Tarbawiyah : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan
(e-ISSN) 2579-325X; (p-ISSN) 2579-3241
https://e-journal.metrouniv.ac.id/index.php/tarbawiyah/
Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Ilmu Keguruan (FTIK), Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Jurai Siwo Lampung, Indonesia.

Developing Children's Religious Character through Informal Family Education: Multiple Parental Roles in Air Jamban Village

Hery Kiswanto*[1)], Elsayed Mohamed Salem Elawadi[2)]
[1)] Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Hubbulwathan Duri Riau, Indonesia
[2)] Al-Madinah Internasional University, Malaysia
✉ herykiswanto1@gmail.com* (Correspondence)

Article Information

Article history:
Received
July 30, 2026
Revised
October 5, 2026
Accepted
October 14, 2026

Abstract

This study explores parents' lived experiences in providing informal religious education and supporting children's religious character development in Air Jamban Village, Bengkalis, Indonesia. The study employed a qualitative phenomenological design involving seven participants: three parents as the main informants, three children as supporting informants, and one community leader. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and documentation. Analysis combined Moustakas's phenomenological procedures (bracketing, identification of significant statements and meaning units, and textural–structural description) with the data condensation, data display, and conclusion-drawing cycle of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The five parental roles drawn from the literature served as sensitizing concepts rather than fixed categories: interviews began with open narrative questions, and the meaning, enactment, and interrelation of each role were developed from participants' accounts. The analysis yielded five interconnected dimensions of parental experience: parents as educators, motivators, role models, supervisors, and facilitators. These dimensions illustrate how informal religious education is experienced as an integrated process embedded in everyday family life, in which religious instruction, encouragement, modeling, supervision, and the provision of a supportive environment operate in relation to one another. The study's novelty lies in offering an integrated analysis of these five interconnected parental roles within the context of informal, family-based Islamic education, rather than examining parental involvement as separate or general functions. The findings suggest that the interconnected involvement of parents can support children's religious character development through everyday family interactions and practices. The study contributes to Islamic family education by providing a phenomenological account of how parents experience and enact religious education as an integrated process of character formation within the family.

Keywords: Informal Family Education, Parental Roles, Religious Character, Islamic Education, Phenomenology.

How to cite: Kiswanto, Hery; Elawadi, Elsayed Mohamed Salem. *Developing Children's Religious Character through Informal Family Education: Multiple Parental Roles in Air Jamban Village*, Volume 10, Issue 02, July-December 2026; 124-140; https://doi.org/10.32332/tarbawiyah.v10.i2.14708

This is an open access article under the CC BY SA

INTRODUCTION

The family constitutes the earliest and one of the most influential educational environments in children's lives. Long before children encounter formal schooling, they learn beliefs, values, attitudes, and patterns of behavior through everyday interactions with parents and other family members. Within Islamic education,

parents have a responsibility that extends beyond meeting children's physical and educational needs to include the cultivation of faith (*iman*), worship (*ibadah*), and moral conduct (*akhlaq*). Religious education in the family is therefore not limited to deliberate instruction but is also transmitted through daily routines, parental example, communication, habituation, and the social environment in which children grow. Contemporary educational research similarly recognizes sustained parental involvement as an important factor in children's moral development, social competence, and character formation, particularly when values are incorporated into everyday family practices (Diana et al., 2021).

The importance of the family as an educational environment is also recognized in international research on child development. A global systematic review of parenting interventions found that effective parental practices can contribute to children's socioemotional development, reduce behavioral problems, and improve parent-child interactions across diverse cultural and socioeconomic contexts (Jeong et al., 2021). This evidence reinforces the significance of examining the family not merely as a private social unit but also as an important context in which children's values, behaviors, and developmental outcomes are shaped.

Within the context of Islamic education, this issue is increasingly important because children's religious development takes place amid substantial social change. Digital media, changing patterns of family interaction, peer influence, and increasingly diverse sources of information may reduce the extent to which religious values are transmitted through direct family interaction. Consequently, the educational function of the family remains important not because schools and religious institutions are unimportant, but because children's everyday experiences at home provide repeated opportunities to observe, practice, and internalize values. Recent studies in Islamic education have likewise emphasized parents' roles as educators, role models, and guides in developing children's religious and moral character (Hartitik & Wulandari, 2026).

Indonesia has responded to this challenge by strengthening character education through educational policies; however, numerous studies emphasize that schools alone cannot effectively develop children's religious character without active parental participation. Religious character develops through continuous interaction within the family, where parents consistently function as educators, role models, motivators, supervisors, and facilitators. Positive parenting practices supported by parental religiosity have been shown to enhance children's character development and strengthen parental engagement in character education (Diana et al., 2021).

