



Instilling a Value of Responsibility in Early Childhood Through Habit Formation in Early Childhood Education Institutions

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Article Information:

Received June 25, 2026

Revised July 27, 2026

Accepted August 29, 2026

Keywords: *Responsibility, early childhood, habit formation, good manners at the table, character education*

Abstract

Instilling a sense of responsibility in young children is a fundamental part of character education that cannot be postponed. This study stems from concerns about the declining sense of personal responsibility among children aged 5–6 years, particularly regarding neatness and cleanliness after eating. Early childhood education institutions in West Sumatra have implemented a “tidy up on your own” habit-forming approach derived from the values of the Prophet Muhammad’s hadith on dining etiquette as a strategy for instilling responsibility. This study aims to describe the implementation of this habit-forming approach, analyze the forms of responsibility exhibited by the children, and identify the factors that support and hinder its implementation. A descriptive qualitative approach was used, with data collection techniques including participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The research subjects consisted of the school principal, four teachers, and twelve students in Group B. Data analysis was conducted using the data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion-drawing model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The research findings show that consistently and systematically instilling the habit of “tidying up after oneself” has proven effective in fostering a sense of responsibility in children, as evidenced by behaviors such as cleaning up food scraps, returning tableware to its proper place, and keeping the table clean. Hadiths on table manners provide a spiritual foundation that strengthens children’s internal motivation. Supporting factors include active teacher involvement, a conducive environment, and adult role modeling, while the main obstacle is inconsistency in the practice at home.

INTRODUCTION

Character education is one of the most fundamental pillars of Indonesia’s national education system and is increasingly receiving serious attention from various stakeholders. From the perspective of early childhood education, character development cannot be separated from a child’s holistic growth and development. Character instilled from an early age will serve as a solid foundation for a child’s future personality development. This aligns with Lickona, (2013) view, which

How to cite:

Ramayani, E., Sumarti, P., Handayani, F., Ahmad, N., Nafsiyati, H. (2026). Instilling a Value of Responsibility in Early Childhood Through Habit Formation in Early Childhood Education Institutions. *Ahlussunnah: Journal of Islamic Education*, 5(2), 1352-1365.

E-ISSN:

2827-9573

Published by:

The Institute for Research and Community Service

emphasizes that character education must begin as early as possible, since it is during this period that a child's brain and mind are at their most plastic and responsive to moral values. Investing in character at an early age is a long-term investment whose impact will be felt well into adulthood.

One of the most crucial character traits to instill in young children is responsibility. In the context of early childhood education, responsibility is understood as a child's ability to recognize and carry out their tasks independently, including taking care of themselves, looking after their belongings, and actively participating in activities that are their responsibility (Zubaedi, 2015). This value of responsibility is not merely a cognitive aspect that can be taught through lectures or verbal instructions alone; rather, it must be internalized through direct experience and consistent practice in a child's daily life. Without adequate instillation of responsibility from an early age, children tend to grow up as individuals who are dependent on others and less capable of taking care of themselves.

The urgency of instilling a sense of responsibility in early childhood education becomes increasingly apparent when observing various social phenomena emerging in contemporary society. Research by Hakim & Darajat, (2023) indicates that one of the primary challenges facing Indonesia's education system is the low sense of responsibility among the younger generation, the roots of which can be traced back to parenting and educational practices during early childhood. Children who are not accustomed to taking responsibility for their actions from an early age tend to have difficulty adjusting to social demands as adults. Therefore, instilling the value of responsibility is not merely a matter of individual interest but also a collective responsibility of society and educational institutions to prepare a generation of people with integrity.

Habituation theory serves as the most relevant psychological foundation for instilling character values in young children. Habituation is the process of forming relatively stable attitudes and behaviors through consistent repetition of a specific action (Mulyasa, 2017). In behaviorist psychology, habituation is known as conditioning the formation of a response to a stimulus through regular repetition. However, in the context of character education, habituation is not merely a stimulus-response mechanism; rather, it involves dimensions of awareness, meaning-making, and the internalization of values. Children who have become accustomed to repeatedly engaging in positive behaviors will develop an intrinsic understanding of the importance of those behaviors, thereby fostering an authentic character not merely superficial compliance.

