Shaping Children's Social Ethics in Female Migrant Families: Islamic Insights on Education and Gender within the SDGs Framework

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Abstract

Objective: This study explores strategies for shaping children's social ethics within female migrant families through the lens of Islamic values and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). **Theoretical framework:** The theoretical framework integrates the concepts of social behavior formation in families, character education theory (especially honesty and modeling), and religious education theory in the family context. This is reinforced by the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) to determine strategic priorities in an objective and data-driven manner. **Literature review:** Literature review findings indicate that female migrant workers, despite limited physical presence, still play a pivotal role in shaping their children's social ethics through intentional education, values transmission, and exemplary behavior. Prior research emphasizes family-based value education and identifies the need for measurable strategic frameworks such as AHP in prioritizing parenting methods. **Methods:** This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach using purposive sampling. Data were gathered through interviews, observation, document analysis, and structured questionnaires. Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP), supported by Expert Choice 11 software, was used to prioritize educational strategies based on expert judgments. **Results:** The results identified three priority strategies: religious education (42.1%)—with emphasis on daily religious values (47.5%); exemplary behavior (43.5%)—highlighting the importance of parents as role models; and honesty education—prioritizing the alignment between words and actions (46.9%). The results were confirmed by a low inconsistency index (0.01), validating the reliability of the findings. **Implications:** The implications highlight the importance of reinforcing Islamic values in children's social development, especially in the context of parental absence due to migration. The study provides guidance for mothers and educators to implement practical, measurable, and value-based approaches aligned with Islamic teachings and the SDGs. **Novelty:** The novelty lies in applying AHP to evaluate parenting strategies in migrant contexts—a method rarely used in character education research.

Keywords: gender, social and education, children, migrant families, islam and sdgs.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of globalization and economic transformation, the migration of women for work has become increasingly common, particularly in developing countries. While this shift has brought about economic benefits for families, it has also raised critical concerns regarding parenting roles and the moral development of children left behind. Children in female migrant families often face a lack of consistent parental presence, especially maternal guidance, which can significantly affect their social behavior and ethical development. Although various studies have explored the implications of parental absence on children's academic performance and emotional well-being, limited research focuses specifically on the shaping of children's social ethics within these unique family structures [1].

Moreover, existing literature tends to generalize family dynamics without differentiating between male and female-headed households in migrant contexts. There is a lack of attention to the cultural and religious values that influence parenting strategies, especially in Muslim-majority societies. While Islamic education emphasizes moral development through akhlaq (ethics), tarbiyyah (education), and parental example, few empirical studies integrate these principles into practical frameworks for families affected by maternal migration. Similarly, although the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality)—highlight the importance of inclusive and equitable education and the empowerment of women, the intersection between Islamic ethics, gender roles, and moral education in migrant families remains underexplored [2].

Additionally, most studies on child socialization strategies rely on qualitative approaches and lack systematic prioritization methods. There is a research gap in applying analytical tools such as the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) to determine effective strategies for ethical development in such family settings. This gap underscores the need for a comprehensive, data-driven, and culturally rooted investigation that not only addresses children's moral growth in female migrant households but also aligns with Islamic educational values and the global vision of sustainable development. This study seeks to fill that gap by offering a focused analysis of strategies for shaping children's social ethics in female migrant families, incorporating Islamic insights and SDGs-based educational goals [3].

Female labor migration has become a significant phenomenon in various countries, especially Indonesia. Many women choose to work abroad to carry out household responsibilities, which is done to improve the family's economic condition. Although this decision brings financial benefits, it can lead to family structure and dynamics, especially for the children left behind. This raises questions about the impact of migration on the social behavior of children in families of female workers. Understanding that female labor migration is often driven by pressing economic factors on the ground is crucial for addressing the challenges faced by migrant workers and their families. Female labor migration is essential for many families who rely on the income of female workers to meet basic needs. However, a mother's absence can have profound psychological and social impacts on children. The lack of a mother figure in daily life can affect a child's emotional and behavioral development [4].

Positive parenting plays a crucial role in the well-being of immigrant families, fostering resilience and healthy development. However, when a mother works abroad, her child may experience negative consequences that affect their well-being and development [5]. They may have to take on additional responsibilities, such as caring for younger siblings or helping with household chores. While the presence of parents is generally considered beneficial, these changes can affect family relationships and lead to tension [6]. Simultaneous positive education and the involvement of both mothers and fathers in a child's upbringing help the child adjust to their environment [7]. Migration can also alter

the social conditions of a child's environment. Children from families of female workers may face stigma or negative perceptions from the surrounding community due to their parents' migration [8]. This stigma can lead to isolation or a lack of self-confidence, ultimately affecting their social behavior. These experiences can influence their interactions with peers and the wider community [9].

