

# Parental Engagement in Character Education for Generation Alpha in Diaspora: A Qualitative Study of Indonesian Families at Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur (SIKL), Malaysia

Sri Handayani<sup>a</sup>, Mohamad Zuber Abd Majid<sup>b</sup>, Andy Prasetyo Wati<sup>a</sup>, Inayati Nuraini Dwiputri<sup>a</sup>, Wiwin Hartanto<sup>c</sup>, Dian Wahyuningsih<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Economic Education Study Program, Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia

<sup>b</sup>Economic Development Education, Fakulti Pendidikan, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia

<sup>c</sup>Department of Asia Pacific Regional Studies, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, National Dong Hwa University, Taiwan

<sup>d</sup>Southampton School of Education, University of Southampton, United Kingdom

## Abstract

**Purpose** – This study addresses a critical gap in character education literature by examining how Indonesian parents in diaspora settings, specifically those with children attending Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur (SIKL), perceive and implement character education within the family. Given Generation Alpha's deep immersion in technology and the shifting cultural identities of diaspora families, this research highlights the need for moral resilience fostered through family-based character development.

**Methods/Design/Approach** – Using a qualitative approach, the study employed Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and in-depth interviews involving 30 purposively selected parents of SIKL students across grades X–XII. Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, then thematically analyzed with the support of NVivo software. The analysis focused on six key dimensions of parental involvement: parenting, communication, home-based learning, contribution, decision-making, and collaboration.

**Findings** – Parents consistently associated character education with empathy, honesty, religiosity, and emotional intelligence. Role modeling (35%), discussion and reflection (45%), and open communication emerged as dominant methods. Major challenges included children's technology dependence (65%), limited parent–child time, and academic stress. Key support resources included family centers, faith communities, parenting groups, and social media networks.

**Originality/Value** – This study offers novel insights into character education within transnational families, emphasizing the strategic role of parental engagement in preserving national identity and moral values in intercultural contexts. While exploratory, the study's findings serve as a theoretical and practical foundation for future research across diaspora settings.

**Practical Implications** – Schools serving diaspora populations should institutionalize collaborative character education programs with active parental involvement. Family-centered training modules, value-based projects, and intercultural parenting forums are essential to maintain consistency in moral education. The study's geographic and informant scope presents limitations, inviting future research to include student and teacher perspectives for a more holistic understanding.

**Keywords** Character education, diaspora families, parental involvement, Generation Alpha, transnational education

**Paper type** Research paper

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## 1. Introduction

Education plays a central role in shaping individual character, which in turn contributes to broader social and community life (Astuti et al., 2019). Strong character in students not only implies an improvement in quality of life, but also fosters the development of social concern, moral integrity, and the ability to make wise decisions in facing the complexities of life (Pradana et al., 2021; Schutte & Malouff, 2019; Singh, 2019). Furthermore, character education is believed to reduce the potential for social conflict through the reinforcement of values such as tolerance and cooperation (Bates, 2019; Hidayati et al., 2020). In this context, character education is understood as a process of personality formation rooted in moral and ethical education (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2007), aimed at shaping individuals who are responsible for themselves, their communities, and their nation (Hermino & Arifin, 2020).

Character development cannot be separated from interaction with various social environments, including family, school, and community (Singh, 2019). However, in the current digital era, particularly amid the rise of Generation Alpha with their high level of technological literacy, character education gains renewed urgency. This generation faces complex life challenges due to the rapid flow of information and technological advancement (Asif et al., 2020), thus requiring a strong character foundation to maintain a balance between technological development and sociocultural values (Defitrika & Mahmudah, 2021). Character education for Generation Alpha is crucial in shaping moral resilience, enabling them to use technology ethically and productively (Dienlin & Johannes, 2020; Gusma et al., 2022; Miller, 2023). Therefore, synergy is needed between character education in formal settings (schools) and informal settings (families) to shape individuals who are resilient and possess integrity.

Various studies have emphasized the positive influence of education on students' character development. Previous research has shown that the implementation of character education in school curricula significantly contributes to the strengthening of students' character values (Aningsih et al., 2022; Hidayat & Rozak, 2022; Panggabean, 2022; Pradana et al., 2021). However, this effectiveness increases significantly when school-based character education is accompanied by active parental involvement in the educational process (Paul et al., 2022). The role of the family as the primary environment for shaping children's character is even considered more dominant than that of formal educational institutions (Hermino & Arifin, 2020). A study in Indonesia also highlights the importance of character education beginning in the family environment before being reinforced by formal education and the broader community (Arliman S et al., 2022).

Despite these findings making important contributions to the understanding of character education, several limitations remain to be addressed. First, most previous studies have focused more on character development within the context of formal education, while the role of informal education—particularly the family—is often merely regarded as an additional support. Second, the approaches employed in some studies tend to be descriptive in nature and have yet to examine in depth how parents' perceptions and understanding of character education influence its implementation in the family context. This indicates the existence of both a knowledge gap and an empirical gap (Miles, 2017), particularly in understanding the dynamics of character education in the family environment for Indonesian children studying abroad.