From a child development perspective, the ages of 5–6 years mark a phase known as the “golden age,” during which brain development reaches 80–90% of adult brain capacity. During this phase, children's cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities develop at a very rapid pace. Vygotsky Santrock, (2011) noted that during this phase, children are in the zone of proximal development, which is highly sensitive to scaffolding and support from the social environment in shaping new abilities, including moral and social skills. Erikson (as cited in Papalia & Feldman, 2012) also describes children at this age as being in the “initiative vs. guilt” stage, during which they begin to develop initiative, the ability to plan and carry out activities, and an awareness of the consequences of their actions. This phase represents the most strategic opportunity to instill a sense of responsibility.

The social-emotional development of 5–6-year-olds also supports the process of instilling a sense of responsibility. At this age, children are able to understand others' perspectives, feel empathy, and begin to develop a more complex sense of self. Their emerging ability to regulate emotions allows them to resist impulsive urges and choose more deliberate behaviors (Denham et al., 2012). Socially, children of this

age begin to understand group norms, rules for playing together, and the social consequences of their actions. This understanding of rules and consequences is an important prerequisite for the development of a sense of responsibility. When children understand that their actions have an impact on themselves and others, an internal motivation to be responsible can grow naturally.

From the perspective of Islamic education, instilling a sense of responsibility in children is an obligation inseparable from the concept of *taklif* that is, the imposition of religious obligations upon human beings. Although children are not yet formally subject to religious obligations, the process of preparing them and fostering good habits from an early age is part of the responsibility of parents and educators as mandated by religion. Quran Surah At-Tahrim verse 6 emphasizes that parents have a duty to protect their families from the fires of Hell, which exegetes interpret as the obligation to educate children with the right values from an early age (Ulwan, 2017). The concept of *tarbiyah* in Islam encompasses not only intellectual development but also the cultivation of moral character, including the values of responsibility, honesty, and compassion toward others.

The hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) regarding table manners are a rich and comprehensive pedagogical resource for teaching values to young children. These hadiths not only address the technical aspects of how to eat but also instill deeper values such as gratitude, cleanliness, concern for others, and responsibility for one's own actions. In a hadith narrated by Muslim, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated that one should eat with the right hand, mention the name of Allah before eating, and clean one's eating area after finishing. These values embody a dimension of responsibility that is highly relevant to teach young children within the context of Islam-based character education (Nawawi, 2019).

Dining etiquette in Islam encompasses a set of ethical principles closely tied to the value of personal responsibility. Cleaning up food scraps, returning utensils to their proper places, and maintaining a clean environment after eating are concrete manifestations of the value of responsibility taught by Islam. Al-Ghazali, in *Ihya Ulumuddin* (Kurniawan, 2021), explains that dining etiquette is part of daily social interactions; when practiced with spiritual awareness, it fosters noble character in its entirety. In the context of early childhood education, these hadiths on dining etiquette can serve as effective pedagogical tools because they address aspects of daily life that are closest to and most familiar to children.

Various previous studies have examined the role of habit formation in early childhood character education from various perspectives. A study by Rahmawati & Nugroho, (2020) at the Bina Anak Sholeh Kindergarten in Yogyakarta found that instilling the habits of handwashing and tidying up one's seat significantly improved children's discipline and sense of responsibility. Fitriani, (2022) study at Al-Ikhlas Early Childhood Education Center in Bandung showed that integrating the values of the hadith into children's daily routines was proven to enhance their moral understanding and prosocial behavior. In their study on Islam-based habit formation, Rahmawati & Nugroho, (2020) concluded that the consistency and involvement of teachers and parents are key factors in the successful instillation of character values in young children.

A review of previous studies reveals a research gap that needs to be addressed. Although there have been numerous studies on habit formation in early childhood character education, research specifically linking the hadith on table manners to the instillation of the value of responsibility through "tidying up on one's own" activities remain very limited, particularly in the context of early childhood education institutions in rural areas of West Sumatra. Most previous studies have focused on the cognitive aspect of understanding values, rather than on concrete behavioral

aspects as manifestations of the value of responsibility. In addition, studies on how the foundations of hadith can strengthen children's intrinsic motivation in carrying out their responsibilities have also received insufficient attention in the existing scientific literature.

