



# Bridging Home and School: Communication Management Strategies of Islamic Institution for Fatherless Children

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## ABSTRACT

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Communication Management, Islamic Education, Fatherless Children, Character Education

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This study aims to examine how Islamic educational institutions manage communication with single-parent families to support family-based Islamic education for fatherless children. Fatherlessness has become an urgent social and educational issue because the absence of paternal involvement may weaken children's moral guidance, emotional security, and religious value formation. In Islamic educational contexts, this condition requires structured school-family collaboration to sustain character education beyond the classroom. This study employed a qualitative case study design in three Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis, and analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The first finding shows that intensive value-based communication enables schools to monitor children's behavioral and religious development. The second finding reveals that participatory parental engagement strengthens single mothers' parenting capacity through consultation, religious programs, and character guidance. The third finding indicates that value synchronization between school and home functions as a moral contract for character formation. These findings contribute to Islamic educational management by proposing an adaptive communication-education partnership model. Practically, the study offers guidance for schools in supporting fatherless children and single-parent families.

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## INTRODUCTION

Fatherlessness has increasingly become a serious social and educational concern because the absence of paternal involvement affects not only family structure but also children's moral development, emotional security, and religious socialization. In many societies, the father is not merely an economic

provider but also a moral guide, disciplinary reference, and symbolic figure of authority within the family. When this role is absent or weakly performed, children may experience fragmented guidance, reduced emotional stability, and inconsistent value formation. This issue becomes even more significant in Islamic educational contexts, where family-based religious education is regarded as the primary foundation for character formation. Prior scholarship has shown that fatherlessness needs to be understood not only as physical absence but also as limited paternal engagement in children's daily development (Hidayati & Sugiarto, 2025). Therefore, examining how Islamic educational institutions support fatherless children is important because schools can potentially become complementary moral ecosystems that strengthen family-based Islamic education.

The general problem underlying this study is the limited capacity of single-parent families, particularly single mothers, to sustain consistent moral and religious education without adequate institutional support. Single mothers often shoulder multiple responsibilities as economic providers, emotional caregivers, and primary educators for their children. This situation may create difficulties in monitoring children's worship discipline, emotional regulation, social behavior, and character development. In Islamic education, these difficulties are not merely private family matters; they are part of broader social concerns related to the continuity of religious values across generations. Studies on parent teacher partnership suggest that effective collaboration between schools and families can strengthen educational inclusion and improve the continuity of learning support beyond classroom boundaries (Abdullah, 2025). However, in fatherless family contexts, such collaboration requires more than ordinary parental involvement; it requires adaptive communication, emotional sensitivity, and structured institutional assistance.

The field phenomenon observed in this study indicates that Islamic educational institutions have begun to respond to the needs of fatherless children through routine communication, consultation forums, parenting programs, and shared character guidance. Schools use digital platforms, particularly WhatsApp, to communicate about children's character development to parents and to provide personal messages when children show behavioral or emotional changes. Some institutions also conduct face-to-face consultation sessions for single mothers and involve them in religious activities and character-building programs. Such practices reflect the emergence of adaptive school-based support for families with incomplete parental structures. This phenomenon is consistent with studies emphasizing the need for Islamic schools to build public trust through adaptive curriculum and responsive institutional management (Baharun et al., 2022). It also resonates with research on Islamic parenting models

that highlight the importance of institutional care, value-based guidance, and collaborative religious formation for vulnerable children (Mahfud et al., 2023).

Previous literature has contributed substantially to the understanding of Islamic education, father involvement, and family-school collaboration. Studies on fatherlessness have clarified the theological and psychological significance of paternal engagement in children's development (Hidayati & Sugiarto, 2025). Research on Islamic education has also shown that community-based religious institutions can play a strategic role in strengthening moral learning, social responsibility, and religious participation (Nawawi et al., 2025). In addition, scholarship on child-friendly management in Islamic boarding schools emphasizes the importance of safe, supportive, and value-oriented institutional environments for children's holistic development (Izzah et al., 2025). These studies provide an important foundation for understanding the relationship between Islamic institutions and children's character formation. Nevertheless, most of them do not specifically examine how communication management functions as a mechanism for supporting single mothers and fatherless children in daily educational practice.

