

Teacher and Parent Collaboration in Developing Children's Spiritual Intelligence at RA Zahro Salim Panyabungan

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the forms of collaboration between teachers and parents in developing children's spiritual intelligence at RA Zahro Salim Panyabungan, the implementation of collaborative programs, supporting and inhibiting factors, and efforts made to maintain the continuity of spiritual habituation. This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. Data were collected through observation, interviews with the head of the madrasah, teachers, and parents, as well as documentation of school activities. Data analysis was conducted through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was tested using source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking. The results show that collaboration between teachers and parents is carried out through regular communication, joint habituation planning, religious activities, communication books, child development consultations, parent meetings, and guidance of spiritual activities at home. The development of spiritual intelligence includes modeling, habituation of prayer, performing salah, memorizing short surahs, expressing gratitude, sharing, honesty, maintaining cleanliness, apologizing, and showing care. Collaboration strengthens value consistency between school and home, increases children's engagement, and helps teachers understand each child's background. Obstacles include limited parental time, differences in parenting styles, uneven communication, and inconsistency of habituation at home. The study concludes that dialogic, planned, flexible, and continuous collaboration can strengthen children's spiritual intelligence development. Its success depends on shared goals, adult role modeling, two-way communication, and joint evaluation of child development.

Keywords: *teacher-parent collaboration, spiritual intelligence, early childhood*

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Introduction

Early childhood education is the initial stage that plays a crucial role in determining a child's development in the subsequent levels of education. At this stage, children experience a very rapid phase of growth in physical, cognitive, social-emotional, language, as well as religious and moral aspects. One of the important aspects that needs to be developed from an early age is spiritual intelligence. Spiritual intelligence serves as a foundation for children to understand life values, distinguish between good and bad behavior, build awareness of God's existence, and develop positive attitudes in daily life (Budiyanti, N., Komariah, K. S., Parhan, M., Islamy, M. R. F., & Nugraha, 2022).

Spiritual intelligence in early childhood does not emerge instantly, but develops through continuous habituation processes. Children learn from what they see, hear, and experience in their surrounding environment. Therefore, the development of children's spiritual intelligence cannot be solely the responsibility of educational institutions, but also requires active involvement from families, especially parents (Mhd. Habibu Rahman, 2024). Schools and families are the two main environments that significantly influence the formation of children's character and habits.

In the context of early childhood education, teachers play roles as educators, role models, guides, and facilitators in instilling spiritual values in children. Teachers do not only teach prayers, worship practices, and exemplary stories, but also instill values such as honesty, patience, responsibility, gratitude, and care (Basori, 2024). However, these values will be more strongly embedded when reinforced within the family environment. This is where collaboration between teachers and parents becomes essential.

In early childhood education studies, teacher-parent collaboration is understood as a broader partnership than merely providing information about a child's development (Mastiana Nainggolan, 2023). (Khotimah & Zulkarnaen, 2023) show that parental involvement in early childhood programs includes various forms, such as parenting education, social support, home visits, center-based learning activities, and opportunities for parents to be directly involved in the child's educational process. In line with this, (Mahfuzhah et al., 2022) emphasize that parental involvement in preschool institutions is an important source for shaping parenting patterns and parents' understanding of child development; meaning that school-family partnerships should be directed toward aligning goals, building shared practices, and ensuring continuity of stimulation, not merely administrative communication.

Several studies also show that the quality of teacher-parent relationships is closely related to child development. (Ayun, 2017) found that family-school relationships at the preschool level are positively associated with children's social development, where the frequency of contact and the quality of teacher-parent relationships are linked to better classroom behavior and improved adaptive learning abilities.

Teacher-parent collaboration is not merely formal communication regarding child development, but also includes cooperation in aligning educational goals, building consistent habits, and creating an environment that supports children's spiritual growth (Zannatunnisya, Abdi Syahril Harahap, Asmidar Parapat, 2024). When teachers habituate children to pray before learning at school, parents should also reinforce the same habit at home. When schools instill politeness values, families must serve as real-life examples in daily practice. Without continuity between school and home education, the development of children's spiritual intelligence may not progress optimally.

RA Zahro Salim Panyabungan, as a religious-based early childhood education institution, plays a strategic role in instilling spiritual values in students. The learning process at RA does not only emphasize basic academic skills, but also aims to shape religious behavior and good morals in children. In practice, the development of spiritual intelligence requires parental support so that habituation carried out at school can be continued at home. Such support may include assisting children in worship, habituating prayer recitation, providing role models,

supervising children's behavior, and maintaining active communication with teachers regarding child development.