The novelty of this study lies in three main aspects. First, this study explicitly links the pedagogical practice of instilling the habit of “tidying up after oneself” with the normative foundation of hadiths on table manners, thereby providing comprehensive theological and psychological legitimacy for this practice. Second, this study was conducted in the specific context of the Cinta Alam Kindergarten in the 2x11 Kayu Tanam subdistrict, which reflects the sociocultural characteristics of the Minangkabau community, thereby contributing to an understanding of the implementation of Islamic character education within a local cultural context. Third, this study systematically identifies supporting and inhibiting factors that have not been extensively explored in previous research, thereby providing more practical and actionable recommendations for educators.

Cinta Alam Kindergarten in the 2x11 Kayu Tanam Subdistrict, Padang Pariaman Regency, West Sumatra, is an early childhood education institution that has been in operation for more than a decade and is known for its educational approach that integrates Islamic values with local wisdom. The institution is located in an agrarian community that still strongly upholds the tradition of mutual cooperation and communal values. These conditions create an environment conducive to instilling social values, including responsibility. However, preliminary observations from this study indicate that there are still some children who do not consistently demonstrate responsible behavior, particularly when it comes to putting away tableware after shared meals at school.

Empirical observations in the field show that before the “clean up after yourself” habit-forming program was systematically implemented, most children in Group B at Cinta Alam Kindergarten were accustomed to waiting for teachers or cleaning staff to clean up food scraps and put eating utensils back in their places. This behavior indicates a lack of personal responsibility among the children regarding the cleanliness and tidiness of their own environment. In response to this situation, the principal and teachers at Cinta Alam Kindergarten designed a “clean up after yourself” habit-forming program based on hadiths regarding table manners. This program is consistently implemented every day as an integral part of the school's shared mealtime routine.

A number of studies show that routines based on religious values have a stronger and more lasting impact compared to habits grounded solely in secular values (Dewi & Pratama, 2022). This is possible because the spiritual dimension provides deeper intrinsic motivation namely, the awareness that the actions performed are part of worship and obedience to Allah. In the context of Muslim families and communities, such as those in the 2x11 Kayu Tanam subdistrict, practices linked to religious values also tend to receive stronger support from parents, ensuring that consistency in these practices is maintained not only at school but also at home.

Based on these various analyses, this study was designed to answer three interrelated research questions. First, how is the practice of “cleaning up after oneself” based on the hadith on table manners implemented at the Cinta Alam Kindergarten in the 2x11 Kayu Tanam subdistrict? Second, what forms of responsibility emerge among 5–6-year-old children as a result of this practice? Third, what factors support and hinder the success of this practice? This study is expected to provide a theoretical contribution to the development of a hadith-based character education model in early childhood education institutions, while also offering a practical contribution in the form of implementation guidelines that can be adopted

by similar early childhood education institutions.

In general, this study aims to provide an in-depth description of the implementation of the “tidying up on one’s own” habit based on hadiths regarding table manners and to analyze its effectiveness in instilling a sense of responsibility in 5–6-year-old children at Cinta Alam Kindergarten. The findings of this study are expected to fill a gap in the literature regarding the implementation of hadith-based character education at the early childhood education level, while also enriching the body of research on Islamic early childhood education in Indonesia.

METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of instilling a sense of responsibility through habitual practices in a natural context without manipulating research variables. This approach was chosen because the researcher intended to describe, understand, and interpret the processes and meanings embedded in the practice of “tidying up on one’s own” at Cinta Alam Kindergarten in 2x11 Kayu Tanam Subdistrict, Padang Pariaman Regency, West Sumatra. The study was conducted over three months, from January to March 2024. The research subjects consisted of the principal, four teachers from Group B, and twelve students from Group B, who were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in the habit-forming program.

