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Synergy Between Teachers and Parents in Shaping Students' Responsible Learning Character at MAN 1 Medan: Collaboration Model and Its Challenges

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A B S T R A C T

Character education is a crucial aspect of student development to foster responsible and independent generations. The synergy between teachers and parents plays a key role in optimizing the formation of students' responsible learning character in the madrasah environment. This study aims to examine the synergy between teachers and parents in shaping students' responsible learning character at MAN 1 Medan and to identify the challenges faced in this collaboration. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results indicate that the synergy between teachers and parents is quite well established in a collaborative pattern, where teachers act as academic mentors and character builders at school, while parents provide moral support and supervision of learning at home. This synergy is reflected in active communication through parent-teacher meetings, social media groups, and parental involvement in various school activities. However, this collaboration faces several challenges, such as limited time available for parents, a low understanding of the importance of home education, and differences in socioeconomic backgrounds. These findings emphasize the importance of building strategic partnerships between schools and families in shaping students' responsible learning character sustainably in the madrasah environment.

1. Introduction

Character education in Islamic Senior High Schools (MA) plays a strategic role in shaping a generation that excels not only academically but also possesses strong moral integrity. One important character trait that needs to be developed is responsibility for learning, which reflects students' awareness and commitment to the educational process (Feranina & Komala, 2022). However, in reality, many MA students still show a lack of discipline and motivation in learning, which indicates a weak sense of responsibility. According to research (Madrasah & Negeri, 2020),

synergy between teachers and parents is very necessary to foster character values such as discipline and responsibility in the madrasa environment.

As professional educators, teachers play a central role in shaping students' character at school. However, this role cannot be fully realized without the support and active involvement of parents. Collaboration between teachers and parents in educating children is crucial for creating a conducive learning environment that supports students' character development (Nur Alvi Puriamandawati & Jani Jani, 2025). Emphasizing that synergy between teachers and parents is absolutely necessary in teaching and learning activities as well as outside of them to form the character of students who are disciplined and responsible (Fadhlillah et al., 2025).

However, the reality on the ground shows that collaboration between teachers and parents is not yet optimal. Many parents leave character education entirely to the school, while teachers struggle to establish effective communication with all students' guardians. This creates a gap between the expectations of the character curriculum and the reality on the ground (Mahbubi & Husein, 2023) revealed that the synergy between teachers and parents is very important in forming the character of discipline and respect in students, but is often hampered by a lack of effective communication and coordination.

The role of parents in a child's education is crucial, particularly in shaping a responsible character and learning from an early age. The family, as a child's first learning environment, will significantly determine the direction of their personality development, including a responsible attitude toward learning tasks (Ramandhini et al., 2023)Parents play a strategic role in shaping their children's character because they are the primary figures in the early learning process, instilling the values of discipline and responsibility in learning activities. Parents can guide, direct, and motivate children to be aware of completing learning obligations independently and consistently (Sari, N., & Wulandari, 2020).

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا قُوْٓا اَنْفُسَكُمْ وَاَهْلِيْكُمْ نَارًا وَّقُوْدُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلٰۤىِٕكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ لَّا يَعْصُوْنَ اللّٰهَ مَآ اَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُوْنَ مَا يُؤْمَرُوْنَ ٦

Meaning: *O you who believe, protect yourselves and your families from the fire of hell whose fuel is people and stones. Its guardians are rough and tough angels. They did not disobey Allah for what He commanded them and always did what they were ordered to do.* (Qs. At-Tahrim: 6).

Another challenge faced is the difference in parenting styles at home and the educational approach at madrasas. The mismatch in values leaves students confused and inconsistent in demonstrating responsible behavior (Yusu & Sulaiman, 2024)As stated in the study by Feranina and Komala, synergy between the roles of parents and teachers in educating children about their character is essential through good communication between parents and teachers, sharing roles, and having a shared vision for shaping children's character (Feranina & Komala, 2022).

