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## Family-Oriented School Culture for Student Well-Being in Indonesian Islamic Junior High Schools: Advancing Sustainable Development Goal 4

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DOI : <https://doi.org/10.63230/jocsis.3.1.281>

### Sections Info

#### Article history:

Submitted: March 29, 2026  
Final Revised: May 12, 2026  
Accepted: June 22, 2026  
First Available Online: July 17, 2026  
Publication Date: March 27, 2027

#### Keywords:

Character Education;  
Family-Oriented School Culture;  
School Culture;  
Student Well-Being.

### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** Student well-being has become an increasingly important indicator of educational quality; however, existing research has largely examined it through individual programmes or psychological interventions rather than as a product of school culture. This article investigates how Family-Oriented School Culture fosters student well-being in Islamic junior high schools. **Method:** A qualitative multisite case study was conducted in two Islamic junior high schools in Sidoarjo, Indonesia, using in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Data were analysed through within-site and cross-site analysis, with triangulation employed to enhance credibility. **Result:** Analysis identified four interconnected dimensions of Family-Oriented School Culture: (1) a family-like school climate, (2) emotional and spiritual support, (3) collective character development, and (4) non-academic support systems. Together, these dimensions formed an integrated organizational culture that strengthened students' sense of belonging, emotional security, responsibility, empathy, discipline, and interpersonal relationships. Positive character and well-being developed simultaneously through sustained interactions among teachers, students, families, and the wider school community rather than through isolated support programmes. **Novelty:** By conceptualizing Family-Oriented School Culture as an organizational mechanism for student well-being, the article extends existing literature that primarily emphasizes individual interventions and school climate as separate constructs. The proposed framework offers practical guidance for school leaders in developing safe, inclusive, supportive, and family-oriented educational environments that contribute to student well-being and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4.

### INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, educational paradigms have undergone a fundamental transformation from emphasizing academic achievement toward fostering the holistic development of learners. Educational success is no longer assessed solely by students' cognitive attainment or academic performance, but also by the capacity of educational institutions to cultivate environments that promote students' psychological, social, emotional, moral, and spiritual development. This paradigm shift has positioned student well-being as a key indicator of educational quality because students' well-being is increasingly recognized as a prerequisite for effective learning and lifelong personal development. This perspective is consistent with the objectives of Indonesia's National Education System as stipulated in Law No. 20 of 2003, which emphasizes the development of learners into individuals who are faithful, pious, morally upright, healthy, knowledgeable, creative, independent, democratic, and responsible. Consequently, students become the primary focus of the entire educational process, implying that teaching, student services, and school management should all be directed toward supporting students' overall well-being and development (Uno & Lamatenggo, 2022). Accordingly, the ultimate outcome of education should not merely be

academically successful students but lifelong learners who possess sound psychological well-being and a high quality of life (Mastura & Santaria, 2020).

Despite this aspiration, recent developments indicate that achieving student well-being remains a major challenge. Schools, which ideally function as safe, supportive, and nurturing environments for students' development (Candra & Rizal, 2021), continue to face numerous issues that threaten students' well-being. Bullying, physical and psychological violence, sexual harassment, academic pressure, mental health problems, and the misuse of digital technology illustrate the increasing complexity of challenges encountered by students within school settings (Dwivedi et al., 2023). In Indonesia, these concerns are reflected in the 2025 report issued by the Indonesian Child Protection Commission, which documents persistently high rates of violations of children's rights in educational institutions, including fatal cases of school violence, increasing suicide cases associated with school-related pressures, cyberbullying, online gaming addiction, and various forms of digital violence. These conditions suggest that contemporary educational challenges extend beyond improving academic quality to ensuring that schools provide environments in which students feel safe, accepted, respected, supported, and empowered to develop their full potential. Without such conditions, the educational process risks losing its meaning because students are required to learn under circumstances characterized by anxiety, stress, and psychological discomfort (Dwivedi et al., 2019).

