

STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING RESPONSIBILITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD WITHIN ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

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Responsibility character development in early childhood has become an important issue in Islamic education because it is closely related to moral formation, self-regulation, and children's social readiness. Although studies on Islamic character education have increased, no review has specifically synthesized strategies for developing responsibility in Islamic early childhood education institutions. Therefore, this study analyzes strategies for developing responsibility in early childhood within Islamic educational institutions using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. The methodology followed the PRISMA 2020 protocol by analyzing 13 selected articles from 542 initial literature sources identified through national and international databases. The findings indicate that responsibility development strategies in early childhood can be classified into four main themes: habituation strategies, reinforcement and direct experience strategies, family roles and parenting patterns, and the cultivation of moral and religious values. Habituation through routine activities, role modeling, and daily discipline emerged as the most dominant approach. Experience-based learning methods, such as project-based learning, cooking classes, storytelling, and token economy, effectively enhance children's sense of responsibility through active engagement in real-life activities. The findings also reveal that parenting styles, parental involvement, and Islamic school culture significantly influence the formation of children's responsibility. Furthermore, research in this field demonstrates a paradigm shift from behavioristic approaches to constructivist and socio-emotional approaches that emphasize direct experience, self-regulation, and the internalization of moral and spiritual values.

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education (ECE) represents a strategic phase in character formation because children at this stage experience rapid developmental growth and remain highly responsive to social and educational stimulation. Self-regulation, emotional control, and social habit formation begin to develop significantly during early childhood. Therefore, experiences gained during this period have long-term effects on children's behavior and personality (Berk, 1998; Ursache et al., 2012). Social interaction, habituation patterns, and the quality of the learning environment during the golden age contribute substantially to children's moral and social behavior in later life (Rohman et al., 2025; Santrock, 2015). Character education in early childhood, therefore, should not be viewed merely as a supplementary component of learning. It should function as the core of the educational process that determines the overall quality of children's development.

Responsibility is one of the character values that should be developed from an early age. Responsibility does not only refer to children's ability to complete tasks. It also reflects moral formation related to self-awareness, decision-making ability, and readiness to accept the consequences of one's actions (Lickona, 2004; Thompson, 2014). In early childhood education, responsibility is closely associated with self-regulation and children's ability to adapt to social norms at school and in the family environment. Children who receive character reinforcement from an early age tend to show stronger social-emotional abilities and better learning readiness than children whose development focuses only on academic achievement (OECD, 2021). Character education in the twenty-first century also needs to strengthen social competence, responsibility, and ethical awareness as part of sustainable human development (UNESCO, 2021). This indicates that developing responsibility in early childhood is relevant not only to individual moral development but also to children's readiness to face future social and educational demands.

From the perspective of Islamic education, responsibility holds an important position because it relates closely to *amanah* (trustworthiness), *akhlaq al-karimah* (noble character), and individuals' spiritual awareness of their obligations to Allah, other human beings, and the environment (Halstead, 2007; Hasan, 2024; Sahin, 2018). Islamic education emphasizes balance among cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions in the learning process. Therefore, responsibility development is not merely

behavioral. It is an internalized value embedded through habituation, role modeling, and direct experience (Mardalena et al., 2025; Mizan, 1999). Islamic early childhood education institutions, such as Raudhatul Athfal (RA), Islamic kindergartens, and Islamic-based playgroups, play a strategic role in instilling responsibility through daily religious activities, adab practices, experience-based learning, and social interactions that integrate moral and spiritual values (Kanza & Lia, 2026).

Over the past five to ten years, research on early childhood character education based on religious values has developed significantly. Several studies have examined the effectiveness of religious habituation, teacher role modeling, daily worship activities, and experience-based learning in shaping children's character in ECE institutions (Apriani et al., 2026; Hasanah & Munastiwi, 2019; Sulyandari & Qonitatillah, 2026). Some studies indicate that Islamic school culture and daily adab practices, such as greeting habits, politeness, collective prayer, and routine religious activities, help improve children's discipline and prosocial behavior through the internalization of religious values in daily social interactions (Pujawardani, 2019; Ramadhon et al., 2025). Other studies show that experience-based and environment-based learning can strengthen children's independence and responsibility in daily activities (Rizqiana & Sugiharti, 2026). However, these studies generally focus on program implementation in specific institutional contexts and mostly assess behavioral changes in practical terms. They have not sufficiently examined the conceptual relationship between pedagogical approaches, the internalization of Islamic values, and the formation of responsibility.

