



TRANSFORMATIVE MUTUAL PUBLIC RELATIONS IN CHARACTER EDUCATION: A SYNERGISTIC APPROACH BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES

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Abstract:

This research aims to examine the application of the concept of mutual public relations in character education at Nurul Jadid Middle School, focusing on the synergy between school and family. Mutual Public Relations, which involves the cooperation of two or more parties in building mutually supportive relationships, is applied in this context to strengthen student character formation through active collaboration between the school, parents, and foster carers. This research found that open communication and parental involvement in various school activities can strengthen character values such as discipline, responsibility, and empathy. In addition, the role of foster carers as a liaison between family and school has also been proven to increase the effectiveness of character education by providing consistent support and feedback. The synergy between these three parties creates a more holistic environment for students' moral development, where character values are taught at school and applied in daily life at home and in the dormitory. It is hoped that these findings can provide new insights for developing a more integrative and sustainable character education model through mutual public relations in other schools.

Keywords: *Mutual Public Relations, Character building, Family & School Synergy*

INTRODUCTION

Throughout life, educational institutions strive to make students useful for society, culture and religion (Mulang & Putra, 2023; Komariah & Nihayah, 2023). In building a positive image, educational institutions must progress and develop. This is a necessity so that the community feels confident and plays an active role in supporting the development of educational institutions (Aragón et al., 2024; García et al., 2022). The development of the times has given rise to many challenges for character education. The formation of student character is an important role for educational institutions and the family environment also has a big influence (Susilo et al., 2022; Tohri et al., 2022). However, many cases show the separation of the two elements in carrying out their respective roles. Even in the process of character development, disharmony often occurs (Syehan et al., 2023; Rahayu & Sudarwati, 2023). On the other hand, to produce holistic and sustainable education, it is necessary to create synergy between the two institutions (Pocol et al., 2022; Tjg et al., 2024).

Public Relations always strives to create and maintain mutually beneficial relationships in a planned and sustainable manner (Fehrer et al., 2022; Owan et al., 2022). Public Relations is closely related to communication activities, it is tasked with disseminating information to internal and external parties in the institution to achieve a consistent or uniform understanding (Lemon & Boman, 2022). Dong & Morehouse (2022) argues that Public Relations in schools functions as a link that strengthens collaboration between schools and parents, which contributes to the formation of student character.

At Nurul Jadid Middle School, the integration of every aspect of learning places great emphasis on the formation of student character. Not only studying science, schools also instill moral values, ethics and a sense of responsibility. The hope of the Institute is not only to be academically intelligent, but also to be intelligent in terms of personality. This character formation needs support from the family to be effective. The lack of family involvement in the formation of students' character has given rise to many negative views of the institution. With public relations, Nurul Jadid Middle School tries to create synergy between school and family, in order to strengthen communication with parents and minimize negative perceptions of the institution. The Institute has implemented various methods, providing clear information regarding character development, as well as encouraging parents to be more involved in the educational process.

This research offers an innovative approach in studying the synergy between schools and families in student character education through the concept of mutual public relations, in this context this has not been widely explored. The main novelty promoted is integrating institutions and families in one framework, very open communication and mutual support through Public Relations. Most previous research only focused on their respective roles. Several studies such as those carried out by Qu et al., (2023) Bissoondoyal-Bheenick et al., (2023) tend to only focus on the role of each factor separately, without considering the interactions between these factors that can influence each other. Research by Iksal et al., (2024) Success in character education can be achieved if there is solid cooperation between school and family, but there is no in-depth discussion regarding the concept of synergy between the two. The position of this research is to fill the existing gap by focusing on synergy between school and family in forming more effective student character through mutual public Relations, which is still less explored in previous literature.

The main objective of this research is how mutual public relations can be carried out between schools and families in order to support student character education. This research will examine various aspects of communication that occur between the two parties and how they can support each other in building good student character. The main focus of this research is to examine the relationship between schools and families through mutual public relations which support each other in creating effective character education and how both parties can work together to influence students' attitudes and behavior outside the formal education environment. The importance of this research lies in the family's contribution to the formation of student character and the synergy between the two.

Based on temporary understanding, this research argues that synergy between schools and families through mutual Public Relations at Nurul Jadid Middle School can create more effective character education. In this context, both parties need to communicate openly, transparently, and support each other to achieve the common goal of forming student character. Strengthening this relationship will have implications for improving the quality of character education, because students will feel harmony between what is taught at school and what they receive at home. As explained Yudarwati & Gregory (2022) Mutual Public Relations from a character education perspective is a public relations approach that focuses on developing mutually beneficial relationships between educational institutions and all parties involved in the educational environment. According to the theory of communication and public relations explained by (Lee, 2022) that communication is two-way, where organizations communicate with their publics to achieve mutual understanding and mutual benefits, not just to achieve the goals of one party.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research aims to explore the dynamics of mutual public relations between school and family in the formation of student character at Nurul Jadid Middle School. Through a qualitative approach with a case study type, this research highlights the important role of communication built between the two parties in supporting student character development. According to Lim, (2024) Alhazmi & Kaufmann, (2022) Qualitative research is a type of research that aims to understand social phenomena,

behavior, experiences or human interactions in a natural context, by exploring deep meaning from data that is not in the form of numbers. The school principal, public relations department and homeroom teacher are the main informants who provide insight into policies, communication strategies, and the school's efforts to involve families in character education. The data collection process was carried out by observation and interviews which were then analyzed using content, discourse and interpretation analysis techniques to identify communication patterns and their impact on students. It is hoped that the results of this research will provide an overview of the effectiveness of collaboration between schools and families in forming positive characters for students.