Against this background, student well-being has emerged as an increasingly important concept in educational research and policy, serving as an essential indicator of schools' capacity to support students' overall development. Student well-being is understood not merely as students' happiness but as a condition in which learners experience balanced fulfillment of their academic, psychological, and social needs while participating positively in school life (Sya'roni & Khotimah, 2018). Students with higher levels of well-being tend to demonstrate positive emotions, healthy interpersonal relationships, stronger adaptability to challenges, and greater engagement in learning activities. Conversely, lower levels of well-being are associated with increased academic stress, declining learning motivation, reduced classroom engagement, and a variety of behavioral and mental health problems (Barseli et al., 2020; Septiana, 2021). A more comprehensive perspective was proposed by Noble and McGrath (2015) through the prosper framework, which conceptualizes student well-being as comprising seven interrelated dimensions: positivity, relationships, outcomes, strengths, purpose, engagement, and resilience. This framework suggests that student well-being cannot be achieved solely through academic success but also requires supportive social relationships, meaningful learning experiences, active engagement, personal strengths, a sense of purpose, and resilience in facing life's challenges. Consequently, promoting student well-being requires schools to create learning environments that support students' holistic development rather than focusing exclusively on academic performance.

Empirical evidence consistently indicates that student well-being is influenced not only by students' individual characteristics but also by the environments in which they learn. Within educational settings, school culture has been identified as one of the most influential contextual factors because it shapes the values, norms, traditions, interaction patterns, and daily practices shared by all members of the school community (Ngalu, 2019). School culture not only reflects the identity of an educational institution but also influences instructional practices, interpersonal relationships, conflict resolution, and the ways in which members of the school community interact with one another

(Saputra et al., 2021). Accordingly, a positive school culture contributes to the creation of safe, supportive, inclusive, and conducive learning environments that facilitate both students' academic achievement and psychosocial development (Fatimatuazzahro & Suseno, 2017). In this sense, school culture functions as an organizational mechanism that bridges educational goals with students' everyday experiences in school.

Empirical evidence further demonstrates a consistent association between school culture and student well-being. Studies on school culture have shown that a positive organizational culture contributes to school improvement, leadership effectiveness, institutional quality, and character development (Abdullah, 2019). Meanwhile, research on student well-being has revealed that students' well-being is shaped by the quality of learning experiences, interpersonal relationships, social support, student engagement, and a positive school climate (Konu & Rimpelä, 2002). Similarly, McClure et al. found that school structures designed to foster closer personal relationships between teachers and students positively influence students' academic engagement and achievement. Taken together, these findings consistently indicate that social relationships, organizational culture, and supportive school environments constitute essential determinants of student well-being.

These empirical findings are further supported by several complementary theoretical perspectives that emphasize the central role of interpersonal relationships in human development. Attachment Theory argues that individuals require secure emotional relationships as a foundation for healthy psychological development (Bowlby, 1969). Likewise, ecological systems theory explains that children's development results from continuous interactions between individuals and multiple environmental systems, including families and schools (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This perspective is reinforced by Self-Determination Theory, which identifies relatedness as one of the three basic psychological needs underlying intrinsic motivation and psychological well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Furthermore, social capital theory emphasizes that trust, social networks, and reciprocal norms strengthen collective life and facilitate positive developmental outcomes (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000). Complementing these perspectives, ethics of care positions caring relationships as the moral foundation of educational practice (Noddings, 1992). Although originating from different theoretical traditions, these perspectives converge on a common proposition: students are more likely to flourish when they learn within environments characterized by emotional security, caring relationships, mutual trust, social support, and a strong sense of belonging.