Previous research has provided valuable evidence regarding parental involvement in children's religious and moral development. Studies have examined parental guidance, religious habituation, parenting practices, parental role modeling, and collaboration between families and educational institutions. For example, research in Indonesia has demonstrated that parents introduce religious values through role modeling, worship habituation, and everyday interaction, while other studies have emphasized the importance of parental involvement and supportive family environments in children's religious development (Farizeni & Astutik, 2025; Hartatik & Wulandari, 2025). International literature also confirms that parental involvement and family religious socialization have broader implications for children's development, suggesting that the family should be examined as an active social environment rather

than merely as a background factor (Bornstein et al., 2017). Likewise, research by Izzatunnisa and Mutiawati (2024) found that democratic parenting accompanied by religious routines positively contributes to children's religious character. Other scholars have highlighted that religious education implemented collaboratively through families, schools, and religious institutions supports children's moral and ethical development (Astutik & Al, 2025).

Nevertheless, an important gap remains. Existing studies of family-based religious education tend to examine parenting style, religious instruction, role modeling, or parental supervision as separate dimensions, and many focus on formal institutions, early childhood settings, or family–school collaboration. Consequently, little is known about how educational, motivational, exemplary, supervisory, and facilitative functions are experienced and enacted simultaneously by parents in ordinary Muslim households at the community level. Qualitative accounts that capture how parents themselves live and interpret these roles, and how their children experience them, remain scarce, and the application of Social Learning Theory to informal Islamic family education has received limited contextual attention. Research on religious socialization suggests that family influence involves more than intentional transmission and includes everyday practices and relational processes (Klingenberg & Sjö, 2019), yet this insight has rarely been translated into integrated, experience-based accounts of parental roles. This study addresses that gap by offering a phenomenological account of how parents in Air Jamban Village experience five interconnected roles (educator, motivator, role model, supervisor, and facilitator) as one process within everyday family life.

This study draws on Bandura's Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), later elaborated as Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), which explains how people acquire behavior, values, and standards through four interrelated mechanisms. The first is observation: children learn by attending to the conduct of significant others and retaining what they see, and models with whom the learner has a close and nurturing relationship, such as parents, are more likely to attract attention. The second is imitation: children reproduce observed behavior in their own actions, and their performance is refined through practice and feedback. The third is reinforcement: behavior is more likely to be repeated when it brings consequences the learner values, whether direct rewards and praise, vicarious reinforcement from seeing a model rewarded, or self-reinforcement when children judge their own conduct against internalized standards. The fourth is the environment: in Bandura (1986) model of reciprocal determinism, personal factors, behavior, and the social and physical environment influence one another, so the settings in which children live shape which models they see, which behaviors are possible, and which are encouraged.

In this study, these four mechanisms provide a conceptual lens for the five parental roles rather than a predetermined coding scheme. Parental role modeling corresponds most directly to observation and imitation; motivation and supervision relate to reinforcement, through praise, rewards, reminders, and corrective feedback; religious instruction supplies explicit verbal guidance that gives meaning to what children observe; and facilitation shapes the environment in which religious behavior becomes possible and routine. The study does not propose a new social learning theory; it examines how these mechanisms operate together within Islamic family education, an application that has received limited contextual attention. This

orientation is consistent with international scholarship on moral development and religious socialization, which recognizes the importance of family interaction and intergenerational transmission (George, 2020).

This study is grounded in the concept of informal family education, which positions parents as the first educators responsible for transmitting religious knowledge, values, attitudes, and behavior through daily interaction. Character development is understood as a continuous process emerging from repeated experiences, value internalization, social learning, and consistent parental modeling. Within this conceptual framework, parental roles constitute the central dimension of informal family education, while children's religious character represents the expected educational outcome. The relationship between these variables is theoretically supported by social learning theory, which explains that children acquire behaviors through observation, imitation, reinforcement, and repeated interaction with significant adults, particularly their parents (Fristyarini et al., 2025).

Based on this framework, the present study examines how parents contribute to children's religious character development through informal family education in Air Jamban Village, Mandau District, Bengkalis Regency. Specifically, it explores how parents perform their roles as educators, motivators, role models, supervisors, and facilitators and how these interconnected roles are reflected in children's religious character. The study contributes empirically by providing contextual evidence from an Indonesian Muslim community and theoretically by demonstrating how Social Learning Theory can be applied to understand the mechanisms through which religious values are learned and reinforced within everyday family life. The findings are expected to provide a basis for strengthening family-based Islamic education and for encouraging meaningful collaboration among parents, schools, and community religious institutions.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze how parents contribute to developing children's religious character through informal family education in Air Jamban Village. The study addresses the following research question: How do parents perform their educational, motivational, exemplary, supervisory, and facilitative roles in developing children's religious character through informal family education in Air Jamban Village?. The study contributes to the literature in three important ways. First, it expands empirical understanding of informal family education by providing an integrated analysis of multiple parental roles within everyday religious practices. Second, it offers contextual evidence from an Indonesian Muslim community, enriching qualitative scholarship on family-based Islamic education. Third, the findings provide practical insights for parents, educators, and policymakers seeking to strengthen collaboration between families and educational institutions in promoting sustainable religious character development among children.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research approach with a descriptive phenomenological design, following the procedures of Moustakas (1994), to explore how parents experience and practice informal family education in developing their children’s religious character. A phenomenological approach was selected because the study sought to understand the meanings that parents attach to their educational roles within the natural context of family life rather than to measure causal relationships.