The influence of communication technology on migration also has a significant impact. Many female workers stay in touch with their families through phone calls or social media. Although this communication can help ease homesickness, virtual interactions cannot fully replace the physical presence of a mother [10]. Children may feel dissatisfied when face-to-face interactions with their parents are limited, leading to feelings of loss and longing [11]. Although parents demonstrate their commitment to their children in various ways and make great efforts to ensure their well-being, children's behavioral problems still require attention [12]. Parents may overlook more effective alternative strategies that could help children develop positive behaviors [13]. Social support from the surrounding environment also plays a crucial role. Caring communities can help children navigate the challenges posed by migration. Community activities, tutoring, and psychological support programs can assist children in adjusting and overcoming the emotional impact of a parent's absence. Without adequate support, children may be at greater risk of developing more serious behavioral issues [14].

Parents employ various methods to achieve their children's welfare goals, including migration [15]. Girls may face higher social expectations regarding domestic responsibilities, while boys may be expected to assume the role of family protector. These differences can influence the development of their identities and social behaviors, leading to changes within the family, particularly in children's behavior [16]. Additionally, children may engage in actions that lead to social conflict within the family, influenced by the roles of their parents [17]. In the context of globalization, the phenomenon of migration is increasing among the population, mainly due to the necessities of life [18]. The challenges children in families of female workers face are becoming increasingly complex. Children must adapt to the social and cultural changes around them [19]. Therefore, it is essential to review existing policies and create programs that support children in navigating these changes, allowing them to grow into socially and emotionally healthy individuals [20].

The presence of parents is associated with joy, satisfaction, and significantly better personal growth. However, many parents, particularly mothers, deliberately leave their children to work abroad for economic reasons [21]. Economic inequality drives mothers to seek employment as female workers abroad [22]. As a result, children's behavior may decline due to a lack of family education and parental guidance. Consequently, they receive less love, supervision, and support from their parents. With mothers working abroad, parental involvement in their children's care becomes unbalanced, negatively impacting their character development. Parents do not always share the same perspective on their child's behavior [23]. A mother's migration does not solely contribute to the decline in the quality of children's behavior; the father's behavior also influences it. The presence of a father as a substitute for the mother may not be effective, as fathers often spend more time outside the home [24]. Economic factors usually prevent fathers from being present with their children, leaving the child without the support of a father's presence.

Children often feel alone, lonely, and homesick; they also need a parental figure to protect and support them in challenging situations [25]. Children abandoned by their mothers may experience changes in behavior, while the father often assumes the role of primary caregiver [26]. These changes may include feelings of laziness and irresponsibility, a lack of discipline, and occasional engagement in behaviors that deviate from religious teachings. Children whose mothers abandon them face numerous challenges, including mental health issues such as stress, confusion, and anxiety. In addition, these children experience mental pressure. The prolonged absence of a mother can leave a child struggling

to find balance in life, and the lack of a mother figure can lead to persistent behavioral deviations [27].

A father's involvement cannot fully meet the family's needs, as he is often busy earning a living outside the home. This situation adds to the burden on children who live far from their mothers and do not experience their parents' roles directly at home. As a result, children are left without the full expression of love, which can lead to changes in their behavior within the family. Research on the impact of migration on the social behavior of children of female workers is still limited, with many studies focusing more on economic or health aspects. While the broader social impact is often overlooked, it is essential to conduct in-depth research to understand how migration affects children's social behavior so that appropriate interventions can be designed [28].

By understanding the impact of migration on the social behavior of children from families of female workers, we can design more effective strategies to support them. This will help children overcome challenges and improve the family's well-being. Ensuring that children receive the appropriate support is crucial in building a better future for both them and society. Building on these insights, the researcher has focused on parental strategies in shaping children's social behavior in families of female workers. The findings of this study carry significant implications for both theoretical discourse and practical applications in the fields of education, family studies, Islamic pedagogy, and sustainable development [29].

The primary implication is the need to strengthen the role of religious and value-based education within female migrant families, where parenting roles are often disrupted due to economic migration. In contexts where mothers serve as migrant workers, children are typically left under the care of fathers, extended family members, or even siblings, which can lead to inconsistent character development. This research suggests that with appropriate strategies rooted in religious education, exemplary behavior, and honesty, families can still foster social ethics and moral integrity in children—even in the absence of one or both parents [30].

From an Islamic educational perspective, this study reinforces the timeless relevance of Islamic values such as akhlaq, amanah (trustworthiness), and qudwah hasanah (exemplary role models). It highlights how these values can be operationalized within modern family challenges, such as parental migration. This recontextualization is crucial in adapting traditional Islamic teachings to current socio-economic realities while ensuring moral continuity within the next generation. These insights also contribute directly to the global objectives of SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality), particularly in promoting equitable, inclusive, and character-based learning frameworks across diverse family structures. The novelty of this study lies in its methodological and conceptual contributions. Methodologically, it is among the few studies to apply the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) in assessing strategies for children's character development in migrant family settings. This approach allows for a quantifiable, consistent, and prioritized evaluation of parenting strategies, which enhances the reliability of findings and provides a structured decision-making model for policymakers, educators, and families alike [31].