The novelty of this research lies in its effort to explore concrete forms of synergy between teachers and parents contextually at MAN 1 Medan, as well as identifying

challenges that arise in its implementation. While previous studies have focused on the one-sided role of teachers or parents at home, this article focuses on a collaborative and interactional model in shaping students' learning responsibility directly in the madrasah aliyah (Islamic senior high school) environment. This approach is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions to strengthening character education.

This research is important because synergy between teachers and parents is often considered normative without concrete efforts to build a structured collaborative system. Therefore, by analyzing the existing collaboration at MAN 1 Medan, this article seeks to provide a realistic picture and offer recommendations for strengthening students' academically and spiritually responsible character. Based on these problems, this study aims to examine in depth how the synergy between teachers and parents forms the character of students' learning responsibility at MAN 1 Medan, as well as identifying various challenges faced in building a sustainable collaborative model of character education.

2. Methodology

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study conducted at MAN 1 Medan. The purpose of this study is to explore in-depth the forms of synergy between teachers and parents in shaping students' responsible learning character. A qualitative approach was chosen to enable researchers to understand the social reality comprehensively, particularly in the context of educational interactions between schools and families. The case study was chosen because it allows for a more in-depth exploration of the unique and contextual collaborative phenomenon within the madrasah environment (Sugiyono, 2021).

The data used in this study consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with teachers, parents, and students, as well as observations of ongoing collaborative activities, such as parenting school, home visits, and daily communication through class groups. Meanwhile, secondary data were collected from school documents, collaborative program archives, and supporting references from relevant journals and scientific books. The data collection technique used purposive sampling, namely selecting participants who have knowledge and direct involvement in collaborative practices, so that the information obtained is relevant to the research focus (Rukminingsih, 2020).

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model from Miles and Huberman, which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. The researchers first reduced the data from interviews and observations to find important patterns, then presented them in the form of a thematic narrative that describes the form of synergy, obstacles encountered, and its impact on the formation of students' responsible learning character. The research conclusions were drawn inductively based on field findings, which showed that the synergy between teachers and parents at MAN 1 Medan has been proven to have a positive impact on the development of students' responsibility

in learning. However, challenges such as time constraints, different role perceptions, and socioeconomic inequality remain obstacles that need to be addressed. The results of this study are expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions in strengthening character education through a collaborative approach between schools and families.

3. Results and Discussion

During the research period at MAN 1 Medan, the school environment was vibrant and conducive to learning. Students appeared actively engaged in classroom activities, and various school programs promoting character education were regularly implemented. The atmosphere reflected a supportive educational culture where both teachers and students collaborated closely to foster academic achievement and personal growth. The synergy between teachers and parents was characterized by open and frequent communication. Teachers consistently provided updates on students' academic progress and behavior through multiple channels, such as parent-teacher meetings, WhatsApp groups, and direct phone calls. Meanwhile, parents showed a willingness to support school initiatives by supervising their children's learning at home and participating in school-organized events. This collaborative relationship fostered mutual understanding and reinforced the development of responsible learning habits among students.

The research results show that the synergy between teachers and parents at MAN 1 Medan in shaping students' responsible learning character is established through a pattern of communication and cooperation that is quite good. This form of collaboration is evident in several concrete activities, such as regular parent-teacher meetings, parenting school programs, home visits, and daily communication through the class WhatsApp group. Teachers act as character builders in the school environment by habituating the values of discipline, perseverance, and academic responsibility, while parents provide reinforcement at home by accompanying learning, supervising schoolwork, and providing motivation. This two-way interaction forms an educational ecosystem that complements the institutional role of the school and the emotional role of the family.

However, in practice, this collaboration still faces several challenges that require serious attention. Some parents admit to having difficulty balancing their time between work and involvement in their children's education, especially those who work full-time or have heavy household responsibilities. Furthermore, there is a gap in understanding regarding the role of education at home; some parents still believe that primary responsibility for education lies solely with teachers at school. Differences in socioeconomic background also influence the level of parental participation in school activities. Nevertheless, the school continues to strive to build an inclusive approach by adapting communication and engagement methods so that all parents, from various backgrounds, feel connected and valued in the process of educating their children about their character.

