

## Beyond The Classroom: Examining Teacher-Parent Social Partnerships in Early Childhood Character Education

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### Abstract

This study examines teacher and parent role dysfunction in the implementation of character education in early childhood, focusing on the discontinuity between school-based practices and family reinforcement. The study addresses the problem of inconsistent character development among children, particularly in discipline, responsibility, compliance with rules, and social interaction. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed at KMH Early Childhood Education Institution (a pseudonym), focusing on Class B. Six informants were purposively selected: the principal, two teachers, and three parents. Data were collected through passive participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation, and analyzed using the interactive model of Sugiyono, involving data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Source and method triangulation were used to strengthen data credibility. The findings reveal that role dysfunction is manifested in inconsistent teacher role modeling and habituation, limited capacity to plan and assess character education, insufficient school family communication, restricted parental supervision due to work commitments, and inconsistent parenting practices. These conditions contribute to the uneven reinforcement of character values between school and home, affecting children's discipline, responsibility, respect, empathy, and social-emotional development. The study argues that role dysfunction is not merely an individual failure but a relational problem arising from limited coordination between teachers and parents. It therefore recommends strengthening teachers' practical competencies, establishing reciprocal communication, and developing shared character-building routines across school and family settings.

**Keyword:** early childhood education; character education; teacher-parent partnership; role dysfunction; school-family collaboration

### INTRODUCTION

Character education in early childhood is a process of developing habits, attitudes, and behaviors through concrete experiences and children's interactions with their immediate surroundings. At this developmental stage, children learn not only through verbal explanations but, more importantly, through modeling, habituation, reinforcement, and repetition. Character education therefore cannot be treated solely as a school-based program. Families and schools must perform complementary roles so that the values introduced to children are consistently reinforced in everyday life (Sujiono, 2009; Lickona, 2012).

The importance of this issue is evident at KMH Early Childhood Education Institution. A preliminary study in Class B found that some children did not consistently demonstrate discipline and responsibility. They still needed repeated reminders to wait their turn, follow classroom rules, put away play materials, greet others, and maintain focus during activities. Teachers had introduced routines such as prayer, queuing, greetings, polite behavior, and positive reinforcement. However, these practices were not yet fully

supported by continuous planning, clear achievement indicators, and systematic character assessment. At home, some parents did not consistently continue the routines established at school, meaning that the character values children encountered did not always receive equivalent reinforcement in the family environment (Dinham & Williams, 2019).

This phenomenon suggests that the central problem is not the absence of character education, but a mismatch between expected roles and the way those roles are performed within the child's educational environment. Biddle (1986) explains that roles are associated with social expectations regarding behavior appropriate to a person's status, while Biddle and Thomas (1966) identify role expectations, role perceptions, and role performance as interrelated components. In this study, teachers are expected to act as educators, guides, classroom managers, and moral role models, whereas parents are expected to serve as children's first educators and reinforce the habits and values introduced at school. When actual performance falls short of these expectations, the resulting condition can be understood as role dysfunction.

The concept of school-family partnership further underscores the importance of continuity. Epstein (2011) emphasizes that family involvement in children's education is an important contributor to their development. From the perspective of character education, Lickona (1991, 2012) explains that character encompasses knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good. In other words, it is not enough for children to know that an action is good; they must also develop an inclination to value goodness and make good actions habitual. This process depends heavily on consistency in the environments that serve as behavioral models. When rules, role modeling, and routines at school differ from those at home, the internalization of values becomes unstable.

Previous studies have identified similar concerns. Cahyaningrum, Sudaryanti, and Purwanto (2017) highlight the importance of habituation and role modeling in developing character in early childhood. Kurniawan and Wuryandani (2017) show that character education in early childhood education should be integrated into learning, while Husna and Handayani (2023) identify limitations in teachers' roles as one challenge in character formation. Irayanti and Sundawa (2023) likewise emphasize the importance of role modeling by teachers and parents in children's moral development. Fatimah et al. (2025) underscore the contribution of teachers and active parental involvement, while Puspita et al. (2025) show that strengthening the roles of both parties is necessary for implementing character education.