Conceptually, the study offers an integrated framework that combines Islamic educational principles with measurable educational strategies aligned with the SDGs. Unlike most prior studies that address either religious education or parenting issues in isolation, this research bridges the gap between faith-based education, gender roles, and sustainable development goals in a cohesive manner. Ultimately, this study expands the discourse on child development by presenting culturally contextualized, data-informed, and ethically grounded strategies that are applicable in both Islamic and global education systems. It encourages further research and policy formulation that recognizes the diverse challenges of female migrant families and the transformative potential of value-based education [32].

LITERATURE REVIEW

Child Social Behavior

Children's social behavior includes their ability to interact positively with others, understand social norms, and manage emotions and behavior in social contexts. These social competencies are important for children's social and emotional development and academic and interpersonal success. According to Ivan, parents play a key role in developing their children's social behavior. Through daily interactions, parents provide direct examples of communicating politely, resolving conflicts peacefully, and showing empathy and concern for others. In addition, values such as honesty, responsibility, and respect taught by parents become an important foundation for children in building healthy social relationships. Support and consistent parental supervision also help children learn to manage emotions and act according to social norms to adapt to various social situations in the family and community [33],

Honesty Education

Honesty education in children is a learning process that aims to instill honest values and attitudes in children from an early age so that they are accustomed to telling the truth, acting according to reality, and taking responsibility for their actions [34]. This education includes the prohibition of lying and encourages children to be open, not hide mistakes, and dare to admit the truth despite the risk of consequences [35]. Honesty education usually begins in the family environment, through real examples from parents who are honest in word and deed [36]. In addition, honesty is reinforced at school through rules, teacher guidance, and activities that foster integrity, such as group assignments, self-evaluation, or discussions of moral values. With consistent and sustainable honesty education, children will grow into individuals who are trusted, respected, and able to build healthy social relationships in the future [37].

Exemplary Education

Exemplary education in female migrant families instills moral and social values in children through real-life examples, especially when the mother, as the central figure, is not present in person because she works abroad [38]. In this condition, role modeling relies heavily on substitute caregivers, such as fathers, grandmothers, or close relatives who live with the child. Role models include positive behaviors such as telling the truth, being disciplined, being responsible, respecting others, and solving problems without violence. Children tend to imitate what they see, not just what they hear. Therefore, caregivers must be able to provide consistent examples that reflect the good values that parents [39]. In addition, exemplary education in female migrant families must be supported by active communication between the migrant mother and the child. Although physically separated, mothers can still play the role of role models through messages, video calls, or recordings containing advice and reinforcement of moral values. In this way, children still feel emotionally and morally connected to their mothers. The role modeling delivered directly by the caregiver at home and reinforced by the mother from afar will help children form a strong social and moral identity so that they continue to grow into individuals with good character, even though they are in a family situation that is far away [40].

Religious Education

Education is a systematic effort to instill the values of faith, morals, and noble character derived from religious teachings to shape the child's personality to be faithful, ethical, and responsible [41]. This education starts early in the family through habituation to worship, introducing daily prayers, reading the holy book, and instilling values such as honesty, compassion, and mutual respect. Parents are very important as role models in carrying out religious teachings because children tend to imitate the behavior they see every day [42].

Religious education also directs children in facing life's problems and forms a moral foundation in behavior and action. In addition to the role of the family, formal education institutions and the social environment also contribute to strengthening children's religious education. Schools and places of worship can provide a more systematic and structured understanding of religion while providing space for children to interact socially with religious values [43]. Religious lectures, religious education classes, and social activities based on religious values can foster social care, empathy, and responsibility [44]. With integrated and sustainable religious education, children grow spiritually and develop into moral individuals, able to respect differences and be active in the social environment in a positive way [45].

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research method is an approach used to understand social phenomena from the perspectives of individuals and groups. This approach is particularly relevant for analyzing strategies that shape the social behavior of children from families working in the women's sector. The study involved human participants and received ethics board approval from the Regional Planning, Research, and Development Agency (approval number: 050.7/485/07.1/2023). Before its conduct, participants were fully informed about the study, and the provided information obtained their consent [46], [47]. Data were collected from eight informants through observations, direct interviews, document analysis, and questionnaires. Verbal consent was obtained from participants, as the study aims to assist families of female workers in addressing children's behavioral problems, with the findings provided to families as evaluation material for their children's behavior. Verbal consent facilitated the research process by allowing researchers to gather the necessary data more effectively [48], [49].

Table 1. Research Informants/ keyperson

No	Name	Age	Work
1	Sadam	50 years old.	Self-employed
2	Mansur	45 years old	Self-employed
3	Nadin	47 years old	Fisherman
4	Angga	39 years old	Farmer
5	Masud	40 years old	Farmer
6	Kadin	44 years old	Trader
7	Samsudin	34 years old	Farmer
8	Abdullah	35 years old	Farmer

The informants in this research are knowledgeable about the topic and serve as crucial actors in the study. The data source for this research is the phenomenon of children's social behavior in families of female workers, which, in reality, leads to various problems, including economic issues resulting from a wife working abroad and leaving her family in her hometown [50]–[52].