Despite the growing body of evidence demonstrating the importance of school culture for students' academic achievement, character development, and well-being, existing studies remain fragmented in several respects. Research on school culture has predominantly focused on organizational effectiveness, leadership practices, school improvement, and institutional performance (Abdullah, 2019). Conversely, studies on student well-being have largely emphasized individual psychological factors, classroom experiences, school climate, teacher-student relationships, and specific dimensions of well-being (Konu & Rimpelä, 2002). Although these studies have generated valuable insights, they generally examine these elements as separate constructs rather than as interconnected components of an integrated organizational culture capable of simultaneously nurturing students' academic, psychological, social, emotional, and spiritual development. Consequently, limited attention has been devoted to explaining how school culture can intentionally integrate interpersonal relationships, emotional

support, character education, and community engagement into a coherent framework for promoting student well-being.

This gap becomes even more apparent within the context of Indonesian Islamic schools. Most international studies on student well-being have been conducted in Western educational settings, where conceptions of supportive school culture are primarily grounded in secular organizational values. In contrast, Indonesian Islamic junior high schools operate within distinctive educational environments characterized by the integration of religious values, communal traditions, moral education, and close partnerships between schools and families. These contextual characteristics are likely to shape school culture differently from those described in previous international studies, yet they remain underrepresented in the existing literature. Consequently, further investigation is needed to understand how culturally and religiously embedded school practices contribute to the promotion of student well-being within Islamic educational settings.

Responding to these gaps, this study proposes the concept of Family-Oriented School Culture as an integrative framework for understanding how school culture can promote student well-being. Rather than treating teacher-student relationships, emotional support, character education, and school climate as independent variables, this study conceptualizes them as interconnected dimensions of a comprehensive organizational culture grounded in familial values. Family-Oriented School Culture is defined as a system of shared values, norms, routines, and institutional practices that cultivate caring relationships, emotional closeness, mutual trust, collective responsibility, empathy, and a strong sense of belonging among all members of the school community. Within this framework, the culture is manifested through four interrelated dimensions: fostering a family-like school climate, providing emotional and spiritual support, strengthening collective character, and establishing non-academic support systems. These dimensions collectively create an educational environment that supports students' academic, psychological, social, and spiritual development.

Accordingly, this study aims to explore how a Family-Oriented School Culture is developed, implemented, and internalized in the daily life of Indonesian Islamic junior high schools to promote student well-being. Employing a multisite qualitative approach, the study was conducted at Al-Falah Assalam Junior High School Sidoarjo and Islam Cendekia Mandiri Junior High School Sidoarjo to obtain an in-depth understanding of school cultural practices that foster students' well-being (Basyar, 2020). Theoretically, this study seeks to extend the literature on school culture and student well-being by introducing the concept of Family-Oriented School Culture as an integrated conceptual framework (Leithwood, 2021). Practically, the findings are expected to provide school leaders, teachers, and educational practitioners with evidence-based insights for developing school cultures that not only pursue academic excellence but also cultivate safe, caring, inclusive, and well-being-oriented educational environments that enable every student to flourish holistically (Duraiappah et al., 2022).

## RESEARCH METHOD

### *Research design*

This study employed a qualitative multisite case study design to explore how a Family-Oriented School Culture is developed, implemented, and internalized to promote student well-being in Indonesian Islamic junior high schools. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study sought to understand participants' experiences, meanings, and interpretations of naturally occurring school practices

within their real-life contexts rather than to measure predetermined variables. Qualitative inquiry enables researchers to investigate complex social phenomena holistically while preserving the contextual richness of the settings in which they occur (Creswell, 2012).

A multisite case study design was adopted because the research investigated the same phenomenon across two different school settings. This design allows for both within-case analysis and cross-case comparison, enabling the identification of common patterns as well as context-specific characteristics that shape the implementation of Family-Oriented School Culture. Comparing multiple sites also enhances the analytical robustness of qualitative findings by identifying transferable themes across different institutional contexts (Creswell, 2012).