However, in practice, collaboration between teachers and parents does not always run ideally. Differences in parenting styles, limited parental time, lack of communication intensity, and differing understandings of spiritual education can become obstacles in building effective synergy. On the other hand, there are also supporting factors such as teacher commitment, parental openness, structured school programs, and a religious culture developed within the institution.

Based on this description, this study is important to conduct in order to gain a deeper understanding of how teacher-parent collaboration contributes to the development of children's spiritual intelligence at RA Zahro Salim Panyabungan. This research focuses on the forms of collaboration implemented, the strategies used in children's spiritual development, as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors encountered. Thus, the findings are expected to contribute to strengthening the synergy between schools and families in early childhood education.

Literature Review

2.1 Teacher and Parent Collaboration

Collaboration is a form of cooperation between two or more parties to achieve common goals. In the context of education, teacher-parent collaboration refers to a partnership built to support the optimal development of children (Hajeni, Rahmatia, Marhani, 2022). Teachers and parents have different responsibilities, but they complement each other. Teachers play a role in educating children in the school environment, while parents are the first and primary educators within the family (Mhd. Habibu Rahman, 2020).

Teacher-parent collaboration can be realized through intensive communication, parental involvement in school activities, monitoring of children's development, and mutual agreements regarding habituation practices and rules applied to children. A good relationship between teachers and parents creates continuity between home and school education, allowing children to gain consistent learning experiences.

In early childhood education, collaboration becomes increasingly important because children are at a developmental stage that is highly influenced by their immediate environment. Early childhood learners tend to learn through imitation and habituation. Therefore, when teachers and parents share the same vision in educating children, the process of value internalization becomes easier to achieve.

2.2 Spiritual Intelligence in Children

Spiritual intelligence is the ability of an individual to understand the meaning of life, recognize values of goodness, build a relationship with God, and guide behavior based on moral and spiritual values (Damayanti & Solihin, 2019). In early childhood, spiritual intelligence is reflected in simple behaviors such as knowing daily prayers, enjoying worship activities, showing politeness, honesty, sharing with peers, respecting others, and expressing gratitude.

Spiritual intelligence in children is not only related to religious rituals, but also includes the formation of conscience, empathy, discipline, responsibility, and awareness of doing good (Mutiarasari & Isnaeni, 2024). In other words, spiritual intelligence becomes the foundation for the development of moral character and behavior from an early age.

The development of spiritual intelligence should be carried out using methods appropriate to the child's developmental stage. Early childhood learners more easily understand spiritual values through role modeling, habituation, storytelling, educational play, Islamic songs, and direct experiences. Therefore, both school and family environments must be able to create conditions that support the natural and enjoyable growth of spiritual values (Mahfuzhah et al., 2022).

The development of children's spiritual intelligence can be implemented through various activities integrated into daily life. In the school environment, these activities may include the habit of reciting prayers before and after activities, simple worship practices, memorizing short surahs, listening to stories of the prophets, and practicing greetings, queueing, honesty, and helping others. Meanwhile, at home, parents may continue these habits through daily behavior modeling, accompanying children in prayer, encouraging children to perform salah, teaching gratitude, and fostering politeness within the family.

The success of spiritual intelligence development is highly influenced by consistency. Spiritual values taught at school need to be reinforced at home, and vice versa. If children only receive habituation in one environment, their spiritual development tends to be less stable. Conversely, when school and family move in the same direction, children will more easily understand and internalize these spiritual values.

Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach with a field research design. The research was conducted at RA Zahro Salim Panyabungan, focusing on the collaboration between teachers and parents in developing children's spiritual intelligence. The research subjects included the head of the RA, classroom teachers, and parents of students, who were selected using a purposive sampling technique because they were considered to have direct knowledge of and involvement in the process of children's spiritual habituation. The data used in this study consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through observation and interviews, while secondary data were collected from supporting documents such as the institution's profile, religious habituation programs, activity schedules, and other documentation relevant to the study.

Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to directly examine children's spiritual habituation activities at school. Interviews were conducted to obtain information from the head of the RA, teachers, and parents regarding the forms of collaboration, strategies used, and challenges faced. Documentation was used to complement the research data. Data analysis was conducted interactively through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was ensured using source triangulation and technique triangulation, which involved comparing data from various informants and cross-checking it with the results of observations, interviews, and documentation to ensure that the data obtained were valid and reliable.

Results

3.1 Teachers' and Parents' Understanding of Children's Spiritual Intelligence

Research results show that teachers and parents understand spiritual intelligence as a child's ability to know God, practice religious customs, distinguish between good and bad behavior, and demonstrate a positive attitude in daily life. This understanding is not solely oriented towards memorizing prayers or short surahs. Teachers and parents also consider honesty, gratitude, caring, patience, responsibility, and respect for others as indicators of a child's spiritual development.