The data collection techniques used in this research include interviews, documentation, observation, and the distribution of questionnaires. After data collection, validity is ensured through triangulation, where researchers assess and cross-check the reliability of the information obtained. The data analysis process employs qualitative analysis techniques and the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) with the assistance of the Expert Choice program. Qualitative analysis techniques and AHP analysis are used to address the research objectives through a structured approach consisting of three strands: Data Collection: In this stage, researchers gather all data from various sources, including informants (parents

and children). Data Reduction: This selection process focuses on simplification, abstracting, and transforming large data sets. Results will emerge from written field notes. Data Presentation: After data collection, calculations are made based on the questionnaire responses using Expert Choice 11 software. The results are then analyzed using AHP. The final step involves drawing conclusions and verifying the findings [53]–[55].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social Behavior Development Strategies for Children in Families of Female Migrant Workers

Analysis of Religious Education Criteria

Based on the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) results, religious education emerges as the top priority in shaping children's social behavior in families of female workers. The importance of spiritual education is highlighted by its position as the second priority in the AHP analysis, which focuses on developing children's social behavior in these families. Religious education emphasizes spiritual aspects that govern human relationships with God and individual interactions. It plays a crucial role within families, as parents are encouraged to implement it in hopes that children will exhibit obedient behavior towards Allah. Additionally, religious education can serve as a strategy for instilling good values within the family. The criteria for religious education focus on three main aspects, which are presented as alternatives and analyzed using the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP):
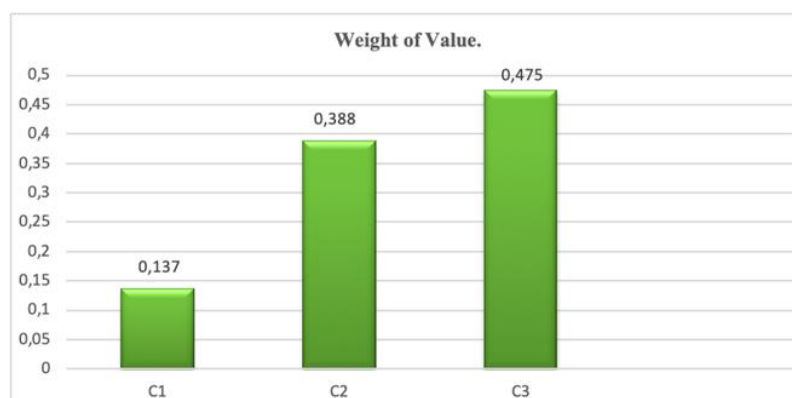

Figure 1. AHP Output Criteria for Religious Education

Source: Primary data processed in 2025

Information:

Inconsistency Value: 0,01

C1: Develop knowledge of religious teachings about values, practices, and traditions in religion.

C2: Encourage children to participate in religious practices, including prayer, study groups, and reading the Koran.

C3: Apply religious values in daily life, relationships with others, and one's relationship with God.

The criteria for religious education in Figure 1, based on AHP analysis, showed an inconsistency value below 0,1 (0,01 < 0,1), indicating that the responses from the key informants were consistent. Applying religious values in life—in relationships with others and God—is the highest-priority alternative, with a weight value of 0,475, or 47,50%. Applying religious values in life—in relationships with others and God—is one of the most important aspects for children to adopt. However, in reality, many children from families

of female migrant workers struggle to maintain their relationships with God and with others. These children often have a shallow perception of the importance of maintaining a relationship with Allah. The role of parents significantly influences children's behavior. However, many parents neglect to instill religious values in their children's lives, resulting in children becoming distant from God and disregarding the positive teachings of religion [56], [57].

Encouraging and teaching children to participate in religious practices, including prayer, attending religious studies, and reading the Qur'an, is the second-highest priority alternative, weighing 0,388, or 38,8%. Despite the importance placed on these practices, many children still struggle with reading the Qur'an fluently and have not consistently performed their prayers, indicating that parents are not fully implementing these religious practices in their children's lives [58]. Parents play a crucial role in the success of religious education for children, yet their involvement is often insufficient. Many children who need guidance at home are left with mothers who work as migrant workers, while the father's role is usually perceived as less effective due to his focus on earning a living outside the home. As a result, children become distanced from religious values, negatively impacting their behavior and interactions within the family and society [59].

The third priority alternative is to increase children's knowledge of religious values and practices, weighing 0,137, or 13,7%. Knowledge of religion is crucial for children, especially in today's challenges, which include rapid societal changes and complex social relationships. It is concerning that many children no longer view religion as a shield or protector against negative influences and harmful behaviors. Knowledge of religion is essential for parents to teach within the family. However, in many families of female workers, children are still found who lack religious knowledge. This is evident in the number of children who cannot read the Qur'an correctly and in the minimal understanding of the importance of obligatory prayers. Additionally, parental presence plays a significant role in shaping children's behavior and religious knowledge. If a child is undisciplined in worship and lacks a sense of responsibility, they may grow up with a gap in their spiritual understanding. Therefore, religious education, especially regarding knowledge, is crucial in helping children protect themselves from ignorance [60].