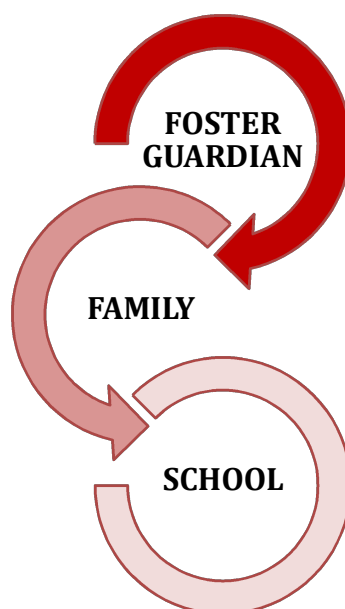
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Synergy between school and family

Nurul Jadid Middle School is an institution that is much sought after by the public. This institution is under the auspices of an Islamic boarding school, so it is a plus point for the institution in attracting public attention. Not only families, this institution also involves foster carers in developing students' character because in fact it is under the auspices of an Islamic boarding school.

Synergy between school and family has a very vital role in realizing character education at Nurul Jadid Middle School. Knowledge and habituation of moral values in a formal environment is the role of school, while the family is the first place where children learn life values through parenting and the example of parents. Not only that, foster carers also take part in forming the character of students at Nurul Jadid Middle School, even foster carers are always there with them every day. At Nurul Jadid Middle School, character education is not only limited to teaching discipline, but also developing attitudes of empathy, integrity, responsibility and cooperation. Collaboration between schools, foster carers and parents is very important to create an environment that supports student character growth. Regular meetings between foster carers and teachers, as well as open communication between foster carers and teachers, foster carers and parents and teachers and parents, are a means of ensuring that character values can be applied in students' daily lives, both at school and at home and also in the dormitory. Through programs involving foster carers and parents, such as holding coordination and evaluation meetings every month, Nurul Jadid Middle School is committed to strengthening this synergistic relationship, so that students can develop into a young generation with noble character, responsibility and care for others.

Graph A.1 Synergy between school, family and foster carers



This graph shows the attachment between the three parties, namely school, family and foster carers. The synergy of the three is really needed so that it can shape students' character effectively Zhang et al., (2022) Argadinata & Majid, (2022) believes that synergy between family and school is very important in forming students' character, because the three of them support and complement each other in creating an environment that is conducive to the development of students' morals and behavior.

The integration between school and family in realizing character education at Nurul Jadid Middle School reflects a holistic approach that actively involves various parties in building student character. As per opinion (Serafini et al., 2022) which states that in producing holistic and sustainable education it is necessary to create synergy between the two institutions. Character education at Nurul Jadid Middle School does not only focus on academic aspects, but also on moral and social values which are implemented through collaboration between the school, foster carers and parents. This approach proves that successful character education requires the involvement of all parties, and with this synergy, students at Nurul Jadid Middle School can consistently internalize values such as responsibility, integrity, empathy and cooperation. This produces students who not only excel in academics, but also have a positive attitude and noble character in everyday life.

Aspect	Role of Schools	Role of Family
Character Education Objectives	Instill character values such as responsibility, discipline, empathy, integrity and cooperation through the curriculum and extracurricular activities	Support the formation of children's character by implementing values at home
Programs and Activities	Hold activities such as parenting seminars, social skills training, and regular meetings	Participate in parent activities such as parenting seminars and child development discussions
Impact on Students	Creating students who are more disciplined, responsible, empathetic, and able to work together well	Helping students apply the character values taught at school in their daily lives
Involvement of Parents and Foster Guardians	Facilitate routine communication between schools and parents, as well as social skills improvement programs	Actively participate in discussions on child development and the application of character values

Table A.2
Synergy between School and Family in Realizing Character Education at Nurul Jadid Middle School

Based on the table above, it shows that there is synergy between schools and families in realizing character education at Nurul Jadid Middle School. On the one hand, schools play a role in instilling character values, namely responsibility, discipline, empathy, integrity and cooperation through the curriculum, extracurricular activities and programs such as parenting seminars and social skills training. On the other hand, families play a role in supporting the strengthening of these values by implementing them at home, providing real examples, and actively participating in school activities. Foster carers also act as custodians in character building between school and family. This synergy produces students who not only excel in academic aspects, but also have consistent and internalized character, which is created through regular communication between parents and school. This collaboration creates a balance between teaching at school and implementing character values at home and in the dormitory, thereby forming students who are more disciplined, responsible and have noble character.