Another stream of literature has examined Islamic character education, pesantren value maintenance, teacher competence, and pedagogical innovation. Research on pesantren management demonstrates that Islamic institutions preserve core religious values through adaptive and innovative management practices (Basori et al., 2023). Studies on early childhood Islamic education also emphasize that character development requires systematic habituation, moral modeling, and value reinforcement from early stages of learning (S. et al., 2023). Meanwhile, research on teacher pedagogical competence and learning innovation indicates that educators need adaptive strategies to strengthen students' literacy, participation, and value-based learning experiences (Dewi et al., 2025). Although these studies are valuable, they tend to focus on curriculum, pedagogy, or institutional management in general. They have not sufficiently explained how communication among schools, teachers, and single mothers becomes a relational infrastructure for sustaining Islamic character education in fatherless family contexts.

The novelty of this study lies in its effort to conceptualize school family communication as an adaptive communication education partnership model for fatherless child development in Islamic educational settings. Rather than treating communication as a technical medium for information exchange, this study positions communication as a moral, relational, and institutional mechanism that connects school-based Islamic education with home-based character formation. The proposed model consists of three interconnected dimensions: intensive value-based communication, participatory parental engagement, and value

synchronization between school and home. These dimensions offer a more integrated explanation of how Islamic educational institutions may compensate for the absence of paternal involvement without replacing the family itself. This study therefore, advances the discussion from the issue of fatherlessness as a family deficit toward the construction of institutional partnership as a form of educational resilience.

Based on this background, the research problem addressed in this study is how Islamic educational institutions manage communication with single-parent families to support family-based Islamic education for fatherless children. The central argument is that effective communication management enables schools to become strategic partners for single mothers by providing moral monitoring, parenting support, and value alignment between school and home. This study argues that fatherless child development cannot be adequately supported through classroom instruction alone; it requires an integrated partnership that connects teachers, parents, institutional programs, and religious values. The contribution of this study is twofold. Theoretically, it offers a conceptual model that links communication management, Islamic character education, and fatherless family support. Practically, it provides an institutional framework for schools seeking to assist single mothers in sustaining children's religious and moral development.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study employed a qualitative case study design to examine how Islamic educational institutions manage communication with single-parent families in supporting family-based Islamic education for fatherless children. A case study design was considered appropriate because the research sought to understand a contemporary social and educational phenomenon within its real-life institutional context, particularly the relational practices, communication mechanisms, and value-based interactions between schools and single mothers (Yin, 2018). The qualitative approach enabled the researcher to capture participants' lived experiences, institutional practices, and contextual meanings that could not be adequately explained through numerical measurement alone (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, this design was selected to provide an in-depth and holistic understanding of communication management as practiced in Islamic educational settings.

The research was conducted in three Islamic educational institutions located in Bogor, West Java, Indonesia. These institutions were selected purposively because they had implemented school parent partnership programs for at least two years and had practical experience in assisting students from fatherless or structurally incomplete families. Purposive sampling was used because the study required participants who possessed direct knowledge and

experience relevant to the research focus (Patton, 2015). The study involved 17 primary informants, consisting of three school or madrasah principals coded as PS1 PS3, six teachers or homeroom teachers coded as T1 T6, and eight single mothers coded as SM1 SM8. In addition, five students from fatherless families were included as observation subjects and coded as S1 S5. This coding system was applied to protect participants' identities while maintaining analytical clarity and traceability throughout the research process.

Data were collected through three complementary techniques: semi-structured in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. Interviews were conducted with principals, teachers, and single mothers to explore their experiences, perceptions, and strategies in managing communication and supporting Islamic character education for fatherless children. Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to maintain consistency across participants while still providing flexibility for deeper exploration of emerging issues (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Participatory observation was carried out during school activities, parent teacher interactions, religious programs, and consultation forums to understand communication practices in their natural setting. Document analysis was also conducted by examining school profiles, partnership program documents, character guidance books, parent communication records, and other institutional materials relevant to the research focus (Bowen, 2009). The use of multiple data sources strengthened the credibility of the findings through methodological triangulation.