Analysis of Exemplary Education Criteria

Based on the results of the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP), exemplary education is the second priority criterion in shaping children's social behavior in the families of female migrant workers. Exemplary education is an important strategy to support the development of children's social behavior in the family. Three alternative criteria for exemplary education will be analyzed using the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP). The results of the AHP calculation for the exemplary education criteria are as follows:
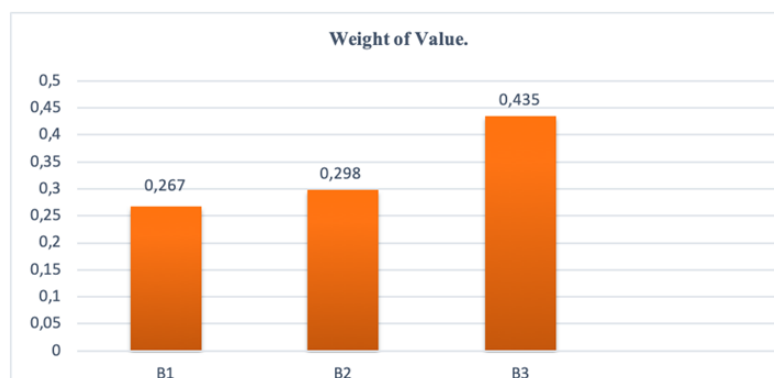

Figure 2. AHP Output Criteria for Exemplary Education

Source: Primary data processed in 2025

Information:

Inconsistency Value: 0,00471

B1: Parents show empathy and concern for their children's needs.

B2: Effective communication means parents use polite language.

B3: Appreciation of positive values; parents demonstrate the values of hard work, honesty, and respect.

Figure 2 shows that, based on the AHP analysis conducted on the exemplary education criteria, an inconsistency value below 0,1 (0,00471 < 0.1) was obtained, indicating that the responses from the key informants are consistent. Based on interviews with parents of female migrant workers, it was found that children in these families have limited role models. Many children cannot provide positive examples because their parents do not exhibit positive behavior. As a result, these children become accustomed to negative behaviors that can impact their lives. Furthermore, children's behavior is influenced by their parents' daily actions. For instance, parents may neglect to perform congregational prayers at the mosque, fail to speak politely in front of their children, or show a lack of discipline in managing time and fulfilling responsibilities at home. Interviews with children also reveal that, without positive role models, they often imitate the behavior they observe from their parents.

The highest-priority alternative is an appreciation for positive values, with parents demonstrating attitudes of hard work, honesty, and respect through daily actions, which weighs 0,435, or 43,5%. However, there is still a lack of exemplary behavior among children within the family, resulting in many children overlooking the importance of role modeling. The exemplary behaviors demonstrated by parents have not been fully implemented by the children, which negatively affects the quality of children's behavior and contributes to a decline in their overall development. Effective communication, mainly through polite language within the family, is crucial in shaping children's social behavior. However, children cannot apply this in their daily lives. Regarding good manners, many children still use impolite language with their parents at home and in the community. This highlights the need for parents to actively model exemplary behavior by consistently using polite language and making it a habit for their children. Children must be taught the importance of respectful language, with parents serving as the primary role models. If parents display negative behavior in front of their children, these actions become examples for children to imitate.

The second priority alternative is effective communication, which involves parents using polite language, with a weight value of 0,298, or 29,8%. The third priority alternative is respect for positive values, with parents demonstrating hard work, honesty, and respect, carrying a weight of 0,267, or 26,7%. Modeling behavior is one of the most important aspects of shaping children's behavior within the family. Children are introduced to a positive culture when exemplary behavior is consistently practiced. However, if parents allow negative behaviors to become habitual in their children's lives, they are also likely to adopt these bad habits. Therefore, parents must continuously strive to model values such as hard work, honesty, and respect to foster good habits in their children so that children can imitate and fully apply what they observe in their parents at home [61].

Analysis of Honesty Education Criteria

The Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) results show that honesty education is the lowest priority criterion in shaping children's social behavior in female migrant worker families, following religious education and exemplary education. Honesty education is essential in supporting children's behavior in the family. The importance of implementing honesty education in children's lives is to ensure they do not lie, speak honestly, and remain consistent in their statements. Therefore, honesty education is an essential strategy in

shaping children's behavior in the family. The results of the AHP analysis of the criteria for honesty education are as follows:
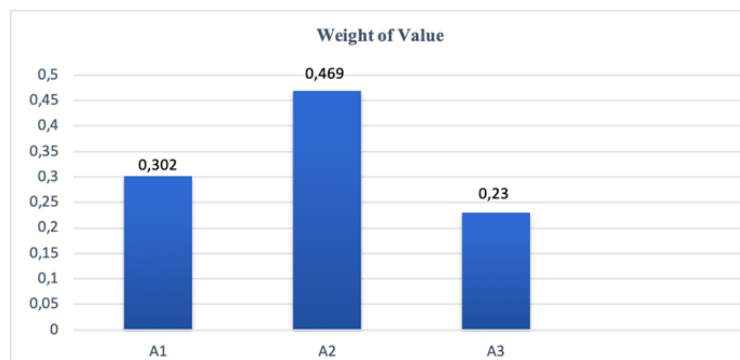
Figure 3. AHP Output Criteria for Honesty Education