Based on this exposition, the present study aims to fill the gap in the literature by exploring parents' understanding of the importance of character education within the family context, specifically for Indonesian children attending Sekolah Indonesia in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, at the junior and senior secondary levels (SMP and SMA). The main issue addressed is the suboptimal integration of character education within the family environment, which has led to a tendency for character education to be concentrated in

formal institutions. Accordingly, this research focuses on the central question: How do parents understand the importance of character education in the family for Indonesian children studying abroad?

The findings of this study are expected to offer both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, this study enriches the body of literature on character education in the context of family and transnational education. Practically, the research may serve as a foundation for the formulation of character education policies that involve active parental participation, particularly for Indonesian diaspora children who face cultural and social challenges in other countries. Thus, this study can strengthen efforts to shape a generation of Indonesian youth who are resilient, adaptive, and deeply rooted in national and humanitarian values.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 *The Role of Parents in Character Education*

Parents remain central actors in the educational process of children, whether through formal, non-formal, or informal pathways (Sakti, 2019). One of the primary roles of parents is to create a home environment that is conducive to and aligned with the family's character values (Lilawati, 2024), particularly in confronting the challenges of globalization faced by Generation Alpha (Miller, 2023). Generation Alpha is known for its high level of technological literacy (Drugas, 2022), which necessitates intensive parental guidance in all aspects of their growth and daily activities (Bozak, 2021).

One form of such guidance is character education within the family environment (Li & Qiu, 2018). However, the practice of character education in the home has not yet become a widespread norm (Aningsih et al., 2022; Hermino & Arifin, 2020). Therefore, a more realistic approach is required to shape children's resilient personalities (Ceka & Murati, 2016), including aspects such as health, physical growth, education, and intellectual and moral development. This also includes the construction of values, beliefs, and positive habits, as well as the strengthening of cultural connections and social behaviors within families and communities (Munafiah et al., 2023).

In line with this, several studies have indicated that parental involvement significantly influences the success of character education programs in schools (Ritonga, 2022). In fact, parental engagement has been shown to enhance the effectiveness of such programs (Paul et al., 2022). Parents play an increasingly crucial role as central agents in shaping children's personalities (Rahayu, 2023), particularly within the context of Generation Alpha (Akmal et al., 2020). Based on this foundation, the present study develops a survey on the role of parents in shaping the character of Generation Alpha, as detailed in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** Dimensions of Parental Roles in the Character Development of Generation Alpha Children

No	Dimension	Indicator
1	Parenting	Providing information on the child's background; conditioning the home; child vaccination
2	Communicating	Two-way communication with the child; understanding the goals of school activities
3	Learning at home	Meeting the child's needs; reviewing assignments; selecting courses; providing appreciation
4	Volunteering	Participating in school activities; sharing expertise; contributing to character development at school
5	Decision making	Active role in the child's character development; involving the child in family decisions

No	Dimension	Indicator
6	Collaboration work	Cooperation with teachers and the community; contributing to the reinforcement of the child's character

The table shows that there are various dimensions serving as key indicators in the character development of Generation Alpha through the active role of parents in family education. A consistent parenting approach is considered a key factor in guiding children to use technology wisely (Susanti, 2023), while simultaneously shaping resilient character to face future challenges (Sugiarti et al., 2022). Directed and consistent communication about the required character values will shape children who are not only intellectually intelligent but also ethically and emotionally aware (Mustoip et al., 2023).

Through the synergy of parenting patterns, communication, and home-based learning, character education can be effectively implemented (Hermino & Arifin, 2020). Parental awareness of the importance of character education fosters their active involvement in building partnerships with educational institutions (Martati & Haryanti, 2023). Accordingly, these dimensions are expected to strengthen the collaboration between parents and schools in shaping the character of Generation Alpha children.

## 2.2 Character Education

Character education is a form of education that emphasizes the importance of moral and ethical values in shaping virtuous individuals (Asif et al., 2020). Technological developments have added complexity to the implementation of character education, necessitating strategies that can instill values such as integrity, empathy, responsibility, cooperation, and honesty (Betawi, 2020). In Indonesia, character education has been integrated into the national curriculum through the Strengthening Character Education (PPK) Program, which is based on Pancasila values, including religiosity, nationalism, independence, mutual cooperation, and integrity (Susilo et al., 2022).

Character education not only aims to shape individual behavior but also to foster a positive school culture and social environment (Cholifah & Faelasup, 2024). In this context, parents serve as primary behavioral models for children, given their tendency to imitate adult actions in their surroundings (Birhan et al., 2021). Daily behaviors that reflect moral values such as integrity and empathy constitute a foundational element in character formation (Rahayu, 2023) and can be integrated into the learning curriculum.

In alignment with this, the character cultivated through education must also correspond with prevailing social norms, including values such as empathy and honesty (Ramadhani et al., 2024). Character education is also intended to offer direct learning experiences to the younger generation in understanding life and facing contemporary challenges (Santrock, 2011).