### ***Research sites and participants***

The study was conducted at two Islamic junior high schools in Sidoarjo, East Java, Indonesia: Al-Falah Assalam Junior High School Sidoarjo and Islam Cendekia Mandiri Junior High School Sidoarjo. These schools were selected purposively based on preliminary observations indicating that both had developed distinctive school cultures emphasizing caring relationships, character development, emotional support, and students' holistic development. Although each school implements different educational programs, both share a strong commitment to cultivating a family-oriented school environment, making them appropriate settings for exploring the phenomenon under investigation.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling because qualitative research emphasizes the selection of information-rich participants who possess extensive knowledge and direct experience related to the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2012). At each research site, participants consisted of the principal, the vice principal for student affairs, one teacher responsible for implementing student development programs, and three students. Principals were selected because they formulate institutional policies and provide strategic direction for school culture development. Vice principals for student affairs were included because they oversee student development programs and disciplinary practices. Teachers were selected because they directly implement family-oriented cultural practices in everyday school activities. Students were chosen because they are the primary recipients of these practices and are therefore able to provide firsthand accounts of how school culture influences their well-being.

The participating students were selected to represent diverse educational experiences, including differences in academic achievement, participation in school programs, and social adjustment. This variation enabled the study to capture multiple perspectives regarding the implementation of Family-Oriented School Culture and its contribution to student well-being. Additional participants remained open for inclusion should further data collection be required to achieve data saturation.

### ***Data collection***

Data were collected through three complementary techniques: In-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Employing multiple data sources enabled methodological triangulation and strengthened the credibility of the findings (Creswell, 2012).

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with all participants to explore their experiences, perceptions, and interpretations regarding the implementation of

Family-Oriented School Culture and its contribution to student well-being. An interview guide was used to maintain consistency across participants while allowing flexibility to pursue emerging issues relevant to the research objectives.

Participant observation was undertaken to examine naturally occurring interactions, school routines, and cultural practices within each school. During the observation process, the researcher participated in selected school activities while documenting interpersonal interactions, behavioral patterns, and contextual conditions related to the implementation of family-oriented values.

Document analysis was conducted to complement interview and observational data. Documents included school vision and mission statements, student development programs, school regulations, activity reports, meeting minutes, photographs, and other institutional records related to school culture and student support. These documents provided contextual evidence that helped corroborate information obtained from interviews and observations.

### *Data analysis*

Data analysis was conducted concurrently with data collection following the interactive qualitative analysis procedures proposed by Creswell (2012). Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim, while observation notes and documentary evidence were organized systematically. The researcher repeatedly read the entire dataset to develop familiarity with participants' experiences before proceeding to coding.

Open coding was first performed to identify meaningful units of information relevant to the implementation of Family-Oriented School Culture. Similar codes were then grouped into broader categories representing recurring practices, values, relationships, and support mechanisms found across both research sites. Through continuous comparison within and across cases, these categories were subsequently synthesized into overarching themes explaining how family-oriented cultural practices contribute to student well-being.

Following individual case analyses, cross-case analysis was undertaken to identify similarities and differences between the two schools. This comparative analysis enabled the researcher to develop a conceptual understanding of Family-Oriented School Culture that extends beyond the unique characteristics of each individual school while remaining grounded in participants' lived experiences.

### *Trustworthiness*

The trustworthiness of the findings was enhanced through several strategies recommended in qualitative research (Creswell, 2012). Credibility was established through prolonged engagement at both research sites, triangulation of interviews, observations, and documents, and continuous comparison of information obtained from different participants. Member checking was also conducted by confirming key findings with selected participants to ensure that the interpretations accurately reflected their experiences.