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). In the first stage, interview transcripts, observation notes, and institutional documents were condensed by selecting, coding, and organizing data relevant to communication management, parental involvement, and value synchronization between school and home. In the second stage, the data were displayed in the form of thematic matrices, descriptive narratives, and categorical tables to facilitate pattern identification across institutions and participant groups. In the final stage, conclusions were drawn iteratively and verified through comparison across data sources, participant categories, and documentary evidence. To enhance trustworthiness, the study applied source triangulation, method triangulation, and repeated verification of emerging themes, following the qualitative credibility principles proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

#### **Intensive Value-Based Communication as a Mechanism for Monitoring Fatherless Children's Development**

Intensive value-based communication refers to a structured and continuous communication practice through which Islamic educational institutions monitor children's moral, behavioral, religious, and socio-emotional development in collaboration with single mothers. In the field, this sub-finding was manifested through three main practices: routine digital communication via WhatsApp groups, individualized teacher parent communication for children requiring closer attention, and periodic face-to-face consultation sessions. Communication was not limited to administrative matters such as school announcements or academic reporting; rather, it functioned as a value-oriented mechanism through which teachers communicated children's discipline, worship habits, social interaction, and emotional changes to parents. Within fatherless family contexts, this communication became a compensatory structure that helped reduce the discontinuity of moral supervision caused by the absence of a father figure at home.

One teacher explained, "Every Friday, I send a recap of the children's character development to parents. For single mothers, I send more intensive private messages, especially if there are changes in attitude that need to be anticipated" (Teacher 2). This excerpt indicates that teachers differentiated communication intensity based on family vulnerability. The Friday character recap functioned as a routine monitoring instrument, while private messages represented a more individualized form of intervention. The researcher interprets this practice as evidence that the school had developed an early-warning communication mechanism. Rather than waiting until behavioral problems became serious, teachers attempted to identify and communicate early signs of change in children's attitudes, particularly among students whose home supervision was limited by the absence of paternal involvement.

A principal further stated, "We have a 'Friday Sharing' program specifically for single parents. They can consult about parenting difficulties, especially in instilling religious values in children without the presence of a father" (Principal 1). This statement demonstrates that the school institutionalized communication beyond the classroom level. The consultation program provided single mothers with a formal yet emotionally accessible space to discuss parenting difficulties. From the researcher's perspective, this practice reflects a shift from communication as information transfer to communication as pastoral and pedagogical support. The school positioned itself not only as an academic institution but also as a relational partner that helped single mothers negotiate the moral and religious challenges of raising fatherless children.

**Table 1. Evidence Matrix of Ideal Influence in Intensive Value-Based Communication**

<b>Informant</b>	<b>Interview Excerpt</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
<b>Teacher 2</b>	“Every Friday, I send a recap of the children’s character development to parents. For single mothers, I send more intensive private messages, especially if there are changes in attitude that need to be anticipated.”	Routine digital monitoring; individualized communication; early detection of behavioral change
<b>Principal 1</b>	“We have a ‘Friday Sharing’ program specifically for single parents. They can consult about parenting difficulties, especially in instilling religious values in children without the presence of a father.”	Face-to-face consultation; institutional support; religious parenting assistance
<b>Single Mother 3</b>	“My child’s teacher is very attentive. She does not only tell me about my child’s problems, but also gives practical advice on how I can deal with a child who is difficult to manage at home. I feel that I am not facing this alone.”	Empathic communication; practical parenting guidance; emotional support for single mothers

Table 1 shows that ideal communication influence was formed through the convergence of three interrelated practices: routine monitoring, institutional consultation, and empathic teacher support. Teacher 2’s statement reflects the procedural dimension of communication, in which reports are delivered regularly and systematically. Principal 1’s statement reflects the institutional dimension, showing that the school created a dedicated consultation forum for single parents. Single Mother 3’s statement reflects the affective dimension, indicating that communication was experienced not merely as supervision but as emotional accompaniment. Taken together, these excerpts show that communication management in Islamic educational institutions operated through procedural consistency, institutional responsiveness, and interpersonal empathy.