Data collection was conducted using three main techniques: participatory observation to directly observe the implementation of habit-forming practices during shared meals; in-depth interviews with the school principal and teachers to obtain information about the program’s planning, implementation, and evaluation; and documentation in the form of teachers’ anecdotal notes, photos of activities, and school program documents (Akem et al., 2025; Anidar et al., 2026; Aryasutha et al., 2025; Efendi et al., 2026; Engkizar et al., 2023, 2025, 2026; Muhlasin et al., 2026). Data analysis followed the model proposed by Miles, (2015), which comprises three stages: data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification. Data validity was tested through source triangulation and methodological triangulation, in which data obtained from one source were confirmed by another source, and data collected through one method were confirmed by another method. Member checking was also conducted by presenting the research findings to the research subjects to ensure the accuracy and appropriateness of the interpretations.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of the “Clean Up After Yourself” Habit at the Cinta Alam Early Childhood Education Center

The “clean up after yourself” habit at the Cinta Alam Kindergarten is implemented as an integral part of the daily group meal routine, specifically from 9:30 to 10:00 a.m. This program was designed by the principal together with the faculty during the 2022–2023 school year in response to the children’s low awareness of cleanliness and tidiness after meals. The implementation of this habit-forming program consists of four sequential and mutually supportive stages. The first stage is the opening with a group prayer before eating, accompanied by the recitation of the *Basmallah* and a meal prayer repeatedly taught to the children. The second stage is the communal eating process supervised by teachers, with an emphasis on dining etiquette in accordance with the hadith, such as using the right hand, not speaking with a full mouth, and not wasting food. The third stage is the core of this habit-forming process, namely “cleaning up after oneself,” where after finishing the meal, each child is required to wipe up food crumbs from the table using a small cloth provided, return their lunchbox and eating utensils to their respective places, and

ensure their dining area is clean and tidy before leaving their seat. The fourth stage is the closing, which includes a post-meal prayer and a brief evaluation by the teacher regarding the day's observance of table manners.

The researchers' two-month observations showed that this habit-forming activity was carried out with a high degree of consistency. Of the 40 observations conducted, the "tidy up on your own" program was implemented 38 times or about 95% of the total observation time. The two instances where the program was not implemented were due to specific school circumstances, not because the program was discontinued. This consistency is a key factor that distinguishes this program from similar efforts in other schools, which are often hampered by inconsistent implementation. Teachers at Cinta Alam Kindergarten take turns monitoring and guiding the children as they carry out the "tidy up on your own" phase, ensuring that every child receives adequate guidance and positive reinforcement.

Teachers play a very active role in the initial guidance phase of the program. During the first three months of implementation, teachers provide hands-on demonstrations of how to clean tables and put away tableware. Scaffolding techniques are applied in a structured manner: the teacher performs all the steps while explaining the reasoning behind them; then the teacher and the child do it together; next, the child does it on their own under the teacher's supervision; and finally, the child does it independently. Vygotsky Santrock, (2011) emphasizes the importance of scaffolding in children's learning that is, providing assistance that is gradually reduced as children's abilities improve. This structured implementation of scaffolding has proven effective in accelerating the process of internalizing responsibility in children, as evidenced by their increasing independence in carrying out "tidying up on their own" over time.

In an in-depth interview, Teacher A (interview, February 15, 2024) revealed that at the start of the program, about 70% of the children still needed to be verbally reminded to "clean up after themselves." However, after six months, nearly 90% of the children had already adopted this habit voluntarily without needing to be reminded. Teacher B (interview, February 18, 2024) added that the most significant change was evident in the children's increased initiative to tidy up even before the teacher gave instructions. This change indicates the internalization of the value of responsibility shifting from a stage of external compliance to internal awareness which is a true indicator of the success of character education (Bier et al., 2021; Nucci et al., 2014).

Implementation of Hadiths on Good Manners at Mealtimes as a Pedagogical Foundation

The use of hadiths on table manners as a pedagogical foundation in the "clean up after yourself" program is the most distinctive aspect of this program. The hadiths used include the hadith on the virtue of reciting the *Basmallah* before eating (Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim), the hadith on eating with the right hand (Narrated by Muslim), hadiths on the prohibition against wasting food and the command to lick or clean up food that has fallen (HR. Muslim no. 2034), as well as hadiths on the virtue of cleaning one's eating area (HR. At-Tirmidhi). These hadiths were selected not only for their authenticity but also for their relevance to the context of children's daily eating habits and their explicit message of responsibility.