Previous studies on the development of responsibility in Islamic early childhood education generally emphasize habituation, religious activities, and teacher role modeling as the main strategies for character formation. However, these findings remain fragmented and reveal several important limitations. Some studies conclude that routine-based disciplinary approaches effectively improve children's responsible behavior. Other studies show that responsibility develops more effectively through child-centered and experience-based learning approaches that encourage independence and self-regulation. These differing findings indicate a conceptual tension regarding the most effective pedagogical strategies for developing responsibility in Islamic early childhood education.

Previous studies also tend to examine specific aspects separately, such as parenting styles, classroom habituation, or moral value inculcation. They rarely

integrate these dimensions into a comprehensive framework for responsibility development. From a theoretical perspective, limited research has synthesized the relationship among Islamic moral values, social-emotional development, and constructivist approaches in shaping children's responsibility. Methodologically, most studies use small-scale qualitative designs or classroom-based studies. Systematic syntheses that comprehensively map research trends, methodological approaches, and the effectiveness of pedagogical strategies remain limited. This condition may cause the development of Islamic-based character education models to proceed partially and without a strong conceptual foundation. Therefore, a systematic literature review is needed to critically synthesize previous research findings and identify future research directions and pedagogical strategies in this field.

Based on these gaps, this article differs from previous studies by conducting a systematic literature review that specifically maps strategies for developing responsibility in early childhood within the context of Islamic education. Previous studies generally focused on character program implementation in single institutions, the use of particular strategies such as habituation or role modeling, and the influence of parenting patterns on children's responsible behavior. However, these studies remain partial and contextual. They have not integrated pedagogical approaches, Islamic value dimensions, and methodological trends into a comprehensive synthesis.

This article addresses these gaps by analyzing and categorizing research findings into four main themes: habituation strategies, reinforcement and direct experience, family roles and parenting patterns, and the internalization of moral and religious values. This article also highlights a paradigm shift in research on responsibility development in early childhood, from behavioristic approaches to constructivist and social-emotional approaches that emphasize direct experience, self-regulation, and the internalization of moral and spiritual values. Therefore, this article contributes not only by mapping previous empirical studies but also by generating a conceptual synthesis of the relationship among pedagogical strategies, Islamic values, and responsibility development in early childhood. This relationship has rarely been discussed integratively in previous research.

METHODS

This study used a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) based on the PRISMA 2020 guidelines. This approach was selected because it enables researchers to systematically identify, evaluate, and synthesize previous studies on strategies for developing responsibility in young children in Raudhatul Athfal (RA) and Islamic kindergarten institutions. Through the SLR approach, this study identifies research patterns, research gaps, and directions for developing responsibility-oriented character education in early childhood.

The systematic literature review process followed the PRISMA stages, including identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. In the identification stage, the researcher searched articles through Scopus, DOAJ, Garuda, and Google Scholar using combinations of the following keywords: “early childhood responsibility,” “responsibility in early childhood,” “early childhood character education,” “character education in Islamic kindergarten,” and “Raudhatul Athfal responsibility.” The search strategy used Boolean operators AND and OR, such as “responsibility” AND “early childhood” AND “Islamic kindergarten.” The initial search yielded 542 articles, consisting of 162 articles from Scopus, 78 from DOAJ, 121 from Garuda, and 181 from Google Scholar.

During the screening stage, the researcher examined titles, abstracts, and duplicate records. A total of 245 articles were removed, including 147 duplicate articles and 98 articles considered irrelevant based on their titles, leaving 297 articles. The researcher then conducted further screening based on topic relevance and the initial inclusion criteria. From this process, 214 articles were excluded because they were not relevant to the theme of responsibility development in early childhood, resulting in 83 articles for the next stage.