Research on families also indicates that parental involvement and the quality of school-family communication affect the consistency of character education. Nurhayati and Anwar (2022) demonstrate the importance of teacher-parent communication in maintaining consistent child behavior. Putri and Jeti (2025) argue that parental involvement can be strengthened through intensive communication. Rahayu (2020) emphasizes the integration of family, school, and community, while research on academic pressure in early childhood education suggests that an excessive focus on academic skills may divert attention from affective and character development (Ningsih & Utami, 2024).

This study analyzes forms of teacher and parent role dysfunction in implementing character education for young children at KMH Early Childhood Education Institution. It also identifies the factors contributing to this dysfunction and examines its effects on the implementation of character education in early childhood.

Although previous studies have discussed habituation, role modeling, parental involvement, and school-family collaboration, relatively few have examined the simultaneous forms of teacher and parent role dysfunction in the implementation of character education within a single early childhood classroom. This study approaches dysfunction not merely as an individual failure, but as a discontinuity in the relationship between school and family shaped by competence, time, communication, parenting practices, and social and

technological environments. This perspective addresses the research gap through a case study of Class B at KMH Early Childhood Education Institution.

Accordingly, this study aims to describe forms of teacher and parent role dysfunction in the implementation of character education, identify the factors underlying it, and analyze its effects on children's behavior and social-emotional development in Class B at KMH Early Childhood Education Institution.

This study argues that teacher and parent role dysfunction in early childhood character education is primarily driven by weak continuity in habituation between school and family. This discontinuity is shaped by teachers' limited pedagogical competence in implementing character education, low levels of school-family communication, parents' limited time for supervision, and inconsistent parenting practices. Consequently, the character values established at school are not reinforced consistently at home, limiting children's optimal internalization of those values.

## **METHODS**

The study was conducted at KMH Early Childhood Education Institution, a pseudonym used to protect the research site's anonymity. It adopted a descriptive qualitative approach because it sought an in-depth understanding of the processes, experiences, and social conditions associated with teacher and parent role dysfunction in the implementation of character education, rather than quantitatively measuring relationships between variables.

The study involved six informants selected purposively: one principal (code A1), two Class B teachers (A2 and A3), and three parents of Class B pupils (A4, A5, and A6). They were selected because of their direct involvement in planning, implementing, supervising, and reinforcing children's character education. In the 2025/2026 academic year, KMH Early Childhood Education Institution had 31 pupils: 15 in Group A and 16 in Group B. This study focused on the dynamics within Group B.

Data were collected through passive participant observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation focused on the school environment, habituation practices, teacher role modeling, enforcement of rules, teacher-child interactions, and indications of alignment or inconsistency between school and family values. Interviews with the principal, Class B teachers, and three parents explored their experiences, understanding, constraints, forms of cooperation, and perceptions of the effects of character education. Documents included the institution's profile, vision and mission, activity schedules, habituation records, child development reports, communication books, and records relating to school-family communication.

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Sugiyono (2015), which comprises data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Interview, observation, and documentary data were grouped into recurring themes and compared to identify patterns in the forms of dysfunction, contributing factors, and consequences. Data trustworthiness was supported by source triangulation, comparing information from the principal, teachers, and parents, and method triangulation, comparing observations, interviews, and documentation (Moleong, 2017).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Teacher and Parent Role Dysfunction**

The analysis shows that role dysfunction occurs in the two main environments in which children's character is formed: school and family. On the teachers' side, dysfunction is particularly evident in inconsistent role modeling, limited capacity to design and assess character education, and insufficiently effective communication with parents. Teachers understand the importance of character education and continue to establish routines such as queuing, greetings, the 5S practice (smile, greet, salute, politeness, and courtesy), responsibility, and praise for positive behavior. Nevertheless, interview and observation data reveal a gap

between understanding and practice. One example is the inconsistency between the discipline expected of children and teachers' own punctuality in certain situations. Teacher interviews also reveal awareness of this responsibility. A2 stated, "Teachers understand the theory of character education, but they are constrained by time, curriculum pressures, and insufficient environmental support. The results are understood, but the practices are not carried out consistently" (Interview, 4 May 2026).