Phenomenological inquiry describes participants' lived experiences and the essence of a shared phenomenon through in-depth engagement with those who have lived it (Moustakas, 1994; Urcia, 2021).

The research was conducted in Air Jamban Village, Mandau District, Bengkalis Regency, Riau Province, Indonesia. This location was purposively selected because the community demonstrates active religious life through mosque-based activities, Qur'anic learning, and family religious traditions, while also facing contemporary challenges related to children's character development. The study focused on Muslim families who actively implemented religious education within the household. The natural setting allowed the researcher to observe how informal educational practices were integrated into parents' daily interactions with their children.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling, which is appropriate for phenomenological research because it emphasizes individuals who possess direct experience with the phenomenon under investigation. The inclusion criteria comprised parents who had school-aged children, actively provided religious education at home, and were willing to participate in in-depth interviews. To strengthen data triangulation, several children and a community leader were also involved as supporting informants. Data collection continued until information redundancy was achieved and no substantially new themes emerged.

Table 1. Research Participants

Participant Category	Number	Selection Criteria
Parents	3	Muslim parents actively providing informal religious education at home
Children	3	Children of participating parents who experienced family religious education
Community Leader	1	Local neighborhood leader familiar with community religious activities
Total	7	

This study involved seven participants consisting of three parents as the main informants, three children as supporting informants, and one community leader who provided contextual information regarding religious activities in Air Jamban Village. The diversity of participants enabled the researcher to obtain comprehensive insights concerning the implementation of informal family education and its contribution to children's religious character development.

Table 2. Characteristics of Research Participants

Code	Participant	Gender	Role in Study
P1	Parent	Female	Main Informant
P2	Parent	Male	Main Informant
P3	Parent	Male	Main Informant
C1	Child	Male	Supporting Informant
C2	Child	Female	Supporting Informant
C3	Child	Male	Supporting Informant
CL1	Community Leader	Male	Key Informant

The participating parents had school-aged children and were actively involved in providing religious education at home. Their educational practices included teaching prayer, encouraging Qur'anic recitation, supervising religious activities, and instilling Islamic values through daily interactions. Data obtained from children and the community leader served to corroborate and enrich the findings derived from parental interviews.

Primary data were collected between March and April 2025 through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews enabled participants to describe their experiences while allowing the researcher to explore emerging issues during the conversation. Observations were conducted to examine family religious activities, including congregational prayer, Qur'anic recitation, and parent-child interactions during religious learning. Supporting documents, such as field notes and photographs of religious learning facilities, were used to enrich contextual understanding and facilitate data triangulation. Employing multiple data sources enhances the credibility of qualitative findings through methodological triangulation (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

The principal research instrument was the researcher, who conducted interviews, observations, and data interpretation throughout the investigation. To maintain consistency during data collection, the researcher used interview guides developed from the study objectives, observation checklists, audio recordings, field notes, and documentation sheets. The interview guide was developed from the study objectives and from five sensitizing concepts drawn from the literature (parents as educators, motivators, role models, supervisors, and facilitators). It began with open narrative questions inviting parents and children to describe everyday religious life at home in their own words; questions about the five role dimensions were used afterwards as follow-up probes to deepen, not to direct, participants' accounts.

The five parental roles were therefore not treated as findings known in advance. They were identified before fieldwork from the literature on parental involvement and Social Learning Theory, and they served as sensitizing concepts: starting points for the interview guide and questions put to the data, not fixed categories into which participants' accounts had to fit. We acknowledge that this gives the study a partly theory-informed character, so that the analysis combined inductive and theory-informed reading. Several steps were taken to preserve the depth of lived experience: role-specific prompts were introduced only after participants had narrated their experience in their own terms; probes followed what participants had already said; statements that did not fit any of the five roles were retained and examined as possible additional or alternative meanings; and the accounts of children and the community leader were used to test, rather than merely confirm, parents' descriptions. To bracket prior assumptions (epoché), the researcher recorded expectations about parental religious roles in a reflexive journal before and during fieldwork and returned to it during coding to separate these assumptions from participants' descriptions (Moustakas, 1994).