The data also reveal that value-based communication produced a relational bridge between school and home. Teachers did not simply report children’s misconduct; they translated school observations into practical parenting advice that could be implemented by single mothers at home. This is important because fatherless children often experience fragmented sources of authority and guidance. Through intensive communication, schools helped create continuity between classroom-based character education and domestic moral supervision. The “ideal influence” of communication in this finding lies in its ability to transform routine interaction into a structured support system for religious and character formation.

Restated simply, the data indicate that Islamic educational institutions used communication as a mechanism for monitoring, guiding, and supporting fatherless children and their single mothers. WhatsApp communication, private

messages, consultation programs, and empathic teacher responses collectively enabled schools to detect behavioral changes, support parental decision-making, and maintain continuity of Islamic values between school and home.

The pattern emerging from the data is a movement from general communication to differentiated care. Communication began with routine information-sharing through digital platforms, then developed into more individualized communication when teachers identified specific child-related concerns, and finally became institutionalized through consultation forums for single parents. This pattern demonstrates that intensive value-based communication functioned as a preventive, corrective, and supportive mechanism in the education of fatherless children.

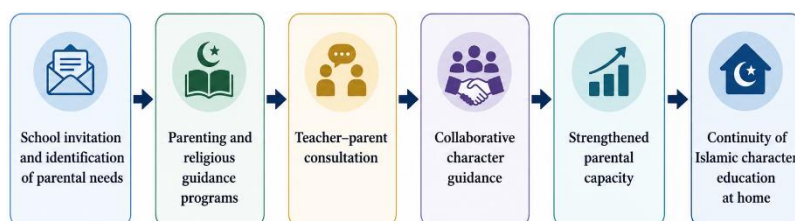
### **Participatory Parental Engagement as a Capacity-Building Model for Single-Parent Families**

participatory parental engagement refers to the active involvement of single mothers in school-based programs designed to strengthen their parenting competence, religious guidance capacity, and psychosocial resilience. In the field, this sub-finding was evident in three forms: parenting education programs, collective religious activities, and collaborative character-related programs involving teachers and parents. The engagement was not merely ceremonial or administrative. It was directed toward enhancing single mothers' ability to guide children's behavior, reinforce Islamic values at home, and access social support from the school community. Thus, parental engagement in this study functioned as a capacity-building mechanism for families experiencing the structural absence of paternal involvement.

A single mother stated, "My child's teacher is very attentive. She does not only tell me about my child's problems, but also gives practical advice on how I can deal with a child who is difficult to manage at home. I feel that I am not facing this alone" (Single Mother 3). This excerpt indicates that parental engagement was experienced as practical and emotionally meaningful. The teacher's advice helped the mother translate school-based character concerns into concrete parenting strategies at home. The researcher interprets this as evidence that parental engagement did not stop at inviting parents to school events; rather, it involved strengthening the mother's agency in managing behavioral and religious education within the household.

Another teacher explained, "We developed this character guide together with parents. Values such as honesty, responsibility, and worship discipline are included in it. Parents only need to follow this guide, so they have a clear reference regarding what should be taught" (Teacher 5). This statement shows that the school involved parents in producing a shared educational instrument.

The collaborative development of the character guide indicates that parental engagement was embedded in curriculum-related and value-related decision-making. From the researcher’s perspective, this practice is significant because single mothers were not positioned merely as recipients of school instructions, but as co-constructors of the child’s moral education framework. The flow of participatory parental engagement can be described as follows:



**Figure 1. Flow of Participatory Parental Engagement**

Figure 1 shows that engagement operated as a gradual process. It began with institutional recognition of single mothers’ parenting challenges, moved into structured support through programs and consultation, and resulted in stronger parental capacity to sustain religious and moral education outside school.