**Figure 1.** Classroom activity on the movements and recitations of prayer in Class B

The documentation presents a religious habituation activity used to reinforce character. It shows that character education is embedded in classroom activities, although consistent implementation and reinforcement at home remain challenges.

These findings suggest that teacher dysfunction does not primarily arise from resistance to character education. Teachers recognize their responsibility to serve as role models but face practical challenges in selecting strategies, following up on children's behavior, and systematically assessing character development. Thus, this dysfunction is better understood as a limitation in role performance shaped by practical competence, professional support, and working conditions. This finding is consistent with Husna and Handayani (2023) and Irayanti and Sundawa (2023), who identify teacher capacity and role modeling as important factors in character formation.

Among parents, dysfunction is reflected in limited supervision, inconsistent parenting practices, and uneven involvement in communication with the school. Some parents recognize the need to reinforce character education at home, but work commitments and limited time reduce opportunities to provide consistent guidance, role modeling, and habituation. Observations also revealed inconsistencies in enforcing simple rules, such as putting shoes in the designated place. This suggests that children sometimes encounter behavioral examples that do not align with the rules applied at school. A6 (31), a parent, explained: "It is difficult to divide my time when the children are at school because I also have to work" (Interview, 4 May 2026).

Inconsistent parenting was also found when children were cared for by more than one family member whose rules and responses differed. In such circumstances, children may encounter conflicting behavioral standards. This supports Bandura's (1986) argument that children learn by observing and imitating models in their social environment. When the behavioral models they encounter vary, habit formation and value internalization become more difficult. Inconsistency was also evident when children were cared for by several family members. A1 (31) explained that parenting strongly influences children's character because children are not cared for and educated by their parents alone; they may also be looked after by caregivers or grandparents whose parenting styles and boundaries differ from those set by the parents (Interview, 4 May 2026).

**Table 1.** Summary of Forms of Teacher and Parent Role Dysfunction

| Actor              | Form of role dysfunction                                     | Main evidence                                                                                                | Interpretation                                                                         |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Teacher A2         | Inconsistent role modeling and habituation                   | Rules and routines are not always applied consistently; a gap exists between understanding and practice.     | Role performance does not fully meet expectations of a moral role model.               |
| Teacher A3         | Limited strategies for and assessment of character education | The teacher has difficulty selecting methods, following up on behavior, and assessing character development. | Practical competence and professional support need to be strengthened.                 |
| Parent A4          | Limited supervision                                          | Work commitments reduce the time available for quality interaction and supervision.                          | The family's role in reinforcing routines is not yet optimal.                          |
| Parent A6          | Inconsistent parenting practices                             | The child receives different rules and responses from caregivers.                                            | The behavioral standards encountered by the child are inconsistent.                    |
| Teacher-parent, A1 | Ineffective communication                                    | A communication book and WhatsApp are available, but parental responses vary.                                | The school-family partnership does not yet function as fully reciprocal communication. |

*Sumber: Data penelitian, diolah peneliti (2026).*

#### Factors Contributing to Teacher and Parent Role Dysfunction

The findings reveal four interrelated groups of contributing factors: limitations in teacher competence and support, insufficiently intensive school-family communication, parents' work commitments and time constraints, and the influence of the social environment and technology.