Unlike quantitative studies, qualitative research emphasizes trustworthiness rather than statistical validity and reliability. Therefore, the quality of the findings was established through four criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was strengthened through prolonged engagement in the field, triangulation of interviews, observations,

and documentation, as well as member checking by confirming interview summaries with participants. Transferability was supported by providing rich descriptions of the research setting and participant characteristics. Dependability was maintained through systematic documentation of research procedures and an audit trail, while confirmability was enhanced by maintaining reflexive field notes and preserving original interview records for verification. These procedures are widely recommended for ensuring methodological rigor in qualitative research (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Data were analyzed by integrating Moustakas (1994) phenomenological procedures into the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Analysis began immediately after the first interview and proceeded concurrently with data collection. In the data condensation phase, interviews were transcribed verbatim and read repeatedly after the researcher had bracketed prior assumptions. Through horizonalization, significant statements describing how parents and children experienced religious education at home were identified and given equal initial weight, and repetitive or overlapping statements were removed. Significant statements were divided into meaning units, each carrying a single idea, and coded descriptively (first-cycle coding), retaining participants' own expressions where possible. In second-cycle pattern coding, codes were clustered into themes of meaning; the sensitizing concepts were used as questions to the data rather than as pre-assigned labels, so clusters could align with, differ from, or cut across the five roles. In the data display phase, matrices were prepared for each participant and across participants, juxtaposing significant statements, meaning units, and themes, with observation notes and documents displayed alongside interview excerpts for triangulation. Using these displays, a textural description (what participants experienced, supported by verbatim excerpts) and a structural description (how and under what conditions the experience occurred, such as daily routines, family relationships, and the mosque and community setting) were written for each family and then synthesized into a composite description of the essence of the experience. In the conclusion drawing and verification phase, interpretations were checked through constant comparison across participants and data sources, member checking, a search for disconfirming evidence, and review of the audit trail until no substantially new themes emerged. This iterative process enabled the researcher to capture the essence of participants' lived experiences while preserving the contextual richness of the findings (Miles, et al., 2014; Colorafi & Evans, 2016).

Ethical principles were observed throughout the study. Before data collection, all participants received an explanation of the study's objectives, research procedures, voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw at any stage without consequence. Written informed consent was obtained from adult participants, while parental consent was secured for child participants. To protect privacy, participants' identities were replaced with pseudonyms in all transcripts and publications, and all collected data were stored confidentially and used solely for academic purposes. These procedures ensured respect for participants' autonomy, confidentiality, and the ethical integrity of the research process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Parents as Educators in Informal Family Education

The first finding concerns the parents' role as educators. All three parents reported that religious education began at home from an early age and was incorporated into daily routines rather than treated as a separate formal lesson. Lisa, for example, introduced her child to Arabic letters at the age of three and subsequently encouraged Qur'anic reading and memorization. She explained: *I always invite my child to pray together at home so that the habit develops from an early age. Since the age of three, I introduced Arabic letters, and every night after the Isha prayer we review prayers and short surahs together.* (P1, interview, March 14, 2025).



Figure 1. Interview with Parent Informant (P1)

The other parents adopted somewhat different approaches. Fadler incorporated religious advice into everyday conversations and avoided coercive instruction, whereas Dedi complemented home-based education with participation in MDTA at the local mosque. The three families also established recurring religious routines, including congregational Maghrib and Isha prayers, Qur'anic reading after Maghrib, prayers before meals and bedtime, listening to religious lectures, and reading Surah Yasin on Fridays.

The children's accounts corroborated the parents' descriptions. Siti explained that her mother was her first teacher in learning the Arabic letters and that Qur'anic memorization was practiced every night by repeating verses together. She described the process as enjoyable because it was conducted with affection and without pressure.

These findings show that informal family education operated through repeated practice, direct guidance, and everyday interaction. Religious learning was therefore not limited to the transfer of knowledge but was connected to the formation of habits. The combination of parental instruction and children's accounts strengthens the credibility of the finding because the educational process was reported from both sides of the parent-child relationship.

The findings revealed that parents viewed themselves primarily as educators responsible for introducing religious knowledge and Islamic values to their children. Religious instruction was commonly delivered through daily conversations, guidance in prayer, Qur'anic learning, and explanations of appropriate behavior based on Islamic teachings.

Table 3. Parents' Educational Roles in Developing Religious Character

Educational Activities	Evidence from Participants
Teaching daily prayers	Parents routinely taught prayer procedures and supplications.
Guiding Qur'anic recitation	Children were encouraged to read the Qur'an after Maghrib prayer.
Explaining Islamic values	Parents explained honesty, respect, and responsibility from an Islamic perspective.
Providing religious advice	Advice was given when children displayed inappropriate behavior.