This understanding aligns with the Foundation Phase Learning Outcomes, which place religious values and morals as a key element of early childhood education. Children are guided to understand the basic teachings of religion, maintain cleanliness and health as a form of gratitude, and respect themselves, others, and the environment. Teachers view the development of spiritual intelligence as a gradual process. Children are not yet required to understand abstract religious concepts. Children are first encouraged to identify with religious activities, follow examples, practice them, and develop habits. Once habits are established, teachers begin to provide simple explanations of the meaning of these actions.

Parents also understand that spiritual intelligence cannot develop through instruction alone. Children need examples they can see every day. Therefore, the behavior of teachers and parents is a crucial part of the process of developing spiritual intelligence. Collaboration at RA Zahro Salim Panyabungan is planned through alignment of goals between the school and the family. At the beginning of the semester, teachers present the learning program, targets for the development of religious and moral values, and forms of support parents can provide at home.

This planning positions parents as partners, not simply recipients of information. The family-to-education partnership model also emphasizes the need for parental involvement as full partners in the development of children's character and morals. Teachers develop simple activities that can be replicated at home. For example, when the school introduces the pre-meal prayer, parents are asked to practice the same prayer when their children eat with the family. When the school discusses sharing behavior, parents can involve their children when giving food to siblings or neighbors.

3.1 Routine Communication between Teachers and Parents

Communication is the most frequent form of collaboration. Teachers and parents exchange information about their children's behavior, habits, development, and difficulties. Communication occurs in several ways. First, direct communication when children arrive or leave school. Second, communication through messaging groups. Third, a contact book. Fourth, parent-teacher meetings. Fifth, individual consultations for children who need special support.

Communication isn't limited to when a child is experiencing problems. Teachers also share positive developments so parents are aware of emerging abilities. For example, teachers provide information when a child begins to take the lead in prayer, help a friend, or admit a mistake. Two-way communication helps teachers gain insight into children's habits at home. Teachers can determine whether children are following the same habits, experiencing specific difficulties, or exhibiting behavioral changes. This information helps teachers adjust their approach at school. Active collaboration between teachers and parents strengthens the continuity of religious values. Recent research also shows that parental involvement helps maintain consistency in character and spiritual education between the school and home environments.

3.3 Forms of Collaboration

a. Teacher and Parental Role Modeling

Role modeling is a key strategy in developing spiritual intelligence. Teachers set an example through their speech, worship, maintaining cleanliness, respecting children, apologizing, and showing concern. Parents continue this role modeling at home. Children are encouraged to observe their parents praying, reciting the Quran, giving alms, and treating family members with kindness. Modeling helps children understand that spiritual values extend beyond school.

Adult behavior has a strong influence because young children learn through observation and imitation. Research in early childhood education shows that parental role modeling plays a role in the formation of children's moral values, religion, and religious identity (Latifah Hannum, 2022). Consistent role modeling also prevents conflicting messages. Children can experience confusion if the school teaches patience, but adults at home frequently use harsh language (Cahyaningrum et al., 2017). Therefore, collaboration needs to include an agreement regarding the behaviors displayed to children.

b. Integrated Religious Habits

Teachers and parents develop spiritual intelligence through repeated practices. Habits at school include greeting, reciting prayers, memorizing short surahs, participating in congregational prayers, maintaining cleanliness, sharing, expressing gratitude, and

apologizing. Parents continue these activities at home. Children are encouraged to recite prayers before bed, upon waking, before meals, after meals, and when traveling. Children are also involved in family worship activities.

Habits are developed gradually. Teachers do not immediately demand that children perform all activities independently. Children are first encouraged to imitate, do the activities together, and then given the opportunity to try them themselves. Continuous habituation can help children develop religious and moral behavior. Research on instilling religious attitudes in early childhood shows that habituation at school, home, and in the community needs to be carried out consistently by all parties involved in the child's life (Mhd. Habibu Rahman, Sofni Indah Arifa Lubis, 2023).

c. Joint Religious Activities

Collaboration is also realized through religious activities involving the family. These activities can include prayer practices, Islamic holiday commemorations, Ramadan activities, charity giving, food sharing, social visits, and religious competitions. Joint activities provide parents with the opportunity to directly observe the learning process. Parents not only receive reports but also participate in their children's educational experiences.