Dependability was strengthened by maintaining detailed documentation of research procedures, interview protocols, observation records, coding processes, and analytical decisions throughout the study. Confirmability was supported through systematic documentation of analytical procedures and continuous reflection to minimize researcher bias. Transferability was facilitated by providing rich descriptions of the research context, participant characteristics, and cultural practices, enabling readers to determine the applicability of the findings to similar educational settings.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Results*

#### *Family-oriented school culture as the foundation of student well-being*

Cross-site analysis revealed that both Islamic junior high schools positioned student well-being as the foundation of the educational process rather than merely an expected outcome of learning (Evripidou et al., 2020). Although each school implemented different programs, both developed a family-oriented school culture characterized by close interpersonal relationships, emotional support, shared responsibility, and students' sense of belonging.

Interview data indicated that school leaders and teachers consistently viewed students' emotional security as a prerequisite for academic success (Kim, Lee, & Cho, 2022). As one vice principal explained, "Student well-being is not an additional program, but the foundation (Hassija et al., 2023). When students feel safe and valued, learning can take place optimally" (Site 1). Similarly, participants from Site 2 emphasized that emotionally secure students were more confident, actively engaged in learning, and better able to build positive relationships with others.

Observations across both schools supported these perceptions. Teachers routinely greeted students personally, participated in daily religious activities, provided informal mentoring, and maintained open communication beyond classroom instruction. School documents further confirmed that mentoring, counseling, home visits, leadership activities, and student appreciation programs were systematically integrated into school life to strengthen students' academic, social, emotional, and spiritual development.

Despite differences in implementation, the cross-site analysis identified four recurring characteristics of the family-oriented school culture: (1) creating a family-like school climate, (2) providing emotional and spiritual support, (3) strengthening collective character, and (4) establishing non-academic support systems. These dimensions were consistently evident across interviews, observations, and school documents, suggesting that student well-being was fostered through an integrated organizational culture rather than through isolated programs.

#### *Dimensions of family-oriented school culture*

Cross-site analysis identified four interconnected dimensions that constituted the implementation of Family-Oriented School Culture across the two Islamic junior high schools. Although each school adopted different programs and institutional practices, the findings consistently demonstrated that these dimensions functioned collectively to promote students' well-being.

The first dimension was the creation of a family-like school climate. Across both schools, participants described the school environment as a "second home" where students were welcomed, respected, and accepted as members of a larger family. Teachers intentionally developed close interpersonal relationships by greeting students personally, engaging in informal conversations, and participating alongside students in daily school activities. One teacher explained, "This program is not merely a routine activity. It is our way of building emotional bonds so that students feel safe and cared for" (Site 1). Students similarly reported that activities such as leadership camps, morning sharing sessions, and collaborative programs strengthened friendships and increased their sense of belonging within the school community.

The second dimension involved emotional and spiritual support. Both schools established multiple support mechanisms through mentoring, counseling, home visits, daily religious activities, and open communication between teachers and students.

Rather than limiting their responsibilities to classroom instruction, teachers positioned themselves as mentors who accompanied students through academic and personal challenges. Observations confirmed that students interacted comfortably with teachers, sought advice voluntarily, and openly discussed personal difficulties. School documents further indicated that these support systems were implemented systematically through scheduled mentoring, counseling services, and student guidance programs.

The third dimension focused on collective character development. Character formation was embedded within everyday school experiences rather than delivered as separate instructional content. Religious activities, leadership training, collaborative learning, and community-building programs encouraged students to practice responsibility, empathy, cooperation, discipline, and respect in authentic situations. Participants from both schools consistently reported observable improvements in students' social responsibility, mutual respect, and willingness to help peers. Teachers also noted that students increasingly resolved interpersonal conflicts through dialogue instead of confrontation.

The fourth dimension comprised non-academic support systems designed to address students' broader developmental needs. These included student appreciation programs, extracurricular activities, home visits, open counseling, and personalized teacher guidance. Such initiatives enabled schools to recognize students' achievements beyond academic performance while providing additional assistance for those experiencing personal, social, or family-related challenges. Students consistently described these programs as making them feel valued, listened to, and supported throughout their school experience.