The primary functions of character education include the development of individual potential (Lavy, 2020), the reinforcement of positive behaviors, and serving as a filter against foreign cultural influences that are inconsistent with Pancasila values (Aryani et al., 2022). In this context, the core competencies emphasized include the 4Cs—critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration—which are highly relevant to contemporary challenges (Supena et al., 2021). Nevertheless, the implementation of character education requires collaboration among various stakeholders, including families, schools, governments, and communities. Consequently, the approach to character education must account for the complex and evolving nature of family contexts, while adapting to technological advancements and the dynamics of social values in society.

### 3. Methods

This research, a document analysis, employs a descriptive content analysis of studies pertaining to teacher image. Descriptive content analysis is a systematic research method used to examine a body of independent qualitative and quantitative studies related to a specific topic (Ültay et al., 2021). The goal is to identify and synthesize overarching patterns and general trends within the existing research in that field. Unlike systematic reviews or meta-syntheses, which aim to answer specific research questions or synthesize findings, our study sought to provide a descriptive overview of the field.

#### 3.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach with the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) method as the primary strategy to address the research objectives. The selection of FGD was based on its capacity to elicit in-depth information directly from parents, allowing the researcher to capture the dynamics of group discussions, non-verbal expressions, and collective understanding regarding character education within the family context (Hennink, 2014). This approach aligns with the research focus on exploring parents' perceptions and subjective experiences in nurturing children's character within the diaspora environment.

#### 3.2 Participants and Data Sources

The initial number of participants invited to the FGD sessions was 112 parents of Grade X, XI, and XII students at Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur (SIKL), Malaysia. All invited participants attended the FGD, which was conducted in two sessions (morning and afternoon). However, for more in-depth and thematically representative analysis, 30 participants were purposively selected based on class representation, intensity of contribution during discussions, and diversity of social backgrounds. This sub-sample selection was intended to ensure that the analyzed data reflected the complexity of perspectives in depth, as is customary in qualitative approaches (Malterud et al., 2016). Furthermore, three parents representing Grades X, XI, and XII were selected for in-depth interviews based on their reflective capacity and active involvement in school activities and their children's education.

#### 3.3 Data Collection

Data collection was carried out in stages through participant observation, FGDs, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis.

The first stage involved preliminary observation and informal discussions with the School Committee in March 2023 to understand the social context and define the core issues. The second stage entailed the main FGDs held in July 2023, conducted in a semi-structured format over two sessions (morning and afternoon), each lasting four hours. These FGDs yielded primary qualitative data regarding parents' perceptions, strategies, and challenges in character education. The third stage comprised in-depth interviews with three key informants to explore aspects not revealed during the group discussions. Lastly, document analysis was conducted on discussion transcripts, field notes, and communication artifacts between the school and parents.



### 3.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted in two stages: (1) Manual analysis, in which discussion and interview transcripts were openly coded, categorized, and thematically interpreted using Braun and Clarke's thematic approach; (2) Digital analysis, where the data were further processed using NVivo 12 Plus to map relationships among nodes, identify keyword frequencies (word clouds), and generate thematic mind maps and project maps. This combined approach enhanced the transparency, accuracy, and visualization of findings (Bazeley, 2021).

### 3.5 Research Ethics

This study obtained ethical clearance from the SIKL management and the School Committee. All participants received written information regarding the study's objectives, procedures, and guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity. Participation was entirely voluntary and accompanied by written informed consent.

## 4. Results

Out of the 112 participants who took part in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), a purposive sample of 30 parents was selected for further analysis. The selection considered class level representation (X, XI, XII), socio-economic background, and the quality of individual contributions during the discussions. The data obtained from these 30 FGD participants were analyzed thematically and yielded six main themes: perceptions, objectives, methods, barriers, resources, and implementation strategies of character education within the family context. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with three key informants and analyzed using the six previously established dimensions of parental roles. All coding and data visualization processes were conducted with the aid of NVivo software.

To enhance transparency and provide contextual clarity for the analysis, Table 2 presents the demographic characteristics of the 30 FGD participants whose data were included in the thematic analysis.

**Table 2.** FGD Respondent Profile

Category	Subcategory	Count	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	7	23.33
	Female	23	76.67
Age	< 30 years	6	20.00
	31–36 years	15	50.00
	37–41 years	5	16.67
	> 42 years	4	13.33
Profession	Homemaker	3	10.00
	Employee	10	33.33
	Teacher/Lecturer	9	30.00
	Entrepreneur	9	30.00
Child's Grade	Grade X	10	33.33
	Grade XI	15	50.00
	Grade XII	5	16.67

The FGDs produced several key themes, as summarized in Table 3 below.