In sharing activities, teachers can ask parents to prepare simple meals with their children. Children then bring the food and give it to friends or members of the community in need. Teachers explain that sharing is an expression of gratitude and caring. Activities are not directed at competitive outcomes. The primary focus is on experience, involvement, and meaning. Children are given the opportunity to understand that worship is related to caring for others.

d. Storytelling and Reflective Dialogue

Teachers use stories to introduce spiritual values. Stories can discuss the story of the prophet, an honest child, sharing behavior, gratitude, or responsibility. After the story is finished, teachers engage children in dialogue. Questions are presented in simple language, such as:

- 1) What did the character in the story do?
- 2) Why did the character help his friend?
- 3) How did the person being helped feel?
- 4) What can the child do at home?
- 5) What actions are pleasing to God?

Parents can repeat this method at home through bedtime stories. Teachers recommend themes or books that align with the school material. Reflective dialogue helps children not only remember the story but also connect it to their experiences. Children begin to learn to recognize feelings, reasons for actions, and the impact of their behavior on others. Teachers and parents reinforce behaviors that demonstrate spiritual development. Reinforcement can take the form of praise, hugs, smiles, opportunities to lead prayers, or special attention. Praise is specific. Teachers don't just say "great child," but explain the action they appreciate. For example, "You honestly admitted your mistake," or "You shared with your friends."

The same reinforcement continues at home. Parents reward children when they pray without being reminded, help family members, or maintain cleanliness. Teachers remind parents not to always use material rewards. Excessive rewards can encourage children to do

good deeds simply to receive rewards. Reinforcement is aimed at fostering awareness that good behavior benefits both themselves and others.

3.4 Factors Supporting and Inhibiting Collaboration

Research results indicate several supporting factors.

First, commitment from teachers and parents. Both parties share the same goal of developing spiritual habits in children. Second, open communication. Parents find it easy to communicate their children's progress and challenges. Third, a clear school program. Parents are more easily involved when the school explains the goals, activities, and expected roles. Fourth, a religious school environment. Routines, visual media, prayer equipment, and teacher behavior support the formation of spiritual experiences. Fifth, simple and flexible activities. Parents can implement activities according to family circumstances. Sixth, leadership from the madrasah principal. The madrasah principal facilitates communication and provides support for the partnership program.

Meanwhile, the inhibiting factors are:

The first barrier is parents' limited time. Some parents have jobs and activities that make regular involvement difficult. The second barrier is differences in parenting styles. Some families implement structured habits, while others don't do so consistently. The third barrier is uneven communication. Not all parents actively read messages, attend meetings, or provide feedback. The fourth barrier is differences in understanding of spiritual intelligence. Some parents still judge spiritual development solely by memorizing prayers and the ability to recite the surah. The fifth barrier is the use of digital devices. Uncontrolled screen time can reduce family interaction and time spent doing activities together. The sixth barrier is the tendency to place excessive demands. Some parents compare their children's abilities with those of their peers, causing the children to feel stressed.

Teachers overcome parents' limited time by providing simple activities. Habitual practices don't have to last long. Parents can develop spiritual intelligence through eating, playing, traveling, and resting. Teachers use multiple communication channels to ensure information is received evenly. Important information is conveyed through groups, contact books, and direct communication.

For parents unable to attend the meeting, the teacher provides a summary of the activities. The teacher also offers flexible consultation times. The teacher emphasizes that spiritual development is not a competition. Children develop at different rates. Emphasis is placed on positive emotional processes, habits, and experiences. To address the dominance of device use, the teacher encourages families to create screen-free time, especially during meals, worship, and communication.

Conclusion

Collaboration between teachers and parents at RA Zahro Salim Panyabungan plays a crucial role in developing children's spiritual intelligence. Collaboration is implemented through regular communication, a shared habituation program, joint religious activities, a liaison book, developmental consultations, home support, and joint evaluations. Developing spiritual intelligence is not limited to memorizing prayers and short surahs. Teachers and parents also foster gratitude, honesty, caring, responsibility, patience, cleanliness, and self-control. Modeling is the primary foundation. Children need consistent examples from teachers and parents. Habits reinforce behavior through repetition. Stories and dialogue help children understand meaning. Joint activities provide concrete spiritual experiences.

Collaboration supports educational continuity between school and home. Teachers gain insight into children's behavior within the family. Parents understand how the school fosters spiritual values. This exchange of information helps both parties develop support tailored to

their children's needs. Factors supporting collaboration include shared commitment, open communication, a clear school program, a religious environment, flexible activities, and support from the principal. Barriers include limited parental time, differing parenting styles, uneven communication, inconsistent habits, dominant device use, and excessive demands.

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