In this study, interview data were collected by asking several key questions to informants consisting of teachers and parents. These questions were designed to explore their understanding, communication patterns, and challenges in the synergy between teachers and parents in shaping students' responsible learning character. The details of the interview questions are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Interview Questions for Teachers and Parents

No.	Informant	Interview Questions
1	Teacher	How do teachers play a role in shaping students' learning character at this madrasah?
2	Teacher	How is the communication between teachers and parents regarding students' learning progress?
3	Teacher	What challenges are commonly faced in establishing cooperation with parents?
4	Parent	How do you support your child's learning process at home?
5	Parent	How often do you communicate with teachers about your child's progress?
6	Parent	What obstacles do you face when assisting your child's learning?
7	Teacher & Parent	How do you address differences in socioeconomic backgrounds that affect the synergy?

A. Understanding Learning Responsibilities

Teachers and parents at MAN 1 Medan share a relatively similar understanding of the meaning of responsible learning, which is an important pillar in strengthening student character. Based on interviews and observations, teachers define responsible learning as a form of student self-awareness in carrying out academic obligations independently, including punctual attendance, completing assignments on schedule, active involvement in class discussions, and compliance with school rules. In practice, teachers convey this value not only through formal instruction but also through exemplary behavior, discipline, and consistency in enforcing rules.

Meanwhile, most parents define learning responsibility as a child's ability to manage their own learning activities independently without constant reminders. They consider a responsible child to be one who can create their own study schedule, recognizes the importance of education, and demonstrates initiative in completing assignments even without pressure. Parents interviewed stated that when a child demonstrates consistent learning behavior without being told, it is an indicator that the value of responsibility has begun to be ingrained.

This shared understanding between teachers and parents is a crucial foundation for building harmonious synergy. With a shared vision, the educational patterns implemented at school can be continued and reinforced at home. This prevents value dissonance the clash of values that often arises when children receive different messages at school and at home. When both parties internalize the meaning of responsibility in the same way, character can be formed consistently and comprehensively (Rantauwati, 2020).

Thus, teachers at MAN 1 Medan strive to instill a sense of responsibility through a thematic approach to the learning process, assignments that encourage self-

reflection, and appreciation for students who demonstrate progress. Meanwhile, parents reinforce these traits by providing a comfortable learning space, establishing disciplined study times, and providing rewards and corrections with a constructive approach. The collaboration that occurs is not mechanistic, but rather synergistic, where the roles of teachers and parents complement each other within the framework of developing students' holistic character (Handayani & Hasrul, 2021).

With a shared understanding of learning responsibilities, the synergy between teachers and parents at MAN 1 Medan serves not only as administrative support for education but has evolved into a substantive partnership in character development. This reinforces the hope that education is not solely the responsibility of the school, but also a shared commitment between the school and the family in developing a generation that is academically and morally responsible. This understanding is also based on the religious approach instilled in schools. Teachers link the values of responsibility to Islamic teachings, such as trustworthiness and honesty, for example through verses in Surah An-Nisa, verse 58.

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Meaning: *Indeed, Allah commands you to convey the trust to its owner. When you establish laws between people, you must establish them fairly. Indeed, Allah gives you the best teaching. Indeed, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing*.

The above verse emphasizes the importance of fulfilling one's mandate. This makes responsibility for learning not just about grades or assignments, but also part of a student's Islamic integrity. In interviews, teachers also mentioned that students who understand the meaning of responsibility will show progress, not only academically but also in their attitudes. Meanwhile, students who receive less support from home tend to be more passive and lack internal motivation.(Saputri et al., 2024)Therefore, it is crucial for teachers and parents to align their perspectives from the beginning of the school year. Synergy built on this strong understanding will result in a sustainable pattern of character development. School and home become two complementary spaces in shaping a generation that is responsible, independent, and ready to face challenges.