The findings indicate that religious education within the family was not limited to formal instruction but was integrated into everyday interactions. Parents considered religious teaching a continuous process that begins at home and complements formal religious education received at school.

Discussion

The findings support the concept of informal family education, which emphasizes that the family serves as the first educational institution responsible for transmitting religious and moral values. From the perspective of Social Learning Theory, children acquire beliefs and behaviors through interaction with significant figures, particularly parents (Bandura, 1986). The educational role identified in this study demonstrates how religious values are internalized through repeated exposure and direct instruction.

These findings align with Diana et al. (2021), who reported that parental involvement significantly contributes to children's character development through continuous guidance and value transmission. Similarly, Astutik & Al, (2025) found that parents play a crucial role in shaping Islamic character by introducing religious teachings and reinforcing them in daily life. The present study extends these findings by showing how educational activities are embedded within ordinary family routines rather than being confined to structured learning sessions.

Parents as Motivators

The second finding concerns the motivational role of parents. Motivation was provided through praise, stories, rewards, and direct encouragement. Lisa praised her child after successfully memorizing Qur'anic passages or performing prayers on time without reminders. Fadler used stories of the prophets and the companions as a source of inspiration, while Dedi provided small rewards when his child successfully completed the Ramadan fast. Fadler explained: *Children become more enthusiastic when we tell them stories of the prophets. From those stories, they learn that being a good person is something to be proud of, not a burden.* (Fadler, interview, March 15, 2025).



Figure 2. Interview with Parent Informant (P2)

The children's experiences provide additional evidence of this motivational process. Rizky reported that his parents celebrated his successful completion of the Ramadan fast with small gifts and sincere praise. He had completed the full Ramadan fast for three consecutive years since the age of nine. According to his account, the positive response from his parents encouraged him to maintain and improve his religious practices.

The finding suggests that parental motivation in this context was not dependent on material rewards alone. Religious stories, praise, companionship, and parental recognition were used alongside rewards. This combination appears to have helped children associate religious practice with positive emotional experiences rather than with obligation alone.

Another important finding concerns parents' motivational role. Participants consistently reported encouraging children to perform religious obligations through praise, reminders, and emotional support.

Table 4. Parents' Motivational Practices

Motivational Strategy	Description
Verbal encouragement	Parents reminded children to pray and recite the Qur'an.
Positive reinforcement	Praise was provided when children practiced religious activities consistently.
Emotional support	Parents expressed appreciation for religious achievements.
Religious inspiration	Stories of prophets and righteous individuals were shared.

Parents believed that motivation was necessary because children often required encouragement before religious habits became self-directed behaviors.

Motivation emerged as a key mechanism through which religious habits were strengthened. Consistent encouragement helped children maintain engagement in religious practices until these activities became part of their daily routines. According to Social Learning Theory, reinforcement increases the likelihood that observed Participating parents had school-aged children and were actively involved behaviors will be repeated (Bandura, 1986).

This finding is consistent with (Izzatunnisa & Mutiawati, 2024), who found that supportive parenting enhances children's willingness to participate in religious

activities. Likewise, Kurniasari, V., Narulita, S., & Wajdi, F,(2022). reported that parental encouragement contributes significantly to the development of religious awareness among children. The present study suggests that motivation functions as a bridge between religious instruction and behavioral implementation.

Parents as Role Models

The third finding is the parents' role as role models. The data indicate that parents considered their own behavior an essential part of religious education. Lisa explicitly connected parental practice with children's willingness to imitate religious behavior: *If the parents themselves do not pray, how can the children follow? So I make sure that my child sees me praying before I invite them to pray.* (Lisa, interview, March 16, 2025).

The parents' modeling extended beyond ritual worship. Fadler emphasized honesty, patience, humility, and respectful interaction with neighbors, while Dedi demonstrated religious commitment through worship as well as everyday social conduct. The data therefore indicate that *uswah hasanah* operated through both religious practices and ordinary interpersonal behavior.

The children's accounts provide further support. Ahmad explained that seeing his father prepared for prayer and receiving a gentle invitation helped him overcome reluctance to pray. He also reported that he had been taught not to delay prayer because of its religious importance.

This finding is particularly important because it demonstrates that the transmission of religious character occurred through observation as well as instruction. Children were not merely told what they should do; they repeatedly saw the behavior being practiced by significant adults in their immediate environment.

The study found that parental example was one of the most influential factors in children's religious character development. Children tended to imitate behaviors that they consistently observed at home.