**Table 3.** FGD Result

Category & Classification	Result	Conclusion
Parents' Perception of Character Education	Of the 30 participants who were parents of Generation Alpha students at SIKL, they viewed character education as highly necessary for the children's future development. The majority of parents (40%, or 12 individuals) viewed character education as activities related to discipline, morality, and acting wisely. A total of 30% (9 parents) stated that character education includes honesty, religious habits/activities, and emotional intelligence. The remaining 30% (9 parents) stated that character education includes empathy towards others and active involvement in social activities.	According to parents at SIKL, character education for Generation Alpha students relates to honesty, empathy and social engagement, discipline, religiosity and morality, wisdom, and emotional intelligence.
Purpose and Importance of Character Education	From the FGDs, parents expressed several purposes in conducting character education for Generation Alpha children. Twelve parents aimed to build a better personality, with character associated with strong ethics, integrity, and good behavior. They also believed that character education helps reduce negative behavior. Eleven parents implemented character education to develop moral values, believing it is important to help children become responsible individuals. Another seven parents conducted character education to enhance their children's social relationships and to build ethics and morals grounded in family values.	Based on the parents' narratives, the purposes of character education are to shape good personality, develop moral values, improve children's ability to build social relationships, and establish ethics and morals grounded in family values.
Methods and Approaches Used by Parents	Various methods can be applied in conducting character education. About 35% of parents chose the modeling method (leading by example) in daily activities and used open two-way communication with their children. Meanwhile, 45% of parents preferred discussion and reflection methods, inviting their children to engage in open dialogue and assigning them responsibilities. Only 20% of parents chose storytelling and involved their children in social and charitable activities.	Parents can use various methods and approaches in conducting character education for their children. The SIKL parent community applied several methods and approaches such as: behavior modeling, storytelling, discussion and reflection, wise use of reward and punishment, formal education or character programs, involvement in social and charitable activities, task and responsibility assignments, open communication, and acceptance.

Category & Classification	Result	Conclusion
Challenges and Obstacles in Character Education	While conducting character education, parents encountered several challenges and obstacles. Nearly 65% of parents experienced that Generation Alpha tends to have a high dependency on technology. Meanwhile, the remaining 35% reported limited quality time with children and high academic pressure.	The challenges and obstacles perceived by parents in implementing character education include technology dependency, lack of time together, and high academic pressure.
Resources and Support	Among various available resources and support in character education, the majority of SIKL parents (25%) sourced from family resource centers—community-based centers that offer seminars, mentoring, and workshops for character education. Around 45% of parents used books, reading materials, and social media, including participation in parent support groups or communities. The remaining 40% of parents chose to rely on religious communities and enrolled their children in character education programs.	Resources and support can be sourced from: family resource centers, books and reading materials, social media, parent support groups, religious communities, and character education programs.
Tips and Tricks for Implementing Character Education	The majority of the parent community (60%) stated the importance of clarifying core values as strengths within the family environment, and the need for family activities or family projects in character education, including providing rewards when children do right and recognition when they make mistakes. Meanwhile, 30% of parents agreed on conducting character education through open communication and involving children in decision-making. Only 10% of parents emphasized doing family planning.	Tips and tricks for implementing character education within the family environment include identifying core values, conducting family activities or projects, offering rewards and recognition, building communication, involving children in decision-making, and performing proper family planning for character education of Generation Alpha.

Based on the respondent profile, three parents each from Grade X, XI, and XII (equivalent to Grades 10, 11, and 12) were selected for in-depth interviews.

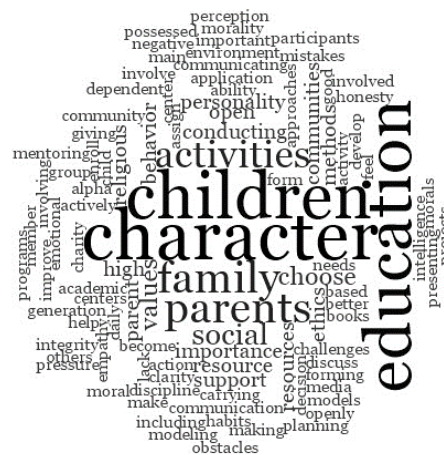
**Table 4.** List of Questions

Dimension	Indicator
Parenting	How do parents implement parenting to develop the character of Generation Alpha?
Communicating	What communication style do parents use in parenting to develop the character of Generation Alpha?
Learning at home	What home learning model is implemented by parents to support the character development of Generation Alpha?



Dimension	Indicator
Parents Contribution	What is the role of parents in parenting to develop the character of Generation Alpha?
Decision Making	How do parents involve children in decision-making for the character development of Generation Alpha?
Collaboration work	What collaboration model is implemented by parents to develop the character of Generation Alpha?

Data from the interview activities were analyzed using NVivo software. The following are the results of the analysis that has been conducted.



**Figure 1.** Word Cloud of FGD Result

Based on Figure 1, the word cloud from the FGD shows several frequently appearing clues such as the words character, children, education, family, parents, and social. From the results of the obtained word cloud data, the analysis was continued by designing a mind map from several important pieces of information that had been collected. The results of the mind map are shown in Figure 2 below.