The eligibility stage involved a full-text review to ensure alignment with the focus of the study, namely strategies for developing responsibility in early childhood within Islamic educational institutions. At this stage, 48 articles were excluded because they did not meet the inclusion criteria, 13 articles did not explain their research methods adequately, and 10 articles were unavailable in full text. Based on the entire selection process, 13 articles met the inclusion criteria and were used as the primary sources in this systematic literature review.

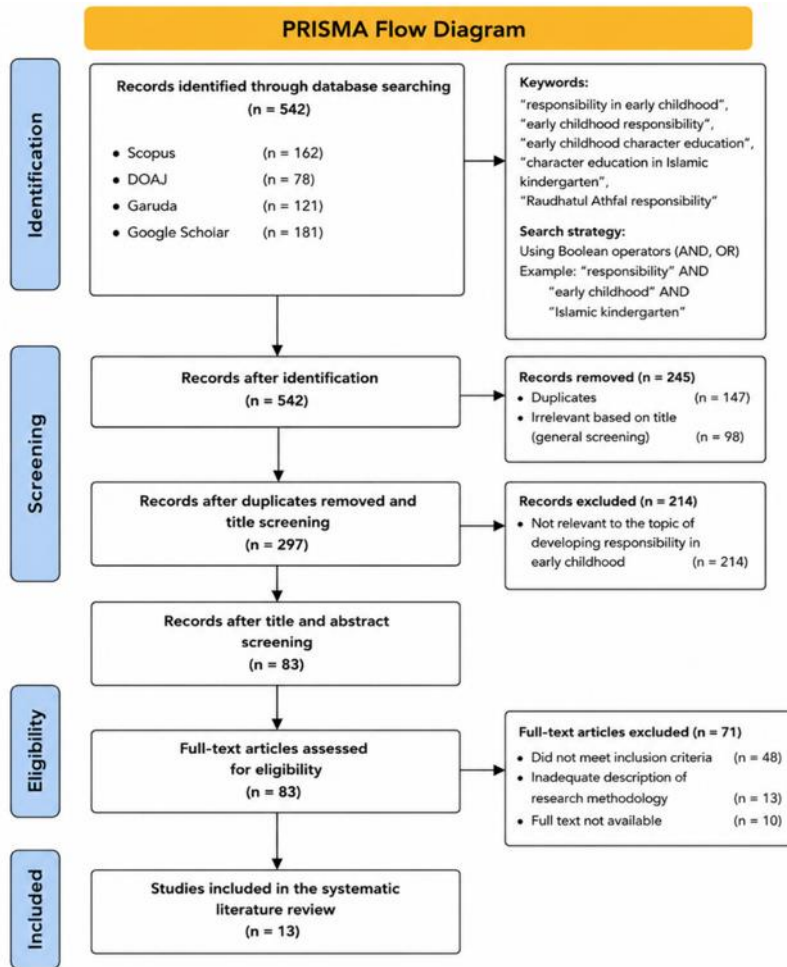


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram of Article Selection Process

Furthermore, the researcher conducted a quality appraisal to assess the quality of the selected articles using several indicators, including the clarity of research objectives, the appropriateness of the methods, data validity, and the relevance of the findings to the research topic. Articles that met the quality standards were analyzed using thematic synthesis. This process involved identifying the main themes emerging from the studies, grouping research findings based on conceptual similarities, and developing a synthesis to identify patterns of strategies for developing responsibility in early childhood.

The results of the thematic synthesis were used to explain the forms of responsibility development strategies and their implications for character education in Islamic early childhood education institutions. Thus, this systematic literature review provides a comprehensive overview of responsibility development in early childhood based on relevant and reliable empirical findings.