Table 5. Parental Exemplary Behaviors

Exemplary Behavior	Observed Influence
Performing daily prayers	Children became more disciplined in prayer.
Reading the Qur'an regularly	Children developed interest in Qur'anic learning.
Speaking politely	Children demonstrated respectful communication.
Participating in religious activities	Children showed greater religious engagement.

Children frequently stated that they followed religious practices because they observed their parents doing the same activities.

Among all identified parental roles, modeling appeared to exert the strongest influence on children's religious character. This finding strongly supports Social Learning Theory, which posits that observation and imitation are central mechanisms in behavioral acquisition (Bandura, 1986).

The results are consistent with Hartatik and Wulandari (2025), who found that exemplary behavior serves as the foundation of children's religious character formation. Similarly, (Lidiawati & Purnama, 2023) reported that parental role modeling significantly influences children's honesty, responsibility, and religious commitment. The findings suggest that religious messages become more effective when supported

by observable parental behavior.

Parents as Supervisors

Parents also played an active supervisory role by monitoring children's religious activities and correcting inappropriate behavior.

Table 6. Supervisory Practices

Supervisory Activity	Purpose
Monitoring prayer performance	Ensuring consistency in worship practices
Observing peer interactions	Preventing negative influences
Evaluating daily behavior	Reinforcing Islamic values
Providing corrective guidance	Addressing undesirable conduct

Parents viewed supervision as necessary to ensure that religious teachings were implemented consistently.

The supervisory role reflects the importance of parental monitoring in maintaining behavioral consistency. Religious character development requires not only instruction and modeling but also continuous oversight to reinforce desirable behaviors and address deviations.

This finding aligns with (Rohman, 2026), who observed that parental supervision strengthens children's commitment to religious values. Similarly, Fristyarini et al. (2025) emphasized that sustained parental monitoring contributes to children's moral and ethical development. The findings indicate that supervision functions as a regulatory mechanism that supports the effectiveness of other parental roles.

Parents as Facilitators

The finding concerns parents' role as facilitators. The parents provided both material resources and access to religious learning environments. Lisa established a Qur'an reading corner at home, provided a large-print Qur'an, and supplied Islamic storybooks and biographies of the prophets. Fadler regularly accompanied his child to the mosque for MDTA and religious gatherings, while Dedi organized family religious activities during Ramadan.

This role was therefore broader than simply providing learning materials. Parents created conditions in which children could practice religious values. Home routines, access to religious books, transportation to the mosque, participation in MDTA, and organized Ramadan activities functioned together as a supportive learning environment.

The community context reinforced this facilitative role. The local mosque hosted MDTA, Qur'anic recitation, and other religious activities, while residents participated in weekly religious gatherings. Thus, family education was connected to a wider community environment rather than operating in isolation.

The study further revealed that parents acted as facilitators by providing resources and opportunities that supported religious learning.

Table 7. Facilitating Religious Education

Facilitative Support	Description
Providing Qur'ans and Islamic books	Supporting independent learning
Enrolling children in religious programs	Expanding religious knowledge
Creating a religious home environment	Encouraging daily worship
Supporting mosque participation	Strengthening community engagement

Parents recognized that religious development requires an environment that supports the implementation of religious values.

The facilitative role highlights the importance of environmental support in character development. Parents not only transmitted values but also created conditions that enabled children to practice those values consistently. These findings support ecological perspectives on child development, which emphasize that children's development is shaped by the interaction between individuals and the settings in which they live, from the family and home to the wider community (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and they correspond to the environmental component of Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1986). Research on Muslim families in Yogyakarta points in the same direction: Maksudin et al. (2025) found that intensive religious parenting, characterized by consistent household rituals, modeling, and emotional engagement, was associated with deeper internalization of religious values than supplemental or laissez-faire patterns. The present study extends this work by showing how home routines, access to religious materials, and connection to the mosque and MDTA together form a facilitative environment for children's religious practice.

Religious Character Developed among Children

The findings indicate several observable manifestations of children's religious character: regular worship, Qur'anic memorization and reading, religious discipline, and positive social conduct. Ahmad routinely attended Maghrib and Isha prayers at the mosque with his father. Siti had memorized three *juz* of the Qur'an and practiced memorization with her mother every evening. Rizky had completed the full Ramadan fast for three consecutive years.

The children's religious character was also reflected in their social behavior. The parents reported teaching honesty and social concern, while the neighborhood leader observed that children in the area generally greeted older people and communicated politely. Suparman stated: *The mosque, which is usually only half full during congregational prayer, can be full to the terrace during Ramadan. The children here are generally polite, greet others, and speak courteously.* (Suparman, interview, March 13, 2025).