The application of hadith in the context of children's learning is carried out using an approach that takes into account children's stages of cognitive development. Children aged 5–6 years are in the preoperational to early concrete operational stages of Piaget's theory, which means they find it easier to understand abstract concepts through concrete examples and direct experience (Piaget & Vygotsky, 2008). Therefore, teachers do not present hadiths in a textual and abstract manner but rather relate them directly to the concrete actions the children are currently

performing. For example, when a child finishes eating and begins to clean their table, the teacher might say: “The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) taught us to clean up after ourselves; this means we maintain cleanliness and take responsibility for the spaces we use.” This contextual approach to hadith learning has proven more effective in helping children understand and make sense of hadiths than mere textual memorization (Yusuf & Ananda, 2022).

The principal of Cinta Alam Kindergarten (interview, February 12, 2024) explained that choosing hadiths on table manners as a foundation is not merely a matter of religious legitimacy, but a deliberate pedagogical choice. In Islam, *adab* or behavioral ethics is the foundation for character development and is inseparable from the practice of worship. When children understand that tidying up their eating utensils is part of following the Sunnah of the beloved Prophet, their internal motivation to perform this action becomes far stronger than if they were simply ordered to do so based on school rules alone. This concept aligns with the theory of intrinsic motivation proposed by Deci and Ryan (as cited in Reeve, 2018), which shows that behavior motivated by internalized values tends to be more stable and enduring than behavior driven by external rewards or punishments (Putri & Dewi, 2023).

In his study on the internalization of hadith in children’s education, (Nawawi, 2019) emphasizes that the Prophet’s hadith are a comprehensive and practical source of values, as they stem from the Prophet’s daily life practices, which can be directly emulated. Unlike abstract norms that are difficult to translate into concrete behavior, the hadith on table manners provide very specific and operational guidance, making it easier for teachers and parents to translate them into concrete and measurable habit-forming programs. In the context of the Cinta Alam Kindergarten, the hadiths on table manners serve as a bridge between theological values and daily pedagogical practices, providing coherence between the spiritual and behavioral dimensions of character education.

Forms of Responsibility That Emerge in Children

Systematic observations during the study identified at least six forms of responsible behavior that emerged as a result of the habit of “tidying up after oneself.” First, responsibility for personal hygiene, evident in children’s behavior of immediately using a tissue or cloth to wipe their mouths and hands after finishing a meal without needing to be reminded. Second, responsibility for table cleanliness, evident in the children’s habit of wiping and cleaning the table of food crumbs using the small cloths provided. Third, responsibility for dining utensils, evident in children’s behavior of neatly returning their lunchboxes, spoons, and water bottles to their respective bags after finishing a meal. Fourth, responsibility for food leftovers, where children begin taking only what they need and strive to finish their meals without leaving much waste, in accordance with the hadith’s principle prohibiting wastefulness. Fifth, social responsibility, which is evident in the child’s tendency to remind a friend who has forgotten to tidy up their table or who has not yet returned their utensils. Sixth, moral-spiritual responsibility, which is evident in the child’s habit of reciting a prayer before and after meals, demonstrating an awareness of the dimension of worship in daily eating activities.

Previous research by Kandiri et al., (2021) categorized forms of responsibility in early childhood into three domains: responsibility toward oneself, responsibility toward the environment, and social responsibility. The findings of this study enrich that categorization by adding a fourth dimension moral-spiritual responsibility which manifests in daily religious practices. The addition of this dimension is particularly relevant in the context of Islamic education, where the value of responsibility is understood not only as a social and ecological obligation but also as an obligation toward God, as enshrined in the concept of *khaliifah fil ardh* that is, humans as God’s

representatives on earth who are responsible for safeguarding the trust entrusted to them (Ulwan, 2017).