Taken together, these findings indicate that Family-Oriented School Culture was implemented not through a single intervention but through a coherent combination of relational, spiritual, character-building, and support-oriented practices that shaped students' everyday experiences across both schools.

## **Discussion**

### ***Beyond school programs: Family-oriented school culture as a well-being strategy***

Student well-being in both Islamic junior high schools emerged not from isolated well-being programmes but from an organizational culture that consistently embedded familial values into everyday educational practices. Although the two schools adopted different initiatives, including mentoring groups, congregational prayers, morning sharing sessions, home visits, and student appreciation programmes, these activities functioned as interconnected cultural practices rather than independent interventions. Their educational value therefore lay less in the programmes themselves than in their collective capacity to cultivate relationships, trust, and shared responsibility throughout the school community. From this perspective, student well-being is more appropriately understood as a product of organizational culture than as the outcome of discrete well-being initiatives.

This interpretation offers a broader perspective than much of the existing literature, which has commonly examined school climate, teacher support, counselling services, or school belonging as separate determinants of student well-being (Allen et al., 2023; Konu & Rimpelä, 2002; Kutsyuruba et al., 2024). While these studies consistently highlight the importance of supportive educational environments, the present study suggests that such factors are better viewed as interconnected expressions of a coherent organizational culture. Across both schools, close teacher-student relationships,

collaborative peer interactions, religious practices, and personalized guidance were embedded within daily routines, making well-being an integral characteristic of school life rather than an additional educational programme.

The centrality of interpersonal relationships also resonates with Self-Determination Theory, which identifies relatedness as one of the basic psychological needs underpinning motivation, engagement, and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2017). Teachers in both schools deliberately positioned themselves not only as instructors but also as mentors, caregivers, and trusted adults who accompanied students throughout their academic and personal development. These relational roles enabled students to feel accepted, respected, and emotionally secure, thereby encouraging greater participation in learning and increasing their willingness to seek guidance when encountering academic or personal difficulties. In this sense, teacher-student relationships functioned not merely as interpersonal support but as organizational resources that sustained students' overall well-being.

A similar interpretation can be drawn from Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, which emphasizes that development is shaped through continuous interactions between individuals and their surrounding environments. Mentoring programmes, home visits, religious activities, and ongoing communication with parents illustrate how both schools intentionally connected students' school, family, and peer contexts. Rather than limiting well-being to experiences within the classroom, these practices created a broader developmental ecosystem in which consistent relationships across multiple settings reinforced students' academic, social, emotional, and spiritual growth.

The role of school culture becomes particularly significant within this context. Previous studies have described school culture as a system of shared values, norms, and everyday practices that shapes educational experiences (Ngalu, 2019; Saputra et al., 2021). The present study extends this perspective by demonstrating that when these shared values are grounded in familial relationships, school culture evolves into a strategic framework for promoting student well-being. Students experienced the school not simply as an institution governed by rules but as a community characterized by care, trust, mutual responsibility, and belonging. Such experiences reduced psychological distance between teachers and students while strengthening students' attachment to the school community.

Overall, the evidence suggests that Family-Oriented School Culture should be understood as an organizational strategy through which relational values are systematically embedded into leadership, teaching practices, character education, and student support systems. This perspective shifts the discussion of student well-being away from evaluating individual programmes and towards understanding how organizational culture continuously creates the conditions in which students can flourish academically, psychologically, socially, and spiritually.

### ***Relational mechanisms supporting student well-being***

The findings suggest that the effectiveness of Family-Oriented School Culture does not lie in individual activities, but in the interaction among multiple relational mechanisms that collectively shape students' everyday experiences. Rather than operating independently, the family-like school climate, emotional and spiritual support, collective character formation, and non-academic support systems function as mutually reinforcing processes that strengthen students' psychological security, social connectedness, and engagement with school. This interconnectedness explains why

student well-being in both schools emerged as a sustained cultural experience rather than as the outcome of isolated interventions.