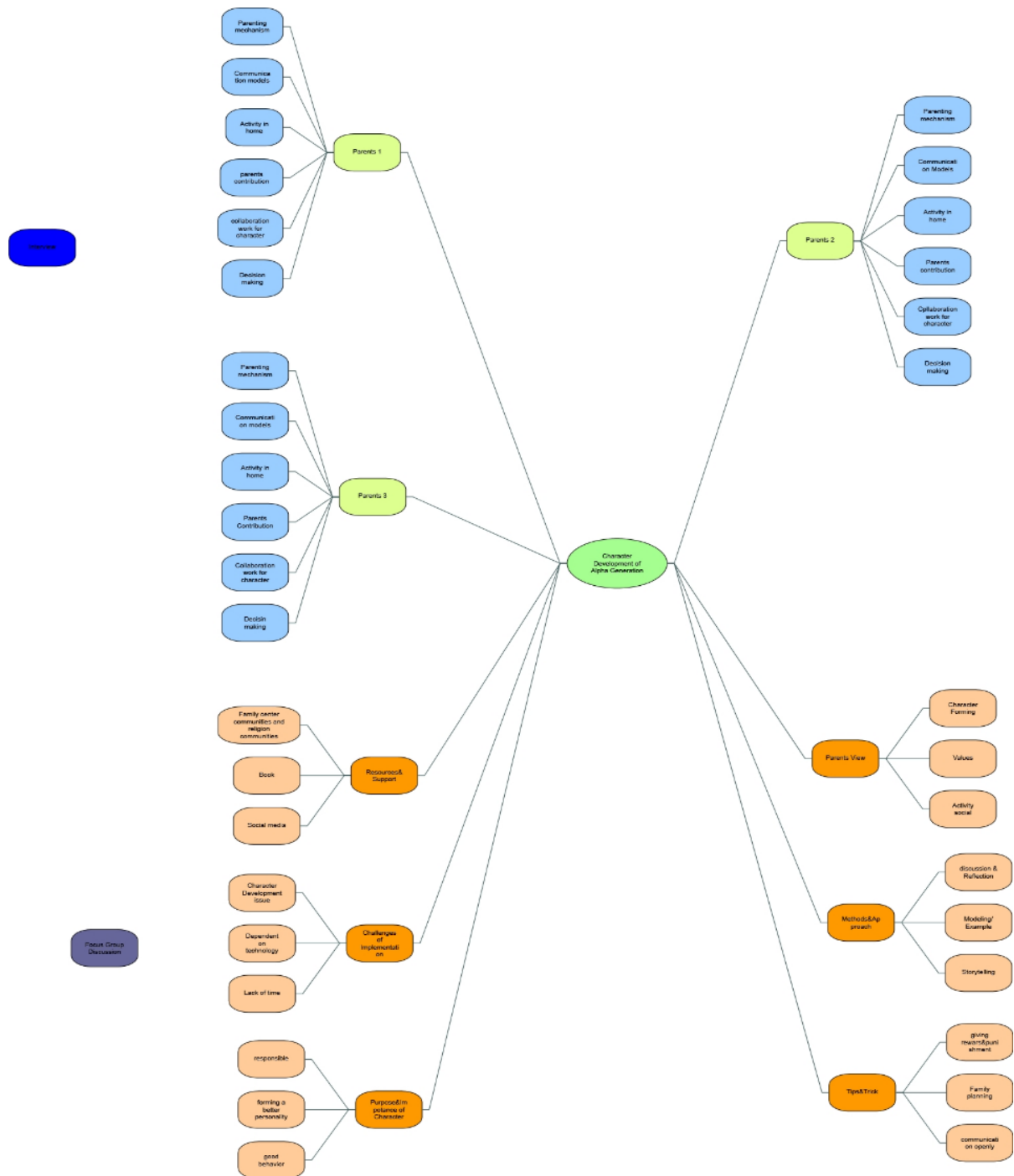
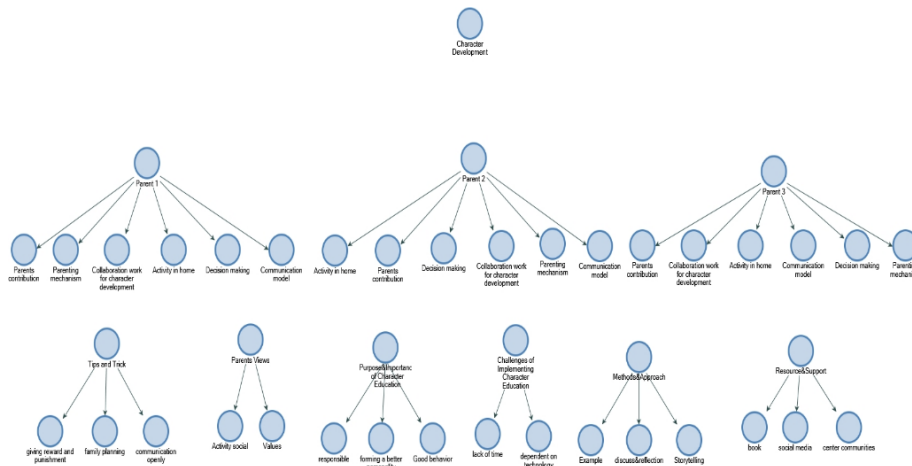