B. Implementation of Mutual Public Relations in Character Education

The implementation of Mutual Public Relations in character education at Nurul Jadid Middle School aims to build mutually beneficial relationships between the school, students, parents and foster carers. In this approach, communication does not only occur in one direction, but in various directions, the school functions as a facilitator who directs and guides, while foster carers and parents act as partners who provide moral and social support. Through various programs, Nurul Jadid Middle School seeks to create a comprehensive educational ecosystem. In this way, mutual public relations helps strengthen students' character education holistically.

Mutual Public Relations at Nurul Jadid Middle School is more than just one-way communication between the school and the community. We apply an approach where communication and relationships are built reciprocally between schools, parents, foster carers and students themselves. The main principle is to create close collaboration between various interested parties in education, especially in shaping student character. Thus, character education does not only occur in the classroom, but also through interactions outside the school, such as extracurricular activities and collaboration with community institutions or the Islamic boarding school itself. (MF, 2024)

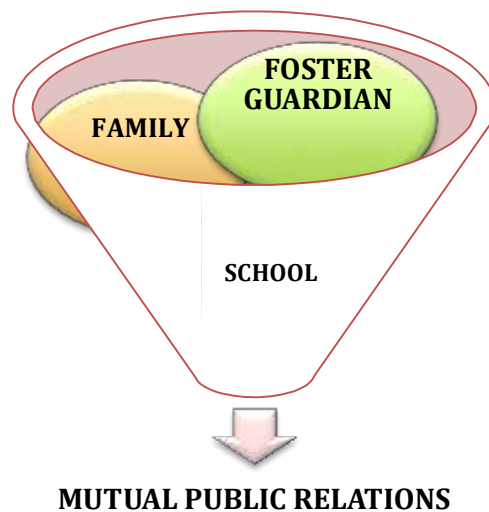
We actively invite parents to be involved in various school activities, such as parent meetings, social activities and parenting programs. Through open

communication, parents not only know their child's progress, but are also inspired to support the character values that we instill at school. In addition, we build relationships with foster carers to help us create an environment that supports positive character formation for students. (JY, 2024)

The results of the interview above show that mutual public relations at Nurul Jadid Middle School is not just one-way communication, but in various directions, namely family, school and foster carers. The aim is to create close collaboration between all parties, especially for the formation of student character.

The implementation of Mutual Public Relations at Nurul Jadid Middle School aims to create a mutually beneficial relationship between the school, parents, foster carers and students in forming students' character holistically. As per opinion Owan et al., (2022) Dong & Morehouse, (2022) Mutual Public Relations is very helpful in creating students who are not only academically intelligent but also have strong character and are ready to contribute to society. This approach involves multi-directional communication, where all parties play an active role in the educational process, not just the school as the teacher. The school encourages parental involvement in several activities, such as providing full student support for various events held by the school or external to the school. Programs such as going to the dormitory where every week the homeroom teacher always takes turns visiting the student's dormitory to accompany dormitory activities, with this the homeroom teacher feels helped in delivering additional material. This is a concrete example of the application of mutual public relations. The impact is very positive, with students showing a more responsible attitude towards learning and being able to work together with other students. Apart from that, foster parents and homeroom teachers send documentation of student activities to the parent group with the aim of keeping guardians updated regarding the child's development. Another aim is to make parents more aware of the importance of supporting children's character education at home.

Graph A.3 regarding the Implementation of Mutual Public Relations in Character Education



Based on the graph above, it shows that Nurul Jadid Middle School implements mutual public relations to strengthen student character education by building close collaboration between the school, parents and foster carers. Intensive communication with parents through meetings and parenting programs, as well as collaboration with foster carers, schools create an environment that supports character values such as responsibility, discipline and empathy. By supporting each other and committing to

applying these values consistently, Mutual Public Relations at Nurul Jadid Middle School has succeeded in strengthening character education which is not only focused on academic achievement, but also on developing students' integrity and character, which is expected to be able to form a young generation who better in the future.

This research highlights the importance of synergy between schools and families in character education through the concept of Mutual Public Relations, which has proven effective in creating an environment that supports the growth of character values in students, such as discipline, honesty and empathy. Collaboration between the two parties, through intensive communication and joint activities involving the community, strengthens the holistic character development of students, both at school and at home. The contribution of this research lies in updating perspectives regarding the application of mutual public relations in character education, introducing a more holistic approach, and providing new insights in integrating communication theory and public relations in the educational context. However, this research has limitations in that its coverage is limited to Nurul Jadid Middle School and does not explore other variables that influence character education, such as the influence of technology or media. Therefore, further research is recommended to expand the scope of the study to various types of schools and consider other factors that can enrich understanding of character education.

CONCLUSION

This research highlights the importance of synergy between schools and families in character education through the concept of mutual public relations, which has proven effective in creating an environment that supports the growth of character values in students, such as discipline, responsibility and empathy. Collaboration between various parties, through intensive communication and joint activities involving schools, families and foster carers, strengthens the holistic character development of students, both at school, at home and in the dormitory. The contribution of this research lies in updating the perspective regarding the application of mutual public relations in character education, introducing a more holistic approach, and providing new insights in integrating communication theory and public relations in the educational context. By presenting some data contained in graphs and tables, it further strengthens this research.

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