**Table 2. Evidence Matrix of Ideal Influence in Participatory Parental Engagement**

Informant	Interview Excerpt	Indicator
Single Mother 3	“My child’s teacher is very attentive. She does not only tell me about my child’s problems, but also gives practical advice on how I can deal with a child who is difficult to manage at home. I feel that I am not facing this alone.”	Parenting guidance; emotional support; increased single-mother confidence
Teacher 5	“We developed this character guide together with parents. Values such as honesty, responsibility, and worship discipline are included in it. Parents only need to follow this guide, so they have a clear reference regarding what should be taught.”	Collaborative program design; value-based parenting reference; parent participation
Principal 1	“We have a ‘Friday Sharing’ program specifically for single parents. They can consult about parenting difficulties, especially in instilling religious values in children without the presence of a father.”	Institutionalized parental engagement; consultation space; religious value reinforcement

Table 2 demonstrates that participatory parental engagement had both pedagogical and psychosocial dimensions. The pedagogical dimension is visible in the provision of parenting guidance and collaboratively developed character materials. The psychosocial dimension appears in the emotional support experienced by single mothers, who felt accompanied rather than isolated in

dealing with child-rearing challenges. This suggests that the school's role extended beyond educating children; it also included educating and strengthening parents, particularly single mothers who had to perform dual parental roles.

The data indicate that parental engagement became effective because it was concrete, relational, and value-oriented. It was concrete because schools provided practical tools such as parenting advice and character guidance books. It was relational because teachers built empathetic communication with single mothers. It was value-oriented because the engagement focused on Islamic moral formation, including honesty, responsibility, worship discipline, and religious habituation. This pattern shows that the school functioned as a capacity-building institution that helped single mothers compensate for the absence of paternal involvement without replacing the family's role entirely.

The data show that Islamic educational institutions strengthened single mothers by involving them in parenting programs, religious activities, consultation forums, and collaborative character guidance. This engagement enabled mothers to gain practical parenting strategies, emotional support, and clearer direction in instilling Islamic values at home.

The pattern emerging from the data is a shift from passive parental participation to active parental empowerment. Single mothers were not merely asked to attend school programs; they were guided, accompanied, and involved in constructing the moral framework used to educate their children. This indicates that participatory engagement functioned as a bridge between institutional education and family-based Islamic parenting.

### **Value Synchronization Between School and Home as a Moral Contract for Character Formation**

Value synchronization refers to the structured alignment of moral, religious, and behavioral expectations between Islamic educational institutions and the home environment. In the field, this sub-finding was manifested through shared value agreements, collaborative character guidance books, two-way reporting of children's religious practices, and consistency in reward and consequence systems. This synchronization functioned as a moral contract because both schools and parents agreed to uphold the same values and reinforce them across different educational spaces. In the context of fatherless children, this arrangement was particularly important because the absence of a father may reduce consistency in supervision, discipline, and moral authority within the household.

**Table 3. Evidence Matrix of Ideal Influence in Value Synchronization**

<b>Informant Position</b>	<b>Interview Excerpt</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
<b>Teacher</b>	“We developed this character guide together with parents. Values such as honesty, responsibility, and worship discipline are included in it. Parents only need to follow this guide, so they have a clear reference regarding what should be taught.”	Shared value framework; collaborative character guidance; moral consistency
<b>Single Mother</b>	“I was asked to fill in a small note about my child’s worship activities at home, such as whether he prayed on time, read the Qur’an, or helped his parents. This note was then discussed with the teacher.”	Two-way reporting; home-based religious monitoring; school home feedback loop
<b>Principal</b>	“We have a ‘Friday Sharing’ program specifically for single parents. They can consult about parenting difficulties, especially in instilling religious values in children without the presence of a father.”	Institutional facilitation; moral consultation; support for religious parenting

Table 3 indicates that value synchronization operated through three layers of moral coordination. The first layer was normative: teachers and parents agreed on core values such as honesty, responsibility, and worship discipline. The second layer was procedural: parents were asked to record children’s worship practices and discuss them with teachers. The third layer was relational: the school provided consultation spaces where single mothers could negotiate difficulties in transmitting religious values at home. These layers show that value synchronization was not an abstract ideal, but a concrete management practice embedded in documentation, reporting, and dialogue.

A critical interpretation of the data suggests that the character guide functioned as a stabilizing instrument in fatherless family education. For single mothers, the guide reduced ambiguity regarding what values should be emphasized at home and how those values should be reinforced. For teachers, the guide provided a shared reference to ensure that character education was not contradicted or weakened outside the school environment. Thus, the guide acted as a boundary object connecting institutional expectations and domestic practices. Its significance lies in the way it translated Islamic character education into practical, monitorable, and mutually agreed routines.