The evidence suggests that religious character in this setting extended beyond ritual observance. It was also expressed through manners, respect, honesty, responsibility, and concern for others. This is consistent with the conceptual framework in the original study, which defines religious character through faith, worship, noble conduct, and positive social attitudes.

Analysis of interviews and observations identified five dominant indicators of religious character among participating children.

Table 8. Indicators of Children's Religious Character

Indicator	Manifestation
Worship discipline	Performing daily prayers regularly
Qur'anic literacy	Reading and learning the Qur'an
Religious responsibility	Fulfilling religious obligations independently
Respectful behavior	Demonstrating politeness toward parents and others
Social ethics	Showing empathy, cooperation, and helpfulness

The findings suggest that religious character development encompasses both vertical relationships with God and horizontal relationships with other people.

The findings demonstrate that children's religious character development in Air Jamban Village is strongly influenced by parents' multifaceted roles as educators, motivators, role models, supervisors, and facilitators. Among these roles, parental modeling emerged as the most influential mechanism because children tended to imitate behaviors they repeatedly observed in daily family life. Collectively, these roles contributed to the development of worship discipline, Qur'anic literacy, religious responsibility, respectful behavior, and social ethics(Widianti & Alam, 2026).

The results reinforce Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1986), which explains that behavior is acquired through observation, imitation, reinforcement, and interaction with significant others. The findings suggest that informal family education operates as a dynamic process in which religious values are transmitted not only through instruction but also through habitual practice and social interaction. This extends previous applications of Social Learning Theory by demonstrating how multiple parental roles interact simultaneously within the context of Islamic family education.

The study is consistent with recent findings reported by Diana et al. (2021), Farizeni and Astutik (2025), Hartatik and Wulandari (2025), and Izzatunnisa and Mutiawati (2024), all of whom emphasize the importance of parental involvement in character development. However, the present study contributes a more integrated perspective by examining the interconnected functions of parents rather than focusing exclusively on parenting style or religious instruction.

Theoretically, this study strengthens the conceptual understanding of informal family education as a multidimensional process involving educational, motivational, exemplary, supervisory, and facilitative functions. The findings suggest that these dimensions should be viewed as complementary rather than independent variables in models of religious character development.

Practically, the findings imply that efforts to strengthen children's religious character should prioritize parental empowerment programs. Educational institutions, religious organizations, and community leaders should collaborate to enhance parents' capacity to provide effective religious guidance at home. Family-based religious education programs may serve as a strategic complement to formal school-based character education initiatives.

Despite these contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study involved a relatively small number of participants from a single community, limiting the transferability of findings to other contexts. Second, the study focused exclusively on Muslim families and therefore does not capture variations across different religious or cultural settings. Third, the findings rely primarily on self-reported experiences, which may be influenced by social desirability considerations.

Future research could employ comparative designs involving multiple communities, larger participant groups, or mixed-method approaches to examine how parental roles influence children's religious character across different socio-cultural contexts. Further studies may also investigate the influence of digital media, family religiosity, and socioeconomic factors on the effectiveness of informal family education in shaping children's religious character.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that children's religious character is supported by an integrated process of informal family education wherein parents act simultaneously as educators, motivators, role models, supervisors, and facilitators. Among these five roles, parental role modeling serves as the primary mechanism through which religious habits are observed and internalized. Theoretically, this study demonstrates that Social Learning Theory can be enriched within the context of family-based Islamic education by explicitly incorporating environmental facilitation and religious supervision as critical dimensions alongside observation, modeling, and reinforcement. Furthermore, as a non-longitudinal qualitative study, the observed religious character is reflected in and supported by daily interactions and habituation rather than indicating guaranteed long-term developmental outcomes.

Practically, these findings highlight several operational implications for family, school, and community integration. First, local institutions should design structured religious parenting programs and targeted training for parents on effective religious communication. Second, a collaborative framework among families, schools, and local mosques needs to be established to reinforce consistent religious guidance. Third, actionable operational guidelines for home-based worship habituation—such as daily prayer schedules and structured Qur'anic recitation routines—should be provided to assist parents in creating a conducive learning environment at home.

The study's findings should be interpreted within certain limitations. Conducted with seven participants in Air Jamban Village, the insights are context-specific to a single Muslim community and rely on qualitative self-reports and field observations over a limited period. Future research should employ comparative across socio-cultural settings or longitudinal designs to observe the sustainability of children's religious practices over extended developmental stages.

REFERENCES

Astutik, A. P., & Al, E. (2025). *Parental Roles in Developing Children's Islamic Character in Families*. *7*(2), 1–7. https://doi.org/10.21070/jims.v7i2.1638

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory*. Prentice-Hall.