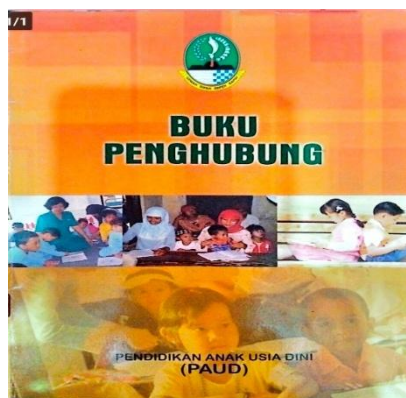


**Figure 2.** Communication book as a medium for school-family communication

The communication book is one means of connecting school and family to monitor children's development over time. Teachers can use it to share information about behavioral development, character-building routines, attendance, and learning activities at school, while parents can provide feedback on

children's behavior at home. Thus, the communication book is not merely a channel for transmitting information; it can also help teachers and parents develop a shared understanding of how to support children's character. Its existence indicates that a mechanism for school-family collaboration is in place, but its effectiveness depends on both parties consistently completing, reading, responding to, and acting on the information exchanged. This is consistent with Epstein's School-Family Partnership theory and with Sheridan and Garbacz (2022), who argue that ongoing, reciprocal, and respectful communication is foundational to effective school-family partnerships that support children's development.

These findings are also supported by more recent research on parental involvement in early childhood education. Mulyasa (2014); Wawan, et.all (2026) explain that communication media between teachers and parents have a positive effect only when both parties actively provide feedback and agree on follow-up actions concerning children's development. In other words, the presence of a communication book does not automatically ensure successful character education if communication remains one-way or merely administrative. By contrast, responsive communication accompanied by consistent follow-up at home and school creates continuity in habituation, allowing the values of discipline, responsibility, and politeness taught at school to be reinforced within the family. This demonstrates that communication quality is essential to effective school-family collaboration in early childhood character education.

First, teachers' limitations relate to their practical ability to integrate character education into learning activities. Although teachers have received guidance, they still find it difficult to assess character outcomes, select appropriate strategies, and follow up on children's behavior. This indicates that understanding the importance of character does not automatically translate into systematic pedagogical practice. Lickona (2012) argues that character develops through repeated processes connecting moral knowledge, moral feeling, and moral action. Teachers therefore need professional development that goes beyond conceptual understanding.



**Figure 4.** Queuing routine before the Iqra reading activity

Queuing is a concrete habituation practice used by the school to instill discipline, patience, responsibility, and compliance with rules. Based on observations and interviews, children are encouraged to wait their turn before participating in learning activities, collecting learning materials, or entering the classroom. The routine is repeated so that children learn to control the urge to go ahead of their peers, respect others' rights, and follow rules consciously. Through such routines, character values are not only understood cognitively but also enacted in everyday behavior. This finding is consistent with Ningsih, S., & Utami, R. (2024), who argue that discipline in early childhood is more effectively developed through consistent habituation and teacher role modeling in daily learning activities, allowing positive behavior to become an established habit.

However, interviews with teachers and parents indicate that these routines are not always reinforced equally at home. Some parents acknowledged that queuing, waiting one's turn, and following rules were not

practiced consistently at home because of time constraints or differences in parenting practices. Children consequently experience different expectations at school and at home, which may hinder the internalization of discipline. This finding is supported by Asmi, A. N. (2024), who explains that successful character education in early childhood depends heavily on sustained collaboration between school and family. When teachers' routines are not reinforced by parents at home, children's behavior may remain inconsistent and the character values established at school may not develop optimally.



**Figure 3.** Classroom agreements as a guide to developing discipline

Classroom agreements set out simple rules for children to follow, such as queuing, waiting patiently for one's turn, returning learning materials to their proper place, washing hands before and after activities, and asking permission before leaving the classroom. Based on documentation and observation, these rules are explained in simple terms appropriate to children's developmental stage and are intended to be applied consistently during learning activities. The classroom agreements provide a behavioral guide for developing positive habits. Through repeated practice, children learn that actions are governed by rules, helping them develop discipline, responsibility, and self-control. This finding is consistent with Alammy, R., & Arifudin, A. (2025), who explain that simple, understandable, and consistently enforced classroom rules are an effective habituation strategy for fostering moral values and character in early childhood.