B. Concrete Forms of Collaboration between Teachers and Parents

The synergy between teachers and parents at MAN 1 Medan is not merely a matter of good intentions, but has been realized in the form of systematic and ongoing collaboration. Based on research and direct field observations, the author found that this collaboration is built through various strategic programs designed to align student parenting and character development between the school and home environments. Regular parent-teacher meetings provide a formal space for teachers and parents to exchange information, evaluate student progress, and align perceptions regarding educational approaches. Furthermore, informal communication through the class WhatsApp group is an effective means of quickly

and openly conveying important information about assignments, attendance, and student behavior in class. Through this platform, parents can respond directly and take early action if they detect signs of decreased responsibility for learning in their children.

One of the most impactful forms of collaboration is the home visit program. Based on the author's observations, this activity allows teachers to directly observe the social conditions and learning environment of students at home and to engage in personal dialogue with parents. Through these visits, teachers can understand students' emotional backgrounds, economic backgrounds, and habits outside of school, which are often determining factors in developing a responsible learning character. From observations, many teachers stated that home visits often serve as a key moment to open previously closed lines of communication. Parents feel valued and are more open in expressing the obstacles or difficulties they face in supporting their children's learning at home. This strengthens the emotional connection and fosters two-way trust between teachers and parents.

The parenting school program is also a concrete manifestation of this highly influential synergy. In this program, parents are provided with training and guidance on how to support their adolescents with a positive and constructive approach.(Nafisah et al., 2023)The authors noted that the parenting materials provided included effective communication techniques, instilling non-violent discipline, and how to provide psychological support for children experiencing academic stress. Several parents interviewed admitted that they only realized the importance of their role in shaping their children's character after participating in these activities. They no longer viewed education solely as the responsibility of teachers, but began to actively participate in creating a conducive learning environment at home. As a result, students demonstrated improvements in independence, discipline, and sensitivity to academic responsibilities.(Setiaji & Sarmawati, 2024).

In addition to face-to-face activities, daily communication through the class WhatsApp group has also proven to be an effective medium for fostering synergy. The author's observations indicate that information conveyed by teachers, including assignment announcements, late notes, and appreciation for student progress, is readily available to parents. In some cases, this communication prevents delays in intervention for students who are starting to lose motivation or are not completing their assignments. Some students even report being more disciplined knowing that their teachers and parents are coordinating to monitor their learning progress. This demonstrates that intensive digital communication can strengthen supervision and character development, even without face-to-face interaction. In this study, various forms of collaboration between teachers and parents were analyzed to understand how this synergy is established and maintained. These forms of collaboration can be seen more clearly in Figure 1.

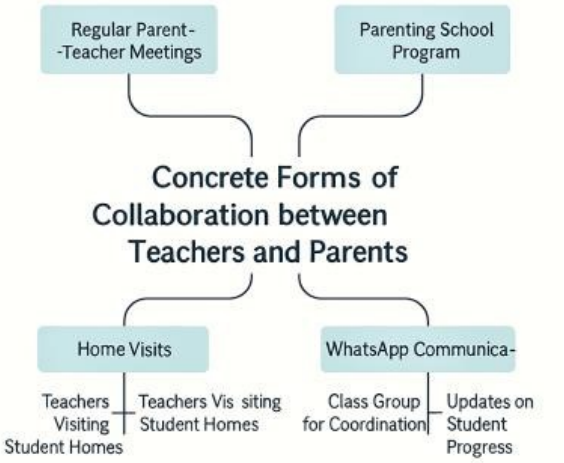

Figure 1. Forms of Collaboration between Teachers and Parents

The image above shows concrete forms of collaboration between teachers and parents that have been implemented to support the development of students' responsible learning character. Through parent-teacher meetings, parenting school programs, home visits, and communication via WhatsApp, this collaboration serves as a crucial bridge in building synergy between the school and family environments. Each form of collaboration plays a strategic role in strengthening the overall monitoring and development of students' character, both academically and morally, thereby creating a consistent and harmonious learning environment across both environments.

C. Impact of Collaboration on Student Learning Responsibility

Based on observations and interviews conducted by the author at MAN 1 Medan, one of the most obvious positive impacts of the synergy between teachers and parents is the increased awareness of students in carrying out their learning responsibilities. Students who receive attention and support from both teachers at school and parents at home demonstrate more disciplined, structured learning behavior, and are more motivated to achieve academic goals. In daily classroom interactions, the author observed that these students are better prepared for lessons, more active in discussions, and rarely late or forget to do assignments. They have better self-control and are able to manage their study time independently, which indicates the consistent development of a responsible character.