Bornstein, M. H., Putnick, D. L., Lansford, J. E., Al-Hassan, S. M., Bacchini, D., Bombi, A. S., Chang, L., Deater-Deckard, K., Di Giunta, L., Dodge, K. A., Malone, P. S., Oburu, P., Pastorelli, C., Skinner, A. T., Sorbring, E., Steinberg, L., Tapanya, S., Tirado, L. M. U., Zelli, A., & Alampay, L. P. (2017). 'Mixed blessings': parental religiousness, parenting, and child adjustment in global perspective. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *58*(8), 880–892. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.12705

Colorafi, Karen Jiggins, & Evans, Bronwynne. (2016). Qualitative Descriptive Methods in Health Science Research. *HERD: Health Environments Research & Design Journal*, *9*(4), 16–25. https://doi.org/10.1177/1937586715614171

Diana, R. R., Chirzin, M., Bashori, K., Suud, F. M., & Khairunnisa, N. Z. (2021). Parental engagement on children character education: The influences of positive parenting and agreeableness mediated by religiosity. *Cakrawala Pendidikan*,

40(2), 428–444. https://doi.org/10.21831/cp.v40i2.39477

Farizeni, Y. S. A., & Astutik, A. P. (2025). Parental Roles in Developing Children's Islamic Character in Families: Peran Orang Tua dalam Membentuk Karakter Islam Anak-Anak dalam Keluarga. *Journal of Islamic and Muhammadiyah Studies*, *7*(2 SE-Study Of Islamic Studies), 10.21070/jims.v7i2.1638. https://doi.org/10.21070/jims.v7i2.1638

Fristyarini, A., Raihana, S. N., & Muliani, M. (2025). Dynamics of Moral and Ethical Development in Children through Religious-Based Education. *Journal of Family Sciences*, *10*(1), 99–113. https://doi.org/10.29244/jfs.v10i1.63071

George, L. (2020). Religious Socialization and Moral Development: How Similar? How Different? *Innovation in Aging*, *4*(Supplement_1), 657–658. https://doi.org/10.1093/geroni/igaa057.2269

Hartitik, W. S., & Wulandari, D. R. (2026). Parental Involvement In Shaping Children's Religious Character: A Qualitative Study At Madin Al Istiqomah. *Jurnal Penelitian*, *19*(2), 302. https://doi.org/10.21043/jp.v19i2.33609

Izzatunnisa, Y., & Mutiawati. (2024). Parenting Practices and Religious Character Development in Early Childhood: A Study of Tanjung Morawa Village. *Ascarya: Journal of Islamic Science, Culture and Social Studies*, *4*(1), 112–122. https://doi.org/10.53754/iscs.v4i1.674

Jeong, J., Franchett, E. E., Ramos de Oliveira, C. V, Rehmani, K., & Yousafzai, A. K. (2021). Parenting interventions to promote early child development in the first three years of life: A global systematic review and meta-analysis. *PLOS Medicine*, *18*(5), e1003602. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1003602

Klingenberg, M., & Sjö, S. (2019). Theorizing religious socialization: a critical assessment. *Religion*, *49*(2), 163–178. https://doi.org/10.1080/0048721X.2019.1584349

Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing. *European Journal of General Practice*, *24*(1), 120–124. https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375092

Kurniasari, V., Narulita, S., & Wajdi, F. (2022). Parenting patterns in forming child's religious character: Case study of religious family. *Mozaic: Islam Nusantara*, *8*(1), 1–24.

Lidiawati, C., & Purnama, M. (2023). Peran Orangtua dalam Membentuk Karakter Religius dan Jujur pada Diri Anak dalam Lingkungan Keluarga. *Jurnal Moral Kemasyarakatan*, *8*(2), 147–155. https://doi.org/10.21067/jmk.v1i2.8331

Maksudin, Machali, Sudiati, & I. (2025). Typologies of Islamic Religious Parenting in Yogyakarta: Intensive, Supplemental, and Laissez-Faire Patterns Shaping Children's Spiritual Development. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, *22*(2 SE-Articles), 385–399. https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.v22i2.11432

Miles, Huberman, and S. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis (3rd ed.)* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications Inc.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological Research Methods*. SAGE Publications Inc.

Rohman, D. A. (2026). Parental Perceptions of Islamic Religious Education in Boarding Schools and Children ' s Religious Character Development : A Case Study Approach. *Jurnal Iman Dan Spiritualitas*, *6*(1), 203–218.

Urcia, I. A. (2021). Comparisons of Adaptations in Grounded Theory and Phenomenology: Selecting the Specific Qualitative Research Methodology. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *20*, 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069211045474

Widianti, S., & Alam, M. (2026). A Theoretical Review of the Formation of Religious Character in Early Childhood through the Method of Storytelling about the Prophets. *Ceria: Jurnal Program Studi Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, *15*(2), 746–766.