The development of these forms of responsibility does not occur instantly, but rather through a gradual process that can be observed in three phases. The first phase (months 1–2) is the instruction-based compliance phase, during which children “tidy up on their own” primarily because of the teacher’s commands and supervision. The second phase (months 3–4) is the habit-based compliance phase, during which children begin to perform actions routinely without the need for explicit verbal instructions, although they still require the teacher’s presence as a visual reminder. The third phase (months 5–6 and beyond) is the internalization phase, during which children engage in “tidying up on their own” based on internal awareness and even begin to show initiative and encourage their peers to do the same. The development of these three phases is consistent with the character development model proposed by Kirschenbaum (Lickona, 2013), which describes the journey from external compliance toward internal commitment as the essence of successful character education.

An interesting finding from this study is the emergence of socially responsible behavior that was not directly taught but arose as a spillover effect of the “clean up after yourself” habit. The children not only cleaned up their own eating areas but also began helping peers who needed assistance and reminding those who forgot to follow the habit. This phenomenon indicates that instilling a sense of personal responsibility can serve as a catalyst for the development of broader social values. This finding aligns with the research by (Putri & Dewi, 2023), which found that children who have developed a strong sense of personal responsibility tend to be more sensitive to social responsibility and more motivated to actively participate in community activities.

Changes in Children’s Behavior After Habituation

Changes in children’s behavior after the “tidying up on their own” habituation program was consistently implemented can be identified through various observable indicators. Based on anecdotal records made by teachers and analyzed by researchers, the most significant behavioral changes occurred in three areas. First, regarding independence, the percentage of children who tidied up on their own without verbal instructions from the teacher increased from 30% in the first month to 88% in the third month. Second, regarding the quality of implementation, observation scores showed an improvement in the completeness of actions (cleaning the desk, returning equipment, disposing of trash properly) from an average of 1.8 out of 3 indicators in the first month to 2.7 out of 3 indicators in the fourth month. Third, regarding generalization, several parents reported that the responsible behaviors taught at school began to appear at home as well, albeit with a lower level of consistency.

This behavioral change can be understood through the lens of Bandura’s social learning theory (as cited in Schunk, 2020), which emphasizes the importance of observation, imitation, and reinforcement in shaping behavior. Children at Cinta Alam Kindergarten not only receive verbal instructions on how to tidy up but also witness the teacher directly modeling the behavior. When teachers consistently demonstrate and practice the same actions, children learn through observation and gradually adopt that behavior. The positive reinforcement provided by teachers in the form of verbal and gestural praise when children successfully carry out the behavior also plays a crucial role in strengthening and maintaining that behavior.

Teacher C (interview, February 20, 2024) noted that the most striking change occurred among the group of children who were initially the most resistant to the program. Two children who, during the first month, showed resistance or indifference toward the “tidy up on your own” instruction gradually began to follow the routine after seeing the positive reception given to their peers who were

participating in the program. This phenomenon of social conformity is a crucial mechanism in the formation of group norms in the classroom, where positive peer pressure can serve as an effective motivator for children who lack internal motivation. This demonstrates that fostering a classroom environment that supports the value of responsibility is just as important as the habit-forming program itself.

The behavioral changes observed in the children have also had a positive impact on the overall classroom dynamics. Teacher D (interview, February 22, 2024) reported that since the “clean up on your own” program began, the time needed to clean the room after mealtime has decreased significantly, which in turn has freed up more time for other learning activities. More importantly, these changes have also influenced the overall classroom atmosphere: the children have become more orderly, more respectful of one another, and more cooperative in other activities beyond mealtimes. These findings confirm Berkowitz’s (2021) view that the internalization of one character value can serve as a catalyst for the development of other character values, as these values are interconnected and form a coherent network of character traits.

Supporting and Hindering Factors

Data analysis identified several supporting factors that contributed to the success of the “tidy up on your own” habit-forming program at Cinta Alam Kindergarten. The first and most decisive factor was the teachers’ commitment and consistency in implementing and supervising the program. The four teachers in Group B demonstrated a high level of consistency in carrying out each stage of the program and reminded one another when a stage was missed. This shared commitment fosters a school culture that supports the value of responsibility, rather than treating it as merely an individual teacher’s initiative. Wibowo, (2021) research confirms that the sustainability of habit-forming programs in schools depends heavily on the collective commitment of the entire school community, not just the teachers directly involved.