Interviews with several students corroborated these observations. Students stated that they felt more cared for and appreciated when both teachers and parents showed involvement in their learning process. This mutual attention and guidance provided a powerful psychological boost and made them feel less alone in facing academic challenges. Students also reported becoming more serious, more careful in completing assignments, and less prone to procrastination. In fact, when they received reprimands from teachers or parents, they did not feel pressured but instead

understood the reprimand as a sign of concern and care. Appreciation from both parties, even in simple forms like praise or recognition, served as an additional source of motivation to continue improving and studying harder.

In contrast, in observations of students who received less parental attention, the authors found striking differences in their learning attitudes. These students tended to neglect assignments more often, lacked discipline, and exhibited low levels of self-confidence in class. They also exhibited a more passive attitude, both in discussions and in other academic responsibilities. This lack of communication between home and school led students to feel that their learning process was solely a private matter that did not require supervision or support. This indicates that the absence of parental involvement, despite teachers' best efforts at school, still had a significant impact on the development of students' learning character.

Thus, from the author's field findings, it can be concluded that success in developing a responsible learning character in students is largely determined by the strength of the synergy between teachers and parents. When this collaboration is active and balanced, the impact is felt not only in academic achievement but also in the development of independent, disciplined, and resilient student character in facing learning challenges. This collaboration is not only technical but also creates a healthy and supportive psychological space for students, ultimately shaping them into individuals who are ready to face the future with integrity and a strong sense of responsibility. The positive impact of this collaboration on student responsibility and overall learning outcomes can be seen more clearly in Figure 2.

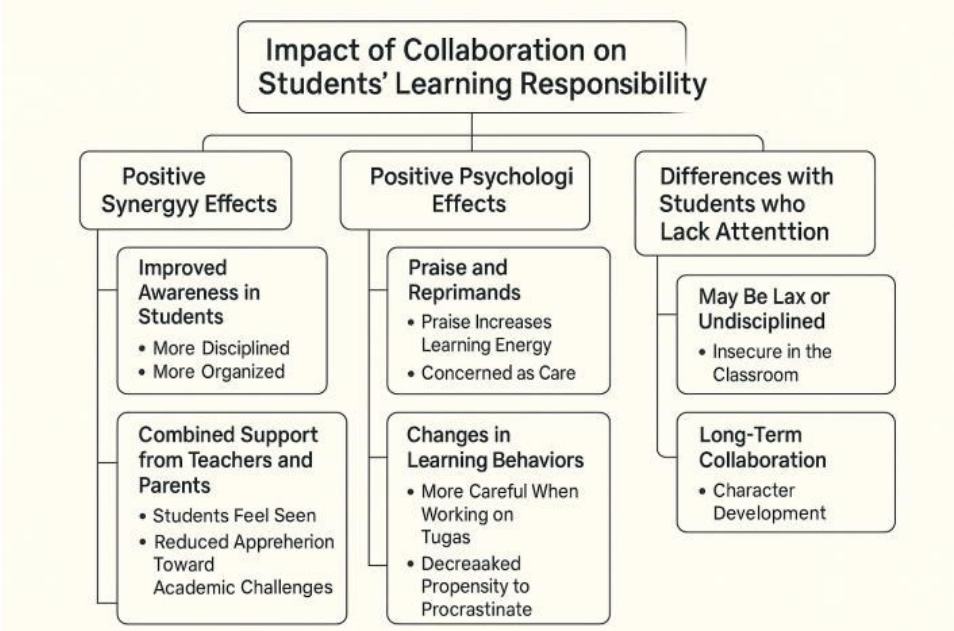

Figure 2. Impact of Collaboration and Student Learning Responsibility

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The image above clearly illustrates that collaboration between teachers and parents has a significant impact on fostering students' sense of responsibility for learning. The resulting synergy can increase students' awareness of being more disciplined and organized, and they feel cared for through dual support from home and school. Positive psychological effects also emerge in the form of constructive appreciation and reprimands, which then encourage changes in learning behavior for the better. Conversely, students who receive less attention from this collaboration tend to be more easily distracted, lack self-confidence, and struggle to develop strong learning character. Therefore, ongoing and targeted collaboration is key to creating an educational environment that focuses not only on academics but also on developing responsible character.