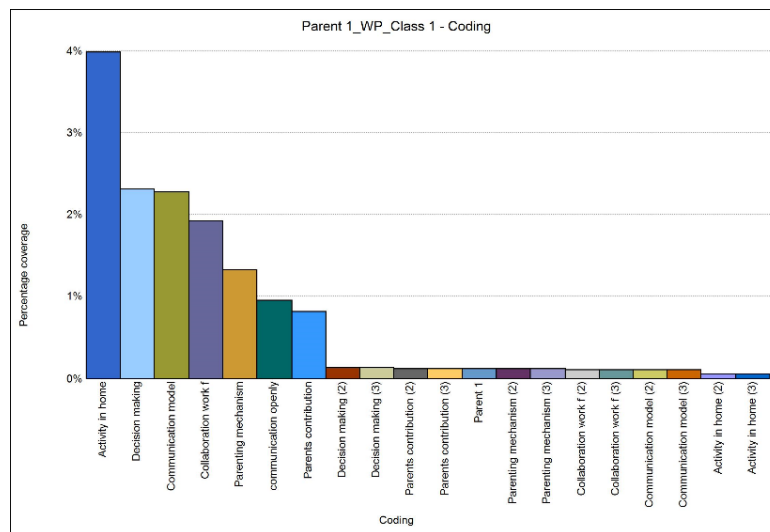
Figure 2. Mind Map NVivo Result

From the results of the mind map, it can be seen that the character development of Generation Alpha can be developed through the opinions of three parents and the results of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) activities with several compiled question themes and topics. The results related to the nodes in this study can be seen in Figure 3 below.

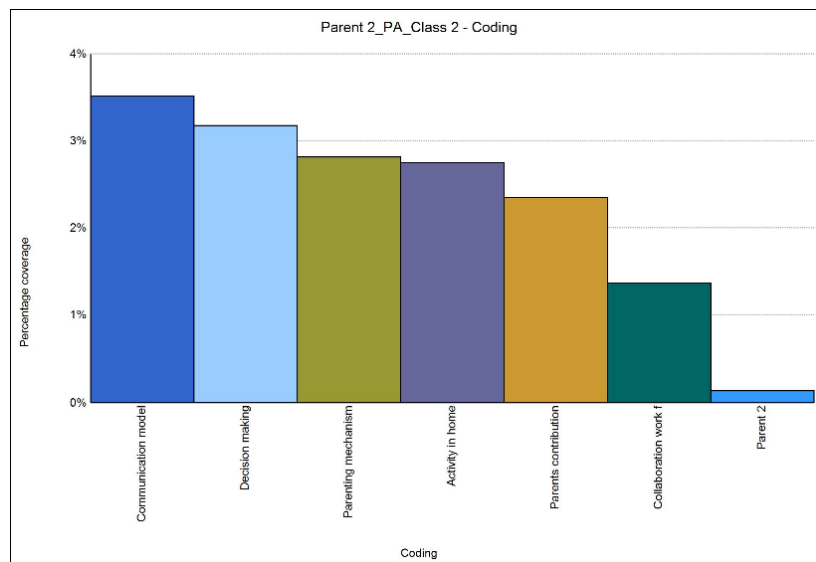


**Figure 3.** Project Map of NVivo Result

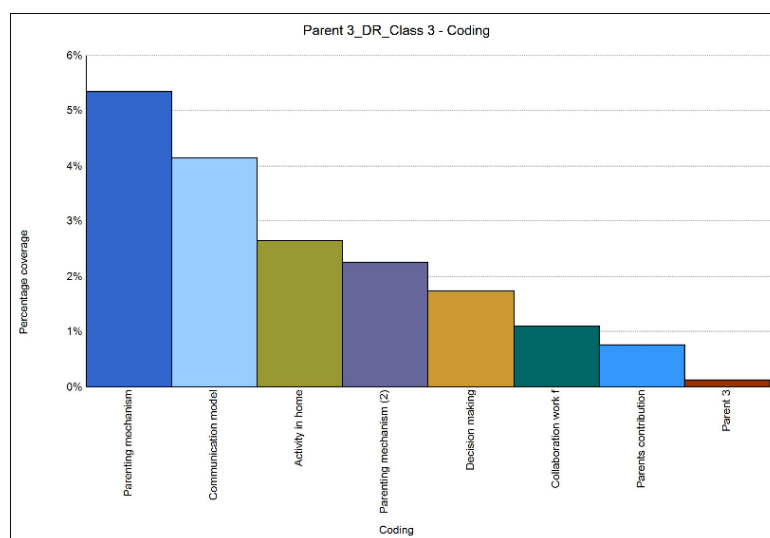
Based on Figure 3 above, it can be seen that there are 9 nodes in analyzing character development for Generation Alpha. Character development can be viewed from parents' perceptions, which are seen through six (6) aspects such as parenting mechanism, communication models, activity in home, parents' contribution, decision making, and collaboration work. The visual output of each opinion provided by the parents can be seen in Figures 4, 5, and 6 below.