Author(s)	Article Title	Research Method	Key Findings
Pujiati & Dahlan, 2017	Behavior Modification Through Token Economy	Quasi-Experimental	Children who received a token economy program

	Techniques to Improve Responsible Behavior in Early Childhood		showed a significant improvement in responsible behavior compared with children who did not receive token economy reinforcement.
Saleh & Chairunnisa, 2018	Responsibility for Faith Education in Early Childhood	Descriptive Qualitative	Faith education in early childhood aims to instill the foundations of faith, the pillars of Islam, Islamic law, love for the Prophet and his family, love for the companions, and love for the Qur'an in accordance with children's developmental stages.
Surifah et al., 2018	The Influence of the Habituation Method on the Formation of Responsible Attitudes in Children Aged 4-5 Years	Ex-Post Facto	The habituation method influences the formation of responsible attitudes in children aged 4-5 years.
Gusmaniarti & Suweleh, 2019	Analysis of Parents' Home Service Behavior in the Development of Children's Independence and Responsibility	Descriptive Qualitative	Among 50 early childhood students aged 5-6 years, parents assisted 80% of school preparation activities, completed 90% of simple room-cleaning activities, and tidied up toys in 60% of cases. Excessive parental home service strongly affects the development of children's independence and responsibility.
Anggraeni et al., 2021	The Habituation Method for Instilling Discipline and Responsibility at RA Daarul Falaah Tasikmalaya	Descriptive Qualitative	The habituation method at RA Daarul Falaah is implemented through routine, programmed, and incidental school habituation activities that foster discipline and responsibility in children.
Elan et al., 2022	Responsibility among Children Aged 4-5 Years through Father-Involved Parenting	Case Study	Children who experience father-involved parenting show meaningful development in cognitive, social, emotional, and positive developmental aspects. The development of responsibility is part of their social-emotional competence.
Zahro, 2022	Responsibility among Children Aged 5-6 Years during the Pandemic Viewed from Parenting Styles at TK Islam Terpadu An-Nur	Case Study	Children's responsible attitudes during learning from home at TK Islam Terpadu An-Nur varied according to parenting style, parents' work demands, and individual child characteristics.
Widiyono et al., 2022	The Formation of Children's Independence	Survey Research	Parental assistance strongly influences children's

	and Responsibility through Cooking Class Activities at RA IMAMA		responsibility and independence in cooking class activities.
Laksita et al., 2023	Instilling Responsibility in Early Childhood through Storytelling	Descriptive Qualitative	Storytelling can improve responsibility in early childhood.
Purba et al., 2023	Implementation of the Project Method to Improve Responsible Attitudes in Early Childhood	Descriptive Qualitative	The project method can improve responsible attitudes in early childhood by involving children in task completion and shared activities.
Rahardi et al., 2023	Implementation of the Habituation Method in Instilling Responsibility in Early Childhood	Descriptive Qualitative	Responsibility can be instilled through routine habituation, exemplary habituation, and spontaneous habituation.
Mulianingsih, 2024	Improving Responsible Attitudes among Children Aged 5-6 Years (Group B) through Group Activity Habituation at TK Darul Ulum	Descriptive Qualitative	Group activity habituation can be used by educators because it contains elements of cooperation and individual tasks that each child must carry out responsibly.
Mustafa, 2025	Cultivating Resilience and Self-Regulation in Malaysian Early Childhood Education: Bridging Cultural Insights and Educational Practices	Descriptive Qualitative	Educators integrated Islamic teachings, local cultural practices, and strategies that support children's resilience and self-regulation. Early childhood educators acted as cultural and emotional mediators, encouraged inclusive classroom environments, and involved families to strengthen resilience and facilitate self-regulation.

Table 1. SLR Research Articles

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of 13 articles shows that strategies for developing responsibility in early childhood can be categorized into four main themes: habituation strategies, reinforcement and direct experience strategies, the role of family and parenting patterns, and the inculcation of moral and religious values. Recent studies also indicate a conceptual development toward a more holistic approach through the strengthening of resilience and self-regulation in early childhood education. These four themes are interconnected and form a character development system that supports the formation of responsible attitudes in early childhood.