Source: Primary data processed in 2025

Information:

Inconsistency Value: 0,00424

A1: Honesty in speaking encourages children to express what they truly believe.

A2: Consistency between words and actions fosters children's honesty and self-consistency.

A3: Courage to admit mistakes without fear or shame.

The results of the AHP analysis in Figure 3 show that the criteria for honesty education obtained an inconsistency value below 0,1 (0,00424 < 0,1), indicating that the responses from the key informants are consistent. The highest-priority alternative in the criteria for honesty education is consistency between words and actions, with a weight of 0,469, or approximately 46,9%. This consistency is essential for encouraging children to behave honestly and demonstrate self-consistency within the family environment and the broader community. Parents have not fully nurtured honest behavior in children, and parental involvement in children's honesty education remains very low. Some parents in female worker families fail to recognize the importance of honest education, often prioritizing material needs over developing their children's behavioral values. Additionally, when a mother leaves to work abroad as a migrant worker, and the father is often absent due to work commitments, the children's behavioral education is not fully supported, leading to suboptimal outcomes.

The second priority alternative is honesty in speaking, which involves parents encouraging children to tell the truth, with a weight value of 0,302, or approximately 30,2%. Honesty in speaking is crucial as it helps parents train their children to be truthful. For children in migrant worker families, dishonesty is a common behavioral issue, particularly when it comes to admitting mistakes or constantly making excuses to avoid responsibility. The absence of parents, especially mothers who work abroad as migrant workers, has a significant negative impact on the development of children's behavior. The final priority alternative is the courage to admit mistakes, with a weight value of 0,230, or approximately 23%. Teaching children the courage to admit mistakes helps them develop the confidence to speak openly without fear or shame. However, observations and interviews revealed that many children still fear making mistakes. They often believe they lack the courage to acknowledge their errors, even when the mistake is minor. The fear of admitting mistakes often leads children to express dishonesty. Children may justify their actions or offer excuses to avoid guilt and blame. This lack of courage in children, as seen by parents, is common and is often coupled with a lack of effort to encourage children to be brave in telling the truth.

Problems within female workers' families, particularly those involving parents, significantly impact the quality of children's behavior. Parents who lack a deep understanding of children's education often view dishonest behavior as a common issue in all families, and they do not take more meaningful or in-depth actions to address problematic behavior. For many parents, offering essential advice to their children feels like sufficient education on behavioral issues. However, children frequently repeat the same mistakes even after receiving guidance.

Alternative Strategies for Shaping Children's Social Behavior in Families of Female Workers

This research employs the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) to establish a priority scale for strategies to develop children's social behavior in the Langgudu sub-district, Bima Regency. The criteria and alternatives are assessed using AHP, based on direct observations and interviews with key personnel who have experience and direct contact with child behavior issues in the families of working mothers. The key participants in this research included the Bima Regency Social Service, the Bima Regency Manpower and Transmigration Service, and the parents and children from families of working mothers. These participants contributed to developing the criteria and alternatives used in the analysis. The requirements include honesty, exemplary, and religious education, with three options for each. The calculation results from the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) were obtained using Expert Choice 11 software, and the findings are as follows:
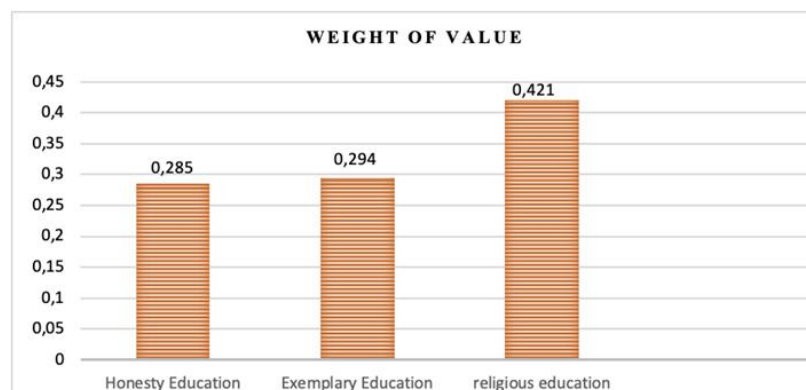
Figure 4. AHP Output for All Criteria on Strategies for Forming Children's Social Behavior in Families

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

Inconsistency Value: 0,01

Based on Figure 4, the inconsistency value is 0,01, indicating that the responses from the key informants are consistent, as the value is below 0,1. The criteria for religious education have the highest weight, 0,421 (42,1%), making religious education the most prioritized factor in the strategy for shaping children's social behavior in migrant worker families. The criteria for exemplary education rank second, with a weight value of 0.294 (29,4%), while honesty education is ranked third, with a weight value of 0,285 (28,5%).