D. Challenges and Efforts to Overcome Barriers to Collaboration

Based on initial observations at MAN 1 Medan, the synergy between teachers and parents in shaping students' responsible learning character has demonstrated a fairly active collaborative effort. It appears that most teachers have established regular communication with parents, both through face-to-face meetings and digital media such as WhatsApp. Several activities, such as parenting school and home visits, have also begun to be implemented periodically to build closer relationships. However, in their implementation, various obstacles remain that hinder the effectiveness of this collaboration. One of the most prominent is the low level of participation of some parents in school activities, reflected in their absence from official forums or a lack of response to teacher communications.

Observations also indicate that many parents are unable to consistently devote time to their children's educational activities. This is due to various factors, primarily their heavy workloads and household responsibilities. Teachers frequently complain about a lack of response to messages sent through class group messages, and in some cases, parents fail to respond to important information about student progress. Furthermore, some parents tend to believe that educational matters are solely the responsibility of the school. This attitude leads to a lack of continuity between character development at home and at school, preventing students from fully reinforcing the value of responsibility.

Observations also noted that communication limitations stem not only from parents but also from time constraints and teachers' workloads. Although teachers strive to maintain active communication, they are not always able to reach all parents individually, especially in classes with large numbers of students. In this situation, the relationship between teachers and parents becomes uneven; only some parents are active and responsive, while others tend to be passive. This certainly impacts students' levels of discipline and motivation to learn, as evidenced by differences in student participation and responsibility in class.

To address these challenges, the school is developing various strategies for a more flexible and humane approach. For example, by extending personal invitations to parents who rarely attend, scheduling discussions around parents' free time, and designing parenting activities that are packaged in an engaging and applicable

manner. This approach is designed not only to build technical engagement but also to foster a collective awareness that character education cannot be the responsibility of one party alone. By building mutual trust and shared responsibility, the school hopes that communication and collaboration patterns will be more intensive and have a direct impact on student character development, particularly in terms of learning responsibility.(Cahyani et al., 2021).

When compared with the findings in the study(Khotibatul Ulya & Cholimah, 2024)Regarding parental involvement in character education for elementary school students in Yogyakarta, there are similarities in the challenges faced, such as minimal involvement due to work factors. However, the approaches taken are quite different. Yuliana emphasized the importance of involving parents in more relaxed, informal, community-based activities, such as neighborhood meetings or parents' religious study groups. Meanwhile, at MAN 1 Medan, the collaborative approach tends to be formal and structured through official school programs. This comparison shows that the sociocultural context significantly influences the forms of interaction and collaborative strategies that can be implemented. Therefore, the strategies used need to be adapted to the characteristics of the community so that the synergy between schools and families is truly effective in shaping students' responsible learning character.

4. Conclusion

The results of this study show that the synergy between teachers and parents at MAN 1 Medan has become a key factor in developing students' responsible learning character. This collaboration is evident in various forms, such as parent-teacher meetings, parenting programs, home visits, and consistent digital communication. Teachers take an active role as academic mentors and character builders, while parents act as primary companions at home, ensuring discipline and consistent learning habits. A shared understanding between both parties regarding the value of responsibility has contributed to a positive and sustainable learning atmosphere, reflected in students' higher motivation, greater independence, and stronger accountability in their academic duties. However, building and maintaining this synergy is not without challenges. Limited parental availability, passive involvement from certain parents, and unequal access to communication tools often hinder the smooth flow of collaboration. These findings highlight the need for more flexible, inclusive, and participatory strategies, including personal approaches, open dialogue forums, and parent education programs. With continued commitment and innovation, the existing collaboration at MAN 1 Medan has the potential to serve as a strong and adaptable model for fostering a generation that excels academically while carrying a deep sense of responsibility and resilience for the future.

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