Main Theme	Article Frequency	Forms of Strategy	Theoretical Orientation
Habituation Strategies	4 articles	Routines, role modeling, and group activities	Behavioristic and social learning theory

Main Theme	Article Frequency	Forms of Strategy	Theoretical Orientation
Reinforcement and Direct Experience	5 articles	Token economy, projects, cooking classes, and storytelling	Experiential learning
The Role of Family and Parenting Patterns	4 articles	Guidance, opportunities for independence, and consistent parenting	Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory
Inculcation of Moral and Religious Values	3 articles	Morality, faith, worship discipline, and trustworthiness	Islamic education (ta’dib and tarbiyah)

Table 2. Synthesis of Findings on Strategies for Developing Responsibility in Early Childhood

Habituation Strategies

The habituation theme appeared in 4 of the 13 studies. Habituation refers to the continuous repetition of positive behaviors until they become part of children’s habits and character. In early childhood education, habituation is implemented through routine activities, spontaneous activities, role modeling, and programmed activities that are consistently applied in schools. This finding indicates the strong influence of behavioristic approaches in early childhood character education, particularly in Islamic educational institutions. The consistent repetition of positive behaviors is considered effective in shaping habits that gradually develop into character.

The habituation method influences the development of responsible behavior in children aged 4-5 years (Surifah et al., 2018). These habits are developed through simple activities such as tidying up play equipment, disposing of trash properly, storing learning supplies, and completing teacher-assigned tasks. Children who engage in these activities repeatedly demonstrate better responsibility development than those who do not receive consistent habituation.

Routine habituation, spontaneous habituation, and habituation through teacher role modeling can foster discipline and responsibility in children (Anggraeni et al., 2021; Rahardi et al., 2023). Teachers do not only provide instructions. They also model behaviors that children imitate in daily life. In early childhood education, role modeling is crucial because children are in a developmental stage marked by strong imitation of the behaviors of adults around them.

Furthermore, group activities can foster responsibility habituation (Mulianingsih, 2024). In group activities, each child receives a specific task to complete with peers. This situation helps children understand that every action has consequences and responsibilities. Thus, habituation strategies foster both personal and social responsibility in children.

These findings align with Bandura's social learning theory, which emphasizes that children learn through observation and imitation of their social environment. From the perspective of Islamic education, the habituation process also relates to *tarbiyah*, namely a gradual educational process through continuous practice and the formation of good habits. Responsibility, therefore, does not emerge instantly. It is built through consistent practice in the school and family environment. In addition to fostering personal responsibility, habituation through group activities helps children understand social responsibilities, such as working together, respecting rules, and completing shared tasks.

Reinforcement and Direct Experience

The second theme, reinforcement and direct experience, appeared in five articles. This finding indicates a shift in learning approaches from verbal instruction to active learning based on concrete experiences. This strategy emphasizes children's active involvement in real-life activities, enabling them to learn through direct experience.

Research shows that token economy techniques effectively increase responsible behavior in early childhood (Pujiati & Dahlan, 2017). Through a reward system in the form of tokens or specific symbols, children receive positive reinforcement when they successfully demonstrate responsible behavior. This reinforcement helps children understand the relationship between behavior and consequences, motivating them to repeat positive behavior.

In addition to positive reinforcement, experiential learning methods have been found effective in developing children's responsibility (Purba et al., 2023). The project method provides opportunities for children to complete tasks independently or in groups. Children learn to plan activities, complete tasks, and take responsibility for the results.

A similar finding appears in research on stimulating responsibility through cooking classes (Widiyono et al., 2022). In these activities, children are directly involved in preparing tools and ingredients, following instructions, and putting away equipment after completion. These activities train children to understand responsibility through real-life practice and everyday experiences.

Research also shows that storytelling can be used as an enjoyable experience-based learning strategy (Laksita et al., 2023). Through stories containing moral

messages, children can more easily understand the meaning of responsibility and imitate the behavior of story characters. Storytelling helps children develop moral awareness through an approach suited to the developmental characteristics of early childhood.

Furthermore, Mustafa's study (2025) expands the concept of direct experience through the development of resilience and self-regulation in Malaysian early childhood education. The study shows that educators integrate local cultural practices, Islamic values, and emotional regulation strategies into daily learning activities. Children do not only learn to complete tasks. They also learn to control emotions, face difficulties, and take responsibility for their own behavior in social environments. These findings indicate that responsibility development in early childhood is increasingly directed toward self-management skills and emotional resilience as part of socio-emotional character development.