The first mechanism involves the creation of a family-like school climate that strengthens students' sense of belonging. Teachers consistently interacted with students beyond formal instructional roles through informal conversations, shared religious activities, and everyday personal attention. Such practices reduced hierarchical distance and enabled students to perceive the school as a "second home" rather than merely an academic institution. This finding supports previous evidence that school belonging represents one of the strongest predictors of student well-being and academic engagement (Allen et al., 2023). It also reflects Noddings' (1992) ethics of care, which emphasizes that meaningful learning develops within relationships characterized by trust, attentiveness, and genuine care. The present findings demonstrate that belonging was cultivated not through symbolic institutional slogans but through repeated interpersonal interactions embedded in daily school routines.

The second mechanism concerns the provision of emotional and spiritual support as complementary rather than separate dimensions of student development. Across both schools, mentoring, counseling, congregational prayers, Qur'anic reflection, and open communication created opportunities for students to express personal concerns while receiving emotional guidance and spiritual reinforcement. This finding extends the application of Self-Determination Theory by illustrating that the fulfillment of relatedness within Islamic schools is facilitated not only through interpersonal relationships but also through shared religious experiences that strengthen emotional security and collective identity (Ryan & Deci, 2017). At the same time, these practices resonate with the PROSPER framework, which identifies positive relationships, purpose, engagement, and resilience as central components of student well-being (Noble & McGrath, 2015). In this study, spiritual activities did not function solely as religious obligations but also as relational spaces that fostered emotional connectedness and psychological comfort.

A third mechanism emerged through collective character formation. Rather than teaching character as a separate curricular subject, both schools embedded responsibility, empathy, discipline, cooperation, and respect within everyday social interactions and shared experiences. Leadership camps, collaborative learning activities, mentoring groups, and community service enabled students to practice moral values within authentic social contexts. This finding aligns with Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, which explains that prosocial behaviour develops through observation, modelling, and repeated participation in meaningful social environments. Similarly, Lickona (2013) argues that character education becomes most effective when moral values are consistently experienced within the broader school community. The present findings therefore suggest that character development and student well-being should not be viewed as separate educational goals, but as mutually reinforcing outcomes generated through continuous participation in a caring school culture.

The final mechanism involves non-academic support systems that extend educational responsibility beyond classroom instruction. Home visits, personalized counseling, student appreciation programmes, extracurricular activities, and regular communication with families enabled schools to respond to students' academic, emotional, and social needs more comprehensively. These findings reinforce Epstein's (2001) argument that effective education requires meaningful partnerships between schools and families, while also supporting Bronfenbrenner's (1979) proposition that student development is shaped through interactions across multiple ecological systems.

Importantly, the present findings indicate that these support systems were not supplementary services but integral components of the school's organizational culture, ensuring that students experienced consistent care across different educational contexts.

Taken together, these four mechanisms illustrate that Family-Oriented School Culture operates through a dynamic network of relational practices rather than through discrete educational programmes. Their effectiveness lies not in the implementation of any single activity, but in the consistency with which interpersonal relationships, spiritual values, character development, and institutional support are integrated into everyday school life. This relational integration provides a plausible explanation for why students across both schools consistently reported feeling safe, valued, supported, and connected, all of which represent essential conditions for sustaining student well-being.

### *Towards a family-oriented school culture for student well-being*

Establishing a Family-Oriented School Culture requires more than introducing supportive programmes or adopting family-oriented rhetoric. Its sustainability depends on the consistency with which relational values are enacted by all members of the school community. Although both participating schools demonstrated strong commitments to promoting student well-being, several implementation challenges remained evident, including inconsistencies in teachers' relational practices, administrative workloads that limited opportunities for individualized mentoring, variations in students' personal backgrounds, and the influence of external social environments. These challenges indicate that organizational culture should be understood as a dynamic process requiring continuous reinforcement rather than as a fixed institutional characteristic.

