018; Sheridan et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2020). However, the present study extends this literature by locating collaboration within the specific context of madrasah-based character education. In the madrasah context, collaboration is not only related to academic support or school participation, but also to the formation of akhlak, religious consciousness, moral responsibility, and value-based habituation. This supports Sahin's (2018) argument that Islamic education cannot be separated from the formation of moral and spiritual subjectivity.

The study also reveals several managerial weaknesses in parent–madrasah collaboration, including administrative communication, reactive involvement, unstructured participation, limited reflective monitoring, and unclear indicators of character outcomes. These findings suggest that the main problem is not the absence of collaboration, but the weakness of its management design. Collaboration often becomes visible only when students face problems, while preventive and formative cooperation remains underdeveloped. This finding resonates with studies showing that school–family relations become less effective when they are not built through open, structured, and participatory mechanisms (Rahmah et al., 2026; Wahyuni et al., 2022). Therefore, parent–madrasah collaboration must move from incidental engagement toward systematic character-oriented governance.

The proposed STORY Model responds to these weaknesses by offering five interconnected components: Spiritual shared vision, Two-way communication, Organized participation, Reflective monitoring, and Yielding character outcomes. Each component reflects a managerial function in character education. Spiritual shared vision provides the foundation for value planning; Two-way communication strengthens reciprocal dialogue between teachers and parents; Organized participation structures the roles of families in character formation; Reflective monitoring enables formative evaluation across school and home contexts; and Yielding character outcomes directs collaboration toward observable moral development. Through this sequence, the model transforms parent–madrasah collaboration from a formal relationship into a pedagogical partnership.

The theoretical implication of this study lies in its contribution to Islamic educational management. Existing studies on parental involvement generally emphasize communication, home-based learning support, school participation, decision-making, and community engagement (Epstein, 2018; Widaningtyas, 2022). Meanwhile, studies on Islamic education and madrasah culture emphasize akhlak, religiosity, exemplary conduct, moral habituation, and institutional value formation (Kamil & Abdullah, 2025; Surani et al., 2024). The STORY Model integrates these two bodies of literature into a single managerial framework. It shows that character education in madrasahs requires not only moral instruction, but also collaborative governance that organizes values, actors, communication, monitoring, and outcomes.

Practically, the findings imply that madrasahs need to develop a documented and sustainable system for involving parents in character education. Madrasahs can begin by formulating shared priority values with parents, establishing dialogic communication channels,

designing structured parental roles, conducting reflective monitoring, and defining measurable character indicators. Parents should not be positioned merely as supporters of madrasah activities, but as active partners in worship mentoring, digital supervision, moral habituation, and socio-religious practices at home. Such a model is especially relevant in contemporary educational contexts, where students' character is shaped not only by classroom instruction but also by family practices, peer culture, digital media, and broader social environments.

This study has several limitations. First, it is based on a conceptual literature review, so the STORY Model has not yet been empirically tested in real madrasah settings. Second, the study relies on selected literature rather than field data from teachers, parents, students, or madrasah leaders, which limits its ability to capture the lived complexity of parent–madrasah collaboration. Third, the model remains conceptual and therefore requires further validation before being used as a practical intervention. Future research should examine the applicability of the STORY Model through expert validation, case studies, action research, or implementation-based research across different madrasah levels, family backgrounds, and digital-cultural contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study formulated the STORY Model as a conceptual framework for managing parent–madrasah collaboration in character education. The literature synthesis shows that collaboration operates through three main patterns: educational communication, family participation in madrasah programs, and value reinforcement at home. It also identifies several managerial weaknesses, including administrative communication, reactive parental involvement, unstructured participation, limited reflective monitoring, and unclear indicators of character outcomes. In response, the STORY Model offers five interconnected components: Spiritual shared vision, Two-way communication, Organized participation, Reflective monitoring, and Yielding character outcomes. These components provide a structured pathway for transforming parent–madrasah relations from formal institutional coordination into a systematic, participatory, and character-oriented pedagogical partnership.

The main limitation of this study lies in its conceptual literature review design, as the STORY Model has not yet been empirically tested in actual madrasah settings. Therefore, its practical effectiveness, contextual adaptability, and measurable impact on students' character development require further investigation. Future research should examine the model through

expert validation, case studies, action research, or implementation-based studies across different levels and types of madrasahs. Further studies may also develop instruments to measure each component of the model and assess its relationship with observable character outcomes, such as religiosity, adab, responsibility, empathy, discipline, honesty, and social care.

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