The synthesis indicates that direct experience is more effective than lecture-based approaches because early childhood learning is strongly supported by concrete activities. This finding aligns with Kolb's experiential learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of real-life experiences in the learning process.

In the context of Islamic education, direct experience also reflects the concept of *ta'dib*, namely the process of instilling *adab* through concrete practices in everyday life. Children do not only understand responsibility cognitively. They also cultivate responsible behavior through concrete actions. The values of trustworthiness, discipline, and independence are instilled through repeated experiences in learning activities.

Furthermore, the emergence of resilience and self-regulation concepts indicates that responsibility development in early childhood is increasingly directed toward self-management and emotional resilience. This expands the meaning of responsibility beyond adherence to duties and includes the ability to regulate behavior and emotions in social life.

The Role of Family and Parenting Patterns

Families play a crucial role in developing responsibility in early childhood. Four articles confirm that family involvement is a key factor in shaping children's responsibility. These findings suggest that character development cannot be left

entirely to educational institutions. It requires synergy between schools and families. The family environment is the first setting that shapes children's behavior and character before they enter formal education.

Gusmaniarti and Suweleh (2019) found that excessive parental home service can hinder the development of children's responsibility. Parents often perform simple activities that children should be able to do independently, such as tidying up toys, preparing school supplies, and tidying their rooms. This situation reduces children's opportunities to learn independence and take responsibility for their own tasks.

Elan et al. (2022) show that father involvement in parenting positively influences the development of responsibility in children. Children who receive active care from their fathers demonstrate stronger social-emotional development, including the ability to complete tasks and obey rules.

Zahro's study (2022) also shows that parenting styles during the pandemic influenced the development of children's responsibility. Parents who provided guidance, opportunities for independence, and consistent discipline tended to have children with stronger responsible attitudes than parents who adopted permissive or overly indulgent parenting styles.

Mustafa's findings (2025) reinforce the importance of family involvement in developing children's responsibility. The study emphasizes that collaboration between teachers and families helps create a stable and supportive emotional environment for children's self-regulation development. Family support is a key factor in building emotional resilience, self-discipline, and social responsibility in children from an early age.

The synthesis of these findings indicates that children's responsibility development is inseparable from family interaction patterns. Children need opportunities to perform tasks independently, receive consistent guidance, and obtain emotional support from their parents.

These findings are relevant to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which positions family and school as two primary environments that mutually influence child development. In the context of Islamic education, this relationship aligns with the concept of integral education between home and school in children's tarbiyah process. Father involvement in parenting also contributes to children's socio-emotional

development and responsibility. This suggests that character formation requires collective role modeling from the child's immediate environment.

Inculcation of Moral and Religious Values

Moral and religious values appeared in three articles and serve as a primary foundation for developing responsibility in Islamic educational institutions. Unlike general approaches, responsibility in Islamic education is understood not only as social obedience but also as spiritual and moral awareness. Instilling moral and religious values is therefore an essential foundation for developing responsible behavior in early childhood.

Saleh and Chairunnisa (2019) explain that faith education from an early age is an important foundation for developing responsible character. Children are introduced to Islamic values such as worship discipline, respect for parents, love for the Qur'an, and understanding of their obligations as Muslims. Instilling these values helps children understand that every action carries moral responsibility toward themselves, others, and Allah.

In addition to religious instruction, responsibility is instilled through daily school activities such as praying together, maintaining cleanliness, queuing, and helping friends. The Islamic school environment provides a space for children to practice responsibility in their daily social lives.

Mustafa's study (2025) also shows that religious values and local culture can be integrated into the development of children's resilience and self-regulation. Teachers act as cultural and emotional mediators who help children understand responsible behavior through an integrated spiritual, social, and emotional approach. Thus, responsibility is understood not only as adherence to rules but also as part of the formation of children's morals and cultural identity.

This finding is closely related to *ta'dib*, which emphasizes the development of manners and morals as the core of Islamic education. Teachers are also positioned as role models who provide examples of responsible behavior in daily life. Values such as worship discipline, cleanliness, respect for others, and rule compliance serve as media for internalizing responsibility in children. Thus, responsibility in Islamic education develops not only in behavioral aspects but also in children's spiritual, moral, and social

dimensions. Religious values help children understand responsibility more deeply, not only as a social obligation but also as part of moral and personality development.