This interpretation reinforces the view that school culture is embedded in everyday practices rather than in formal policies alone. Ngalu (2019) argues that school culture is reflected through shared values, norms, and habitual interactions among school members, while Rony (2021) emphasizes that organizational culture becomes meaningful only when educational values are consistently translated into daily behaviour. Evidence from both schools illustrates this argument. Students evaluated the quality of school culture primarily through their daily interactions with teachers instead of official programmes or institutional statements. Consequently, inconsistencies in relational practices, such as limited opportunities for personal mentoring or disciplinary approaches perceived as less dialogic, may weaken students' experiences of safety, trust, and belonging despite the existence of well-designed well-being programmes.

The integration of family involvement further demonstrates that student well-being extends beyond the school environment. Home visits, continuous communication with parents, and collaborative character-building activities strengthened connections between school and family, enabling consistent academic, emotional, social, and spiritual support across different contexts. This pattern is consistent with Epstein's (2001) framework of school-family partnerships, which positions collaboration between schools and families as an essential condition for students' holistic development. Rather than functioning as complementary initiatives, family engagement became an integral component of the relational culture developed by both schools.

Taken together, the evidence supports a broader understanding of Family-Oriented School Culture as an organizational framework that integrates relational values into leadership, teaching practices, character education, and student support systems. Within this framework, family-like relationships, emotional and spiritual support,

collective character formation, and non-academic support operate simultaneously to cultivate belonging, psychological safety, and meaningful participation in school life. These relational experiences, in turn, strengthen students' academic engagement, psychological well-being, social connectedness, and spiritual development while reinforcing the organizational culture that sustains them. This reciprocal relationship suggests that student well-being is not simply an educational outcome but also a resource that continually strengthens the culture from which it emerges.

This framework offers an alternative perspective for understanding student well-being in faith-based educational settings. Rather than treating well-being as the product of isolated interventions, it conceptualizes well-being as the outcome of an organizational culture grounded in familial relationships, collective responsibility, and sustained care. Such a perspective provides a foundation for future studies exploring culturally embedded models of student well-being across diverse educational contexts.

## CONCLUSION

**Fundamental Finding:** Family-Oriented School Culture functions as an organizational mechanism for fostering student well-being through the integration of relational values into everyday school practices. Across the two Islamic junior high schools, this culture was consistently manifested through four interconnected dimensions: a family-like school climate, emotional and spiritual support, collective character development, and non-academic support systems. Although each school implemented different institutional practices, both created educational environments where students experienced safety, belonging, trust, and meaningful relationships. These conditions enabled well-being and positive character development to emerge simultaneously through sustained interactions among teachers, peers, families, and school leaders, demonstrating that student well-being is more effectively cultivated through a coherent organizational culture than through stand-alone intervention programmes.

**Implication:** The findings suggest that promoting student well-being requires schools to move beyond isolated support initiatives toward the development of relationship-centered organizational cultures. School leaders should embed relational values within leadership practices, character education, student support services, and daily interactions, while strengthening collaboration with families and creating opportunities for open communication and meaningful student participation. Educational quality should therefore be evaluated not only through academic achievement but also through indicators such as students' sense of belonging, psychological safety, supportive relationships, and holistic development.

**Limitation:** The findings should be interpreted within the context of two Islamic junior high schools in Indonesia that were purposively selected because of their established school cultures. Consequently, the results are intended to provide analytical rather than statistical generalization and may not fully represent schools with different organizational characteristics or cultural contexts.

**Future Research:** Future studies should examine the applicability of the Family-Oriented School Culture framework across different educational levels, school types, and cultural settings using quantitative, mixed-methods, or longitudinal designs. Further investigation is also needed to develop valid measurement instruments for assessing Family-Oriented School Culture and to examine its long-term influence on students' academic achievement, psychological well-being, social relationships, character development, and school engagement.

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