**Figure 4.** Visual Output Interview Result (Parent 1)



**Figure 5.** Visual Output Interview Result (Parent 2)



**Figure 6.** Visual Output Interview Result (Parent 3)

Based on Figures 4, 5, and 6, it can be seen that Parent 1 informant places more emphasis on home learning activities in developing the character of Generation Alpha. In contrast, Parent 2 places more emphasis on the communication patterns built to instill good character, and Parent 3 focuses more on the parenting mechanism implemented to develop character education.

## 5. Discussion

This study aimed to explore the perceptions and practices of Indonesian parents in shaping the character education of Generation Alpha children pursuing education abroad, particularly at Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur (SIKL), Malaysia. The findings reveal that although schools play a significant role in instilling students' moral and ethical values, the family remains the fundamental foundation of character education. These findings directly support the research objectives while also underscoring the need for synergy between formal and informal education within the culturally and socially challenging context of the diaspora.

Based on the results of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews, parents within the SIKL community demonstrated a strong understanding of the importance of character education. They linked it to the development of ethical, empathetic, and socially responsible personalities. More specifically, these perceptions were reflected in six identified dimensions: parenting mechanism, communication models, activity in home, parents' contribution, decision making, and collaboration work.

The most commonly applied strategies included modeling (leading by example), open two-way communication, and value-based discussions and reflections. However, parents also identified challenges such as children's dependency on technology, limited family time due to parents' busy schedules, and academic pressures. These challenges point to the importance of a flexible, values-based parenting approach to ensure that character education is effectively integrated into children's daily lives (Bozak, 2021; Gusma et al., 2022).

These findings are consistent with prior literature that highlights the critical role of parents in children's character education from an early age (Hermino & Arifin, 2020; Paul et al., 2022; Sujarwo et al., 2021). This study reinforces the idea that character education within the family is not merely a supplement to school education, but in fact the starting point of moral development that influences children's behavior in both school and society (Al-Hail et al., 2021; Lilawati, 2024).

At the same time, these findings align with perspectives emphasizing the effectiveness of school-based character education, where formal interactions provide a structured environment for shaping students' ethics, values, and social skills (Holmes et al., 2022; Pring, 2021; Singh, 2019). Schools serve not only as centers of academic instruction but also as arenas for learning values such as honesty, cooperation, and tolerance, facilitated through modeling and real-life practices in the school environment (Hermino & Arifin, 2020; Syarnubi et al., 2021).

Although this study did not directly investigate the perspectives of teachers or school staff, their roles remain relevant to the discussion, as parents' perceptions are largely shaped by their interactions with the school institution. Teachers and educators are thus seen as key actors in shaping children's character through modeled behavior and the tangible reinforcement of character values (Singh, 2019).

The study yields several important implications for the practice of character education, particularly in the context of diaspora children. First, schools must strengthen their role as institutions for character formation, not only by delivering instructional content but also by embedding value-based learning such as honesty, empathy, and cooperation. Teachers and school staff must serve as authentic role models who consistently demonstrate character-driven behavior in everyday school life (Syarnubi et al., 2021). This creates a learning environment conducive to the natural and sustainable internalization of values.

Second, it is crucial for schools to engage parents as active partners in the character education process. Such involvement can be facilitated through various strategies, including targeted training programs, discussion forums, and collaborative initiatives designed to enhance parents' capacity to instill character values at home (Martati &

Haryanti, 2023). When schools and families work synergistically, character education can be implemented in a holistic and more effective manner.

Moreover, the synergy between schools and families should not be limited to functional collaboration but must also be formalized into value-based, sustainable joint programs. This becomes increasingly relevant in the face of digital-era challenges and rapidly shifting social dynamics (Susanti, 2023). Within the diaspora context, such collaboration is even more critical, as children are not only confronted with academic challenges but also with issues of value and cultural identity due to exposure to foreign environments. Thus, diaspora families play a strategic role in maintaining the continuity of character and national identity among Indonesian children in transnational settings.

This study presents several limitations that must be considered when interpreting its findings. A primary limitation lies in the geographical scope of the research, which was confined to Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur (SIKL), Malaysia. As such, the study's findings may not fully capture the experiences of Indonesian diaspora communities in other countries with different socio-cultural contexts.

In addition, the study focused exclusively on parents, without including direct perspectives from students or teachers. Consequently, the depiction of school-family synergy in character education remains incomplete, as it omits viewpoints from other key stakeholders in the process.