The two-way reporting mechanism further strengthened this synchronization. The mother’s note on prayer, Qur’an reading, and helping parents created a feedback loop between the home and the school. This mechanism shifted parents from passive recipients of school reports into active contributors to the child’s moral assessment. At the same time, it enabled teachers to understand whether school-taught values were being practiced in the domestic sphere. In fatherless families, this is particularly meaningful because it

provides an additional structure of accountability and continuity where paternal supervision is absent or limited.

During school activities and teacher parent interactions, communication was not limited to academic performance; it frequently addressed worship discipline, responsibility, social behavior, and children's emotional regulation. Religious programs and parent consultations also served as spaces where teachers and single mothers clarified expectations regarding children's moral conduct. The researcher interprets these observations as evidence that value synchronization was embedded in everyday institutional routines rather than confined to formal documents. The school community collectively reinforced the same values through communication, habituation, documentation, and consultation.

The data show that schools and single mothers attempted to create consistency between what children learned at school and what they practiced at home. This consistency was built through shared character guides, worship activity notes, teacher parent discussions, and consultation programs. These mechanisms helped fatherless children receive more stable moral and religious guidance despite the absence of a father figure in the household.

The pattern emerging from the data is a movement from value formulation to value implementation and then to value verification. First, schools and parents formulated shared values through character guidance materials. Second, parents implemented these values at home through daily religious and behavioral routines. Third, teachers and parents verified the implementation through notes, discussions, and consultations. This pattern shows that value synchronization functioned as a moral contract: both institutions and families carried shared responsibility for maintaining continuity in children's character formation.

Taken together, the evidence suggests that value synchronization was the most integrative finding in this study. It connected intensive communication and parental engagement into a coherent system of Islamic character education. Without value synchronization, communication would remain informational and parental engagement would remain programmatic. Through synchronization, however, school home collaboration became a moral ecosystem in which teachers and single mothers jointly monitored, reinforced, and sustained children's religious and character development.

## **Discussion**

The first finding shows that intensive value-based communication functions as a mechanism for monitoring fatherless children's moral, religious, and behavioral development. This finding is consistent with literature on

fatherlessness, which emphasizes that the absence of paternal engagement may weaken children's emotional security, value orientation, and moral supervision (Hidayati & Sugiarto, 2025). However, this study extends previous work by showing that Islamic educational institutions can partially compensate for such absence through structured communication with single mothers. The finding also supports research on parent teacher partnership, which argues that educational support becomes more effective when schools and parents maintain active, responsive, and collaborative communication (Abdullah, 2025). At the same time, the present study differs from general partnership literature because the communication observed here was not merely academic or administrative. It was explicitly value-oriented, focusing on worship discipline, character change, and moral guidance. Theoretically, this suggests that communication management in Islamic education should be understood as a relational mechanism of value transmission. Practically, it implies that schools need to institutionalize regular, empathic, and individualized communication channels for vulnerable family groups.

The second finding reveals that participatory parental engagement operates as a capacity-building model for single-parent families. This finding aligns with Islamic parenting scholarship, which emphasizes the role of institutional care and religious guidance in supporting children who experience family vulnerability (Mahfud et al., 2023). It also corresponds with social theories of learning, which view learning as a socially situated process shaped by participation, interaction, and shared practice rather than by individual cognition alone (Mukhalalati et al., 2022). In this study, single mothers developed parenting competence not only by receiving information but also by participating in parenting programs, consultation sessions, religious activities, and collaborative character guidance. This finding also resonates with evidence that active and team-based learning improves educational quality by strengthening participation and shared responsibility (Xie et al., 2025). Compared with workshop-based pedagogical models that emphasize structured learning sequences (Shen et al., 2024), the parental engagement model identified in this study is more relational and context-sensitive because it addresses emotional burden, moral responsibility, and religious parenting challenges simultaneously. Its practical impact lies in strengthening single mothers' confidence and reducing their sense of isolation.