Based on the AHP calculations of all alternative strategies for shaping children's social behavior in families, conducted using the Expert Choice 11 program, the following results were obtained:

Figure 5. AHP Output for All Alternatives

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

Figure 5. AHP Output for All Alternatives

Information:

Inconsistency Value: 0,01

A1: Parents encourage honesty in speaking to ensure that children tell the truth.

A2: Consistency between words and actions is emphasized so children develop honesty and self-consistency.

A3: Encouraging courage in admitting mistakes without fear or shame.

B1: Parents demonstrate empathy and concern for their children's needs within the family.

B2: Effective communication involves parents speaking to children using appropriate and polite language while listening attentively.

B3: Respect for positive values is shown as parents exhibit behaviors of hard work, honesty, and respect through daily actions.

C1: Developing children's knowledge of religious teachings focuses on the values of religious practices and traditions.

C2: Encouraging active participation in worship practices, such as prayer services, attending Islamic studies, and reading the Koran.

C3: Applying religious values in life to help children practice these values in daily interactions with others and their relationship with the Creator.

Therefore, religious education should be prioritized to shape children's social behavior in female worker families, as it holds the most tremendous significance compared to the other criteria. The next step is to rank each criterion from most to least prioritized and the alternatives associated with each criterion. Each criterion has several alternatives, each with different levels of priority. These alternatives have advantages and disadvantages, which will complement and synergize to shape children's social behavior within the family. The next step is to rank each criterion from most to least prioritized and the alternatives associated with each criterion. Each criterion has several alternatives, each with different levels of priority. These alternatives have advantages and disadvantages, which will complement and synergize to shape children's social behavior within the family.

The criteria for exemplary education include three alternatives: first, parents demonstrate empathy and concern for the needs of children in the family; second, effective communication, where parents speak to children using polite language and listen

attentively; and third, appreciation for positive values, with parents showing hard work, honesty, and respect through their daily actions.

The criteria for exemplary education include three alternatives: first, parents demonstrate empathy and concern for the needs of children in the family; second, effective communication, where parents speak to children using polite language and listen attentively; and third, appreciation for positive values, with parents showing hard work, honesty, and respect through their daily actions. Based on Figure 5, the results of the AHP analysis show an inconsistency value of 0,01, indicating that the responses from the key informants are consistent. The highest-priority alternative is the application of religious values in daily life, enabling children to apply these values in their relationships with others and their creator. This alternative has a weight value of 0,194 or approximately 19,4%. In practice, however, parents' application of religious education remains very low in families of female workers. In addition to limited knowledge, there is a lack of practical education on religious values for children.

Parents strongly desire their children to exhibit good behavior; however, the lack of knowledge and inadequate exemplary education prevent children from fully applying religious teachings. As a result, the development of children's behavior is hindered. Additionally, habits such as performing prayers, reading the Qur'an, and attending Islamic studies are no longer seen in children from female worker families. Instead, children tend to spend more time playing and socializing with friends, and parents are not strict in enforcing religious education. The second priority alternative is to pay attention to and teach children to actively participate in religious practices, including praying, attending Islamic studies, and reading the Qur'an, with a weight value of 0,158, or approximately 15,8%. Teaching children about religion is crucial as part of implementing religious teachings. However, parents often pay little attention to this and fail to actively teach their children about religious practices. Efforts are typically limited to advising without being accompanied by exemplary behavior in religious observance.

The third priority alternative is appreciating positive values, such as parents demonstrating hard work, honesty, and respect through their daily actions, with a weight value of 0,136, or approximately 13,6%. Based on field observations, the value of hard work in parents is particularly evident in families of female workers, as these families are generally lower-middle class, and the parents are often hardworking. While the value of honesty is also observed in parents, reinforcement of this value through guidance is rarely provided. As a result, the application of honesty in children's behavior has not been fully realized. It is common for children to lie, make excuses, or avoid admitting their mistakes to escape feelings of guilt or blame. This pattern persists due to the lack of parental affirmation and discipline regarding the importance of religious education in the children's lives.

The final priority alternative in the overall analysis is the consistency between words and actions, essential for fostering honesty and self-consistency in children, with a weight value of 0,131, or approximately 13,1%. Based on interviews with families of female workers, consistency between words and actions remains very low. This is evident in children who often avoid responsibility for their mistakes, frequently offering explanations that are not truthful. The role of parents in fostering honesty in children is also minimal. This is particularly concerning, as children who need guidance and support within the family are often left behind by mothers working as female migrant workers abroad. Additionally, fathers' time is limited due to their often being occupied with earning a living outside the home, which leaves children's behavior falling short of the expected standards.