Nevertheless, interviews indicate that the main challenge is not the formulation of school rules but the consistent application and reinforcement of those behaviors at home. Some parents reported difficulty maintaining the same rules because of limited time, different parenting approaches, or a lack of habituation in daily activities. As a result, children do not always experience consistent expectations at school and at home, which may hinder the internalization of discipline. Fitriya, L. (2021) similarly argues that character formation through habituation depends not only on rules at school but also on sustained reinforcement within the family. Consistent collaboration between teachers and parents can help children maintain positive behavior until character values become established in everyday life.

Second, communication is a major barrier. The school uses communication books, face-to-face meetings, and a WhatsApp group. However, documentation shows that not all parents respond to information about their children's development. Communication tools are therefore available, but their function as channels for two-way communication remains limited. This finding aligns with Nurhayati and Asmi, A. N. (2024) who emphasize that the frequency and quality of communication are prerequisites for consistent character-building routines. A2 (46) reinforced this point: "I am unsure how to measure character outcomes; there is little training and limited knowledge of methods for integrating character into learning" (Interview, 4 May 2026).

Third, parents' work commitments reduce the time available for supervision. Interviews indicate that work makes it difficult for some parents to allocate sufficient time, while fatigue and daily pressures also affect patience and consistency in parenting. This is important because parental role dysfunction does not necessarily indicate a lack of concern. In this study, some parents remained concerned about their children,

but limited time prevented them from fully carrying out this role. This interpretation is more balanced than simply portraying parents as negligent. Communication constraints were also highlighted by A2 (38), who referred to “a lack of communication among teachers, the principal, and parents” (Interview, 4 May 2026).

Fourth, the social environment and technology provide additional behavioral models for children. Children may encounter information and imitate behaviors from digital media and their surroundings. Within Bandura’s (1986) social learning framework, these influences expand the sources from which children learn beyond the family and school. Adult guidance and role modeling are therefore increasingly important to help children distinguish behaviors that align with the values being cultivated. These time-related constraints were also emphasized by A6 (31): “It is difficult to remain patient and consistently practice good habits every day, especially when I am tired or dealing with problems” (Interview, 4 May 2026).

**Table 2.** Summary of Factors Contributing to Role Dysfunction

| Participant / Actor             | Contributing Factor                                     | Main Empirical Evidence                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Interpretation & Synthesis                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Teacher A2</b>               | Limited pedagogical competence in character education   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncertainty in evaluating character outcomes</li> <li>• Insufficient professional training</li> <li>• Limited methodological knowledge on integrating character into subject matter</li> </ul> | While recognizing the imperative of character education, teachers face structural pedagogical constraints in systematically integrating, implementing, and assessing character growth. |
| <b>Teacher A2</b>               | Suboptimal school-family communication channels         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intermittent and low-intensity communication among teachers, school principals, and parents</li> </ul>                                                                                         | Infrequent institutional communication weakens cross-setting alignment, hindering the home-based reinforcement of school-established routines.                                         |
| <b>Parent A4</b>                | Temporal constraints on parental supervision            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulties in allocating dedicated supervision time due to formal employment commitments</li> </ul>                                                                                          | Occupational demands diminish parental availability, thereby restricting opportunities to sustain and reinforce character habituation at home.                                         |
| <b>Parent A6</b>                | Inconsistency in positive parenting practices           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affective challenges in maintaining daily patience</li> <li>• Irregular execution of positive discipline routines</li> </ul>                                                                   | Parental psychological state and daily circumstances directly impair the predictability and consistency of home-based character upbringing.                                            |
| <b>Teacher-Parent Dyad (A2)</b> | Discontinuity of habituation across ecological settings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prosocial routines (e.g., queuing, greetings, politeness, responsibility, and rules) structured at school are insufficiently sustained at home</li> </ul>                                      | Asymmetrical reinforcement between school and home environments prevents behavioral routines from internalizing into stable, enduring character habits.                                |