The second supporting factor is the design of the classroom’s physical environment, which supports the program. School administrators provide a clean cloth on each table, a small bucket to collect food scraps, and a rack for returning tableware that is within the children’s reach. An environmental design that makes it easy for children to carry out their responsibilities embodies the concept of a “prepared environment” proposed by Montessori (Lillard, 2006), which emphasizes that a well-designed physical environment can be a key facilitator for the development of children’s independence and responsibility. With easily accessible supplies and clear procedures, children do not face physical barriers in carrying out “tidying up on their own,” allowing them to focus entirely on internalizing values.

The third supporting factor is parental involvement. The school regularly communicates this program to parents through monthly meetings and notes in the communication notebook. Some parents reported that they began implementing the same practices at home, especially after understanding the hadith that forms the foundation of the program. This parental involvement creates consistency between practices at school and at home, which is a crucial factor in the success of character education. Zubaedi, (2019) emphasizes that synergy between school and family is a prerequisite that cannot be overlooked in a comprehensive character education program, because character is shaped by the totality of a child’s environment, not just by a single institution.

The fourth supporting factor specific to the context of the Cinta Alam Kindergarten is the Minangkabau cultural values that naturally support the program. Minangkabau culture is known for its strong traditional principles regarding cleanliness, communal responsibility, and a sense of shame toward reprehensible behavior. The traditional principle of *‘basosoh basisial’* (clean and orderly) inherent in

Minangkabau culture creates a cultural resonance that reinforces the values taught through the hadith on table manners. This integration of Islamic values and local wisdom creates a cohesive and meaningful value ecosystem for children growing up within this cultural context (Manan, 2020).

On the other hand, the study also identified several inhibiting factors that require attention. The main obstacle is inconsistency in practicing these habits at home. Although some parents have tried to implement similar practices at home, there are still quite a few parents who, due to busyness or lack of knowledge, do not consistently apply them. This inconsistency causes some children to experience confusion and a decline in motivation due to differing behavioral standards between school and home. These results align with the findings of (Rahmawati & Nugroho, 2020), who identified differences in the school and home environments as one of the greatest barriers to character-building programs in Early Childhood Education.

The second obstacle is the limited time and resources available to teachers. In classrooms with a high student-to-teacher ratio (an average of 1:8), teachers find it difficult to provide adequate individual attention to each child during “self-tidying” activities. Some children, especially those whose fine motor skills have not yet developed fully, require more intensive guidance that teachers cannot always provide. These limitations highlight the need for additional support, whether in the form of hiring teaching assistants or developing more efficient learning strategies to address the individual needs of children in large groups.

The third challenge is the variation in children’s individual development. Not all 5–6-year-olds are at the same stage of development. Some children have better self-regulation and motor skills, allowing them to quickly “clean up after themselves” independently, while others take longer. These differences require teachers to be able to implement pedagogical differentiation that is, to adjust the level of support and expectations according to each child’s individual abilities (Judd, 2012). Teachers’ ability to apply this pedagogical differentiation depends heavily on their professional knowledge and skills, which need to be continuously improved through ongoing professional training and development programs.

Analysis of Findings Based on Character Education Theory and Islamic Education

The findings of this study can be comprehensively analyzed through the integration of the theoretical frameworks of character education and Islamic education. From the perspective of character education theory, the findings of this study are highly consistent with the habit-based character education model developed by (Lickona, 2013), which emphasizes three components of character: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. The “tidy up on your own” program at Cinta Alam Kindergarten successfully activated all three components simultaneously. Moral knowing was activated through the teacher’s explanation of the hadith on table manners and the values contained therein. Moral feeling was built through the experience of receiving praise and personal satisfaction upon successfully fulfilling one’s responsibilities. Moral action was manifested in the concrete act of “tidying up on one’s own,” which was carried out consistently every day.

From the perspective of Vygotsky’s social constructivism theory, the success of this program can be explained through the mechanisms of the zone of proximal development and scaffolding. The practice of “tidying up on their own” places children in activities within their zone of proximal development that is, tasks that are slightly beyond their independent abilities but can be achieved with guidance. The scaffolding provided by the teacher is gradually reduced as the child’s abilities improve, thereby fostering the development of true independence. This process illustrates how abilities that were initially interpsychological gradually become

intrapyschological through internalization, which is the essence of the learning and development process according to Vygotsky (Bodrova & Leong, 2024).