Analysis

The social behavior of children is largely influenced by their family environment, especially during early developmental stages. This study focuses on the specific context of female migrant worker families, where maternal figures are often absent due to economic

obligations. Based on the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) results, religious education emerged as the top priority strategy in shaping children's social behavior, followed by exemplary education and honesty education. This hierarchy provides valuable insights into how families can respond effectively to the challenges posed by maternal migration while still fostering moral development.

The prioritization of religious education, particularly the application of spiritual values in daily life, is deeply aligned with Islamic teachings. Islam emphasizes the concept of tarbiyyah, which goes beyond formal instruction to include character formation through everyday actions and ethical guidance. Values such as iman (faith), taqwa (God-consciousness), and akhlaq (noble character) are critical in molding children's behavior, especially in the absence of a maternal figure. The family, even in its altered structure, remains a key agent in transmitting these values. The study supports this by showing that spiritual practices—such as prayer, recitation, and acts of kindness—can instill a sense of discipline, empathy, and social responsibility in children. Exemplary education, ranked second, also holds strong Islamic relevance. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is described in the Qur'an as a model of excellent character (uswatun hasanah), emphasizing the importance of leading by example. Parents, guardians, or caregivers must embody values such as honesty, hard work, and patience, as children tend to emulate behavior more than they respond to verbal instruction.

Honesty education, though ranked third, remains essential. Islam stresses the unity of words and deeds, as reflected in the concept of sidq (truthfulness). Teaching children to align speech with action fosters integrity and self-consistency—traits that support both individual development and societal trust. In relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this study contributes to SDG 4 (Quality Education) by providing a framework for value-based learning at home, and to SDG 5 (Gender Equality) by acknowledging the dual roles of women as economic actors and moral educators. It also aligns with SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) by promoting ethical upbringing as a foundation for just societies. Overall, this analysis shows that integrating Islamic values into a structured strategy, supported by AHP, offers an effective and culturally resonant method for shaping children's social ethics in migrant contexts—bridging faith, family, and development in a unified framework.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that among the various strategies for shaping children's social behavior in female migrant worker families, religious education emerges as the top priority, based on the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) analysis. The findings demonstrate that religious education, especially the consistent application of spiritual values in daily life, plays a fundamental role in guiding children's interactions—both with others and with God. This reflects not only the universal importance of spirituality in moral development but also aligns closely with Islamic principles, which emphasize tarbiyyah ruhiyyah (spiritual education), adab (proper conduct), and tauhidic values as the foundation of ethical behavior. The second most prioritized strategy is exemplary education, which stresses the importance of role modeling by parents—particularly working mothers. In Islam, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is considered the ultimate role model (uswatun hasanah), and parents are encouraged to emulate his character in raising children. The study highlights that demonstrating values such as hard work, honesty, and respect is key to shaping children's social ethics. These values not only support emotional and behavioral growth but also help children navigate social challenges with integrity and resilience. Honesty education ranks third but remains crucial. The priority alternative under this criterion is the consistency between speech and action, which reinforces the Islamic teaching that truthfulness leads to righteousness. Teaching honesty through consistent parental behavior ensures that children internalize moral values that are both practiced and believed. This approach nurtures amanah (trustworthiness), a core value in Islamic ethics. In the context of the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs), these findings are significant. The emphasis on religious, exemplary, and honesty-based education supports SDG 4 (Quality Education) by promoting inclusive and value-based learning at the household level. It also strengthens SDG 5 (Gender Equality) by recognizing the critical role of women—particularly mothers—as primary moral educators in the family, despite their challenges as migrant workers. Additionally, fostering ethical behavior in children contributes to SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) by cultivating a generation rooted in moral responsibility, empathy, and social harmony. This study also illustrates how Islamic education, when combined with structured methods such as AHP, can produce measurable and actionable insights for parenting and educational development. The novelty of this research lies in applying a quantitative decision-making model to analyze character-building strategies in a traditionally qualitative domain, thus offering a unique contribution to both Islamic education and global sustainable development discourse. In conclusion, strengthening children's social behavior in migrant families requires a value-based and faith-driven approach, with religious education, parental example, and honesty being central pillars. These strategies, deeply embedded in Islamic ethics, offer a transformative path to achieving the SDGs through family-centered moral development.

Acknowledgments

Author Contribution

All authors have reviewed and approved the final version of this study. Nahrul Faidin drafted the original manuscript, selected the study location, determined the number of participants, and analyzed the results using the Expert Choice program. Tri Marhaeni Pudji Astuti conducted observations, interviews, and qualitative analysis. Sucihatiningsih Dian Wisika Prajanti was responsible for analysis, formal writing, data tabulation, and calculating questionnaire responses using the Expert Choice application. Puji Hardati and Alwy Ahmed Mohamed revised the manuscript and contributed to editing and formal writing.

Conflicts of Interest

All authors declare no potential conflicts of interest in this study.

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