*Sumber: Data penelitian, diolah peneliti (2026).*

As shown in Table 2, the factors contributing to teacher and parent role dysfunction in character education do not operate independently. Rather, they are interrelated and jointly influence the success of children's character formation. For teachers, a key factor is limited competence in integrating character education into learning, particularly in selecting strategies, assessing progress, and following up on pupils' character development. Meanwhile, school-family communication remains suboptimal, meaning that information about children's character development does not always receive a response or reinforcement from parents. This suggests that character education remains largely school-centered and has not yet become a fully shared responsibility between teachers and families. The finding is consistent with Biddle's (1986) role theory, which explains that role effectiveness depends on the alignment between social expectations and actual role performance. When teachers cannot fully perform their roles as educators, guides, and role models, a gap emerges that may result in role dysfunction.

For parents, work-related time constraints and inconsistent parenting practices are major obstacles to reinforcing character at home. Children cared for by several family members may encounter different rules, routines, and disciplinary responses, making it difficult for them to understand expected behavior. The internalization of character values becomes less effective when children do not receive consistent learning experiences across environments. This is supported by Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, which explains that children learn through observation, imitation, and reinforcement from their surroundings. When children encounter different behavioral models at home and at school, character formation becomes less consistent and the values they learn are more difficult to internalize.

Overall, the findings suggest that role dysfunction is better understood as a problem of collaboration than as an individual weakness on the part of teachers or parents. The school has provided communication channels, including communication books and a WhatsApp group, but not all parents respond to or act on the information shared. Teachers, meanwhile, face limitations in developing character-learning strategies that actively involve families. Consequently, routines established at school are not always reinforced at home, preventing character education from achieving optimal continuity. This analysis is consistent with Epstein's (2011) School, Family, and Community Partnership framework, which emphasizes that successful education depends on two-way communication, active parental involvement, and shared responsibility between schools and families.

### **The Effects of Role Dysfunction on Character Education and Child Development**

The main effect of role dysfunction is inconsistency in children's behavior. Interviews and observations revealed continuing instances of rule-breaking, weak discipline, limited responsibility for assigned tasks, and impolite language. At the level of moral attitudes, some children appeared more permissive toward minor violations and showed reduced respect and empathy. These findings indicate that the values introduced to children have not yet been fully translated into stable habits.

From Lickona's perspective (1991, 2012), this situation reflects a gap between knowing the good and doing the good. Children may know that a behavior is good, but without consistent role modeling and habituation, that knowledge does not always translate into action. This finding also accords with Cahyaningrum et al. (2017), who identify regular habituation and role modeling as essential elements of character formation in early childhood. Teacher A2 (46) explicitly reported "rule violations, a lack of discipline, failure to take responsibility for tasks, and impolite speech" (Interview, 4 May 2026).

The effects also extend to social-emotional development. Teachers reported that some children had low self-confidence, experienced difficulties socializing, struggled to be accepted by peers, and lacked a strong moral compass. Children who do not encounter consistent behavioral standards may find it difficult to determine appropriate responses in interactions with others. This shows that character education cannot be

separated from social-emotional development: discipline, responsibility, empathy, respect, and interpersonal skills develop through repeated experiences.

Role dysfunction also affects the educational climate. When problematic behavior recurs, teachers must repeatedly provide guidance and reinforcement, making the learning process less effective. Interview data indicate concerns that the school climate may become less conducive, teacher-child rapport may weaken, and parents' trust in the institution may be affected. Thus, children's character-related problems do not remain confined to individual children but may extend to relationships and the institution as a whole. A3 (38) also noted that these conditions could affect children's confidence and social skills and lead them to behave in ways that conflict with moral values, proper conduct, and ethics (Interview, 4 May 2026).