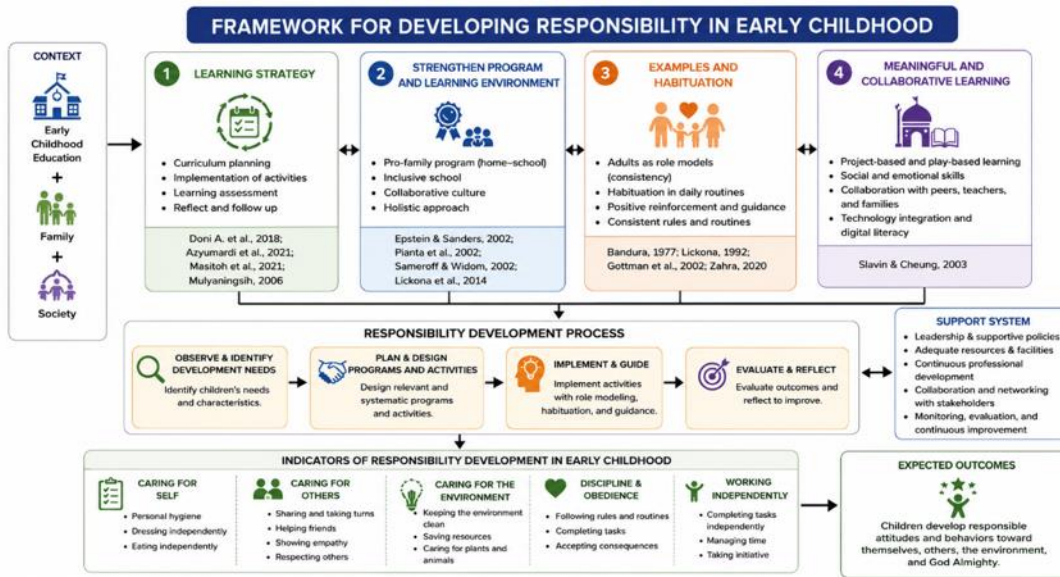


Figure 2. Framework for Early Childhood Responsibility Development Strategy

The framework developed in this study is based on a synthesis of four main themes identified in 13 selected articles. These four themes form an interconnected system in the process of developing responsibility in early childhood. Habituation strategies and direct experience function as processes for shaping behavior through concrete activities and consistent repetition. Meanwhile, families and schools function as primary environments that provide reinforcement, role models, and emotional support for children. Moral and religious values serve as the foundation that gives spiritual meaning to responsible behavior.

Responsibility is positioned as the result of internalization that develops through three main stages: behavioral habituation, consistent reinforcement, and value internalization. This process produces personal, social, and religious responsibility, as well as self-regulation skills in early childhood. This framework also demonstrates that responsibility development in Islamic education is not solely oriented toward behavioral compliance. It also focuses on the holistic development of children’s morals, etiquette, and spiritual awareness.

CONCLUSION

The results of this systematic literature review indicate that responsibility development in early childhood within Islamic educational institutions occurs through the integration of positive behavioral habits, direct learning experiences, family

involvement, and the instilling of moral and religious values. Habituation strategies through routine activities, role models, and discipline are the most dominant approaches. However, recent research indicates a shift toward a more constructivist approach through real-life experiences, social interactions, and contextual value internalization.

Theoretically, this study reinforces the concept that responsibility in early childhood is a holistic and multidimensional character-building process. Responsibility is understood not only as a social skill but also as part of moral formation through the values of trustworthiness, etiquette, and spiritual awareness in Islamic education.

Practically, this study implies that responsibility development in early childhood will be more effective when implemented through collaboration between schools and families, experiential learning, consistent habituation, and the integration of moral and religious values into children's daily activities.

This study used articles indexed in selected databases and covered a limited publication period. In addition, most of the analyzed studies focused on Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. Therefore, the generalization of the findings to broader contexts requires caution.

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