While the qualitative methodology employed enabled deep, context-rich insights, it inherently limits the generalizability of the findings. These exploratory results require further validation through quantitative or mixed-methods approaches to yield a more comprehensive understanding.

Given these limitations, future research may be directed toward several areas. First, studies should be conducted to measure the effectiveness of character education strategies by incorporating both student and parent perspectives. This approach would enable researchers to assess the alignment between parental perceptions and children's lived experiences in character education, as well as evaluate program outcomes more objectively using mixed methods.

Second, comparative studies across countries or diaspora communities are needed to investigate differences in approaches, strategies, and challenges in character education within more diverse cultural contexts. Such research would provide broader and more adaptive insights into the various social configurations influencing the character development of diaspora children.

Third, future research would greatly benefit from directly exploring the perspectives of teachers and students to better understand how school-family collaboration is enacted in practice. This approach would contribute to a more holistic understanding of the synergy in character education and enrich the dimensions of stakeholder interaction that may not yet be fully revealed.

Overall, this study affirms that the success of character education for Generation Alpha is highly dependent on the synergy between parental roles and formal educational environments. While schools remain vital in shaping children's social values and ethics, support from the family—in the form of consistent parenting, open communication, and everyday value-based learning—constitutes an irreplaceable foundation. In the diaspora context, this becomes even more critical, as families hold a strategic role in preserving cultural identity and national character amidst globalization. This study makes a significant contribution to the theory and practice of cross-cultural character education while also opening pathways for more adaptive and transformative family-school partnerships in addressing the challenges of the digital era.



## 6. Conclusion

This study affirms that character education for Indonesian Generation Alpha, particularly within the diaspora context at Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur (SIKL), is significantly influenced by active family involvement. While formal education plays a vital role in the systematic transmission of character values, the findings reinforce the argument that family-based character education serves as the primary foundation for shaping resilient, ethical, and socially responsible individuals. Parents' perceptions—reflected through six key dimensions: parenting, communication, learning at home, parental contribution, decision making, and collaboration—demonstrate a deep understanding and the implementation of concrete strategies to strengthen character values in the daily lives of their children.

These findings address the central research question regarding how parents understand and practice character education within the family in a transnational context. At the same time, this study broadens the scope of the existing literature by introducing insights from diaspora communities, which have thus far been underrepresented in character education research. Employing a qualitative approach through FGDs and in-depth interviews, the study identifies strategies, challenges, and resources employed by parents, including modeling approaches, value discussions, involvement in social activities, and engagement with religious communities and parent groups.

Practically, these results yield several important implications for the field of education. First, schools in diaspora environments should develop more collaborative character education programs that engage parents as strategic partners. Second, educational institutions may design training modules for parents to enhance their capacity to consistently convey character values at home. Third, in a transnational context, value-based initiatives such as family projects, cross-cultural parenting workshops, and family-school communication forums become highly relevant for sustaining national character values.

However, this study has several limitations. The geographical scope is confined to SIKL in Malaysia, thus limiting the generalizability of findings across the broader Indonesian diaspora. Additionally, as the research focuses solely on the perspectives of parents, it does not include the voices of students or teachers, leaving the school-family synergy to be explored further in terms of institutional practices and children's lived experiences.

Future research directions may include employing a mixed-methods approach to objectively measure the effectiveness of character education programs at home and in school settings. Comparative studies across countries or diaspora communities are also essential to explore variations in cultural and social contexts in children's character education. Furthermore, it is important to investigate the role of teachers and the dynamics of children's interactions in the internalization of values, to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of character education synergy.

Overall, this study makes a significant contribution to the development of cross-cultural character education theory and practice. It underscores the pivotal role of the family as the cornerstone in shaping a generation that is resilient, adaptive, and grounded in character amid contemporary challenges. For educational practitioners, especially in diaspora contexts, these findings provide a strong foundation for constructing a character education ecosystem that is collaborative, contextual, and sustainable.

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## Declarations

### Author contribution statement

**Sri Handayani:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Data Collection, Writing – Original Draft.

**Mohamad Zuber Abd Majid:** Theoretical Framework, Validation, Supervision, Writing – Review & Editing.

**Andy Prasetyo Wati:** Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Visualization, Writing – Review & Editing.

**Inayati Nuraini Dwiputri:** Investigation, Resources, Project Administration.

**Wiwin Hartanto:** Software, NVivo Coding, Data Management, and Technical Support.

**Dian Wahyuningsih:** Literature Review, Editing Support, and Documentation.

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The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

### Additional information

Correspondence and requests for materials should be addressed to the **Corresponding Author**, Sri Handayani, at ✉ [sri.handayani.fe@um.ac.id](mailto:sri.handayani.fe@um.ac.id)

### ORCID

Sri Handayani  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4471-6153>

Mohamad Zuber Abd Majid  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5434-5926>

Andy Prasetyo Wati  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4208-3599>

Inayati Nuraini Dwiputri  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2083-2408>

Wiwin Hartanto  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4153-125X>

Dian Wahyuningsih  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7847-9590>

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