These findings reinforce Ki Hadjar Dewantara's concept of the Three Centers of Education, according to which family, school, and community are interconnected environments. When one environment is not aligned with the others, the educational process becomes less integrated. In this study, teachers and parents are the two principal actors responsible for connecting routines at school and at home. The findings also align with Epstein (2011), who argues that school-family partnerships require meaningful communication and involvement rather than the mere availability of communication tools. At the institutional level, A2 (46) stated that "the school climate becomes unhealthy and less conducive, and parents become disappointed, which may affect public trust in the school" (Interview, 4 May 2026).

Role dysfunction affects not only children's disciplinary behavior but also their moral, social, and emotional development. These findings indicate that character education is a holistic process whose success cannot be measured solely by compliance with rules; it must also be assessed in terms of children's ability to internalize positive values in daily life. When teachers' routines are not reinforced by families, children experience inconsistent learning environments, and character values may develop more slowly. This is consistent with Lickona's (2012) view that character formation requires continuity among moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action through consistent experiences across educational settings.

### **The Implications and Strategies for Strengthening Educational Collaboration**

In light of the findings, solutions should not target teachers or parents separately. Improvement efforts need to be developed as a collaborative system. First, the institution should provide practical training and mentoring on integrating character education into learning, observing character development, and following up on children's behavior. Strengthening teachers' competence is essential to narrowing the gap between conceptual understanding and practice.

Second, school-family communication should be developed into a planned, two-way process. Communication books and WhatsApp groups can be retained but supplemented with concise communication formats covering habituation goals, children's progress, and actions that can be undertaken at home. Third, schools and families should agree on a small set of simple, realistic core routines, such as greeting others, queuing, putting belongings away, completing simple tasks, and speaking politely. These routines should be expressed through consistent terms and expectations at school and at home.

Fourth, parents should be offered flexible ways to participate in accordance with their work circumstances and available time. Involvement need not always take the form of physical attendance at school; it may include reinforcing routines at home, responding to teachers' messages, and consistently modeling appropriate behavior (Tabatabai & Simforoosh, 2021).

Conceptually, the findings show that role dysfunction is relational. Teachers' limitations may be compounded by weak communication, while parents' constraints may be exacerbated by work demands and inconsistent parenting practices. Effective intervention must therefore improve relationships among the actors while strengthening each party's capacity. This approach is consistent with the principles of school-family

partnership and with the view that children develop character through consistent experiences across different areas of their lives.

Overall, the study indicates that strengthening character education requires more than improving teacher competence or increasing parental involvement separately. The findings show that successful implementation depends on the quality of collaboration between school and family. Parenting programs, jointly agreed habituation targets, periodic character assessment, and sustained two-way communication may therefore be more effective than interventions that focus on only one party. Role dysfunction can be reduced by building a planned, consistent school-family partnership oriented toward children's developmental needs (Olivola et al., 2020).

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that teacher and parent role dysfunction in early childhood character education at KMH Early Childhood Education Institution is primarily associated with discontinuity between school-based practices and family reinforcement. The main manifestations include inconsistent teacher role modeling and habituation, limited capacity to plan and assess character development, insufficient school family communication, restricted parental supervision, and inconsistent parenting practices. These conditions may hinder the internalization of discipline, responsibility, respect, empathy, and other positive character values. The findings suggest that character education should be approached as a shared responsibility rather than as an isolated task assigned to teachers or parents. Practical teacher development, reciprocal communication, and consistent routines across school and home are therefore important for strengthening character formation. Nevertheless, the study is limited by its focus on one institution and six informants, and its findings cannot be statistically generalized to other educational settings. It also does not establish the long-term effects of school-family collaboration on children's character development. Future research should compare multiple early childhood education institutions, include more diverse participants and family backgrounds, and examine how different partnership strategies influence children's behavioral and social-emotional development over time. Longitudinal or mixed-methods studies could further assess the sustainability and effectiveness of collaborative character education programs.

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