The third finding demonstrates that value synchronization between school and home forms a moral contract for character formation. This finding is closely related to studies showing that Islamic institutions maintain public trust and educational legitimacy through adaptive curriculum and coherent value management (Baharun et al., 2022). It also reinforces research on pesantren

management, which indicates that Islamic educational institutions preserve religious values through innovative but value-consistent practices (Basori et al., 2023). In addition, the finding supports the principle of child-friendly Islamic educational management, which stresses the importance of safe, supportive, and morally coherent environments for children's development (Izzah et al., 2025). The contribution of the present study lies in demonstrating that value coherence is not produced by curriculum alone; it is constructed through shared guidance, two-way reporting, parent consultation, and consistent reinforcement between school and home. This is particularly important for fatherless children because they may experience weakened normative consistency within the household. Theoretically, the finding expands Islamic character education by introducing value synchronization as an institutional domestic process rather than a purely classroom-based practice.

The three findings collectively suggest that Islamic educational institutions can function as adaptive moral ecosystems for fatherless children. This interpretation is supported by broader educational literature showing that effective education after major social disruption requires institutional flexibility, community engagement, and responsiveness to learners' changing conditions (Frenk et al., 2022). Although studies on pandemic-related educational disruption focus on health professions education, they offer a useful conceptual parallel: educational institutions must respond not only to curricular needs but also to psychosocial and relational disruptions affecting learners (Bughrara et al., 2022). Similarly, research on digital competence and community-engaged education shows that technology becomes meaningful only when embedded in participatory and socially responsive learning strategies (Punzalan & Punzalan, 2025). In the present study, WhatsApp communication, consultation forums, and character notes became effective not because they were technologically sophisticated, but because they were embedded in relational trust and moral purpose. This highlights a key novelty: digital communication in Islamic educational settings can become a value-based care infrastructure when connected to parental engagement and character monitoring.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature by proposing an adaptive communication education partnership model that integrates communication management, parental capacity building, and value synchronization in fatherless child development. This model adds to broader competency-oriented education literature by showing that educational competence should not be limited to learners or teachers, but may also include parents' capacity to sustain learning and character formation at home (Taylor et al., 2023). It also relates to competence-based education literature, which emphasizes the importance of structured outcomes, continuous feedback, and

contextual implementation (Stoffman, 2022). Moreover, debates on holistic and competency-based admissions underscore the importance of recognizing learners' broader social and developmental contexts rather than assessing them through narrow academic indicators (Jernigan & Carbonneau, 2025). In this study, the child's family structure becomes a critical educational context that requires institutional response. The practical implication is that Islamic schools should develop formal support systems for single-parent families, including routine character reports, parenting consultation, peer-support forums, and collaborative character guidance. The impact of this study lies in shifting fatherless education from a deficit-based discourse toward a partnership-based model of institutional care.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the most important lesson from the research is that the education of fatherless children cannot be sustained by formal schooling alone, nor can it be fully carried by single mothers without institutional support. The findings show that Islamic educational institutions play a strategic role in creating an adaptive communication–education partnership through three interconnected mechanisms: intensive value-based communication, participatory parental engagement, and value synchronization between school and home. These mechanisms demonstrate that communication is not merely an administrative tool, but a moral and relational infrastructure for monitoring children's character development, strengthening single mothers' parenting capacity, and maintaining the continuity of Islamic values in the absence of paternal involvement. The key insight of this study is that fatherlessness should not only be understood as a family deficit, but also as an educational challenge that requires collaborative, structured, and value-oriented institutional responses.

The strength of this article lies in its contribution to the development of Islamic educational management, particularly by offering an adaptive communication–education partnership model for supporting fatherless children. Theoretically, this study expands the discourse on school–family collaboration by positioning communication management as a mechanism of moral supervision, parental empowerment, and institutional–domestic value alignment. Practically, the study provides a framework for Islamic educational institutions to design targeted support for single-parent families through routine character reporting, parenting consultation, religious guidance programs, and collaborative character guidance. However, this study is limited by its qualitative case study design, the small number of institutions involved, and its specific focus on Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia; therefore, the findings

cannot be generalized to all educational contexts. Future research should involve broader institutional settings, compare Islamic and non-Islamic school contexts, include children's voices more extensively, and develop measurable intervention models to assess the long-term impact of school–family communication on the religious, emotional, and character development of fatherless children.

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