From the perspective of Islamic education, the findings of this study confirm the relevance of the concept of *tarbiyah al-akhlaq* that is, moral education aimed at shaping a noble Muslim character. Al-Attas (as cited in Wan Daud, 2018) defines *tarbiyah* as a process of instilling adab or ethics in a person that takes place gradually and comprehensively, encompassing intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and social dimensions. The “tidying up on one’s own” program, grounded in the hadith on table manners, is a concrete example of the implementation of *tarbiyah al-akhlaq* at the early childhood education level, where daily etiquette serves as a means of holistic character development.

The concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs* the purification of the soul through consistently performed righteous deeds is also relevant to understanding the mechanisms behind the success of this program. From the perspective of educational Sufism, the routine repetition of good deeds not only fosters external habits but also gradually purifies and refines the soul. Imam Al-Ghazali Kurniawan, (2021) explains in *Ihya Ulumuddin* that good character cannot be formed instantly through instructions or lectures but must be instilled through *riyadhah* spiritual exercises performed with consistency and sincerity. The systematically designed “tidying up on one’s own” habit-forming program at Cinta Alam Kindergarten is a form of *riyadhah* tailored to the capacities of young children, serving not only to establish good habits but also to shape character on a deeper level.

From the perspective of Kohlberg’s theory of moral development, children aged 5–6 are generally at the preconventional stage, in which moral behavior is primarily motivated by the desire to avoid punishment or receive rewards. However, the findings of this study indicate that with a strong spiritual foundation and consistent practice, children at Cinta Alam Kindergarten began to exhibit characteristics of early conventional morality namely, the desire to conform to group norms and gain social approval (Kohlberg, in Power et al., 2019). Furthermore, some children even demonstrated moral initiative that went beyond group conformity, such as checking whether their friends had tidied up their desks. This indicates that a well-designed habit-forming program can foster children’s moral development beyond what is expected at their typical developmental stage.

The integration of modern pedagogical approaches with Islamic values in the “tidy up on your own” program at Cinta Alam Kindergarten is an inspiring example of the concept of the Islamization of knowledge in everyday educational practice. Al-Faruqi Kartanegara, (2020) encourages Muslim educators not merely to adopt Western educational theories wholesale, but to integrate them with Islamic values and epistemology to produce an educational approach better suited to the needs and identity of the Muslim community. The program at Cinta Alam Kindergarten demonstrates that such integration is not only possible but has also proven effective: Vygotsky’s theory of scaffolding, behaviorist conditioning theory, and moral development theory can be integrated with the values of the hadith to produce a character education program that is comprehensive, culturally authentic, and pedagogically effective.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the practice of teaching children to tidy up after themselves grounded in the hadith on table manners and consistently implemented at the Cinta Alam Kindergarten in the 2x11 Kayu Tanam subdistrict is effective in instilling a sense of responsibility in children aged 5–6 years. The success of this program is supported by a clear foundation in Islamic values, structured implementation procedures, consistent

practice, and teacher guidance tailored to the children's developmental stages. Through this practice, the children demonstrate development in responsibility that encompasses personal responsibility, environmental responsibility, social responsibility, and moral-spiritual responsibility. This development occurs gradually, beginning with compliance with the teacher's instructions, progressing to habits performed routinely, and ultimately reaching a stage of internalization marked by the emergence of children's awareness and initiative to take responsibility without needing to be reminded.

In addition, the success of instilling the habit of tidying up on one's own is influenced by various supporting and hindering factors. Supporting factors include teacher commitment, a conducive school environment, parental involvement, and the alignment of the program with Minangkabau cultural values. The barriers identified include inconsistent practice at home, a shortage of teachers relative to the number of children, and differences in each child's developmental level. Therefore, the success of character education in early childhood requires ongoing collaboration between schools, families, and the community. Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that Islamic-based early childhood education institutions develop habit-forming programs integrated with the values of the hadith in a more systematic manner, supported by teacher training, the development of relevant curricula, and further research on the long-term impact of these habits on children's character development.

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Ahlussunnah: Journal of Islamic Education

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