

The Role Of The Teacher In Transforming A Messy Play Area Into A Learning Moment About Responsibility For Children In Group A At Teladan Imam Syafi'i

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the teacher's role in transforming a messy play area into a learning moment to foster responsibility among Group A children at RA Teladan Imam Syafi'i. It also aims to describe the strategies used by teachers and identify the supporting and inhibiting factors in its implementation. This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. The research subjects consisted of the principal, Group A teacher, and Group A children, totaling 15 children (8 boys and 7 girls) aged 4-5 years, selected using a purposive sampling technique, with the principal included as a supporting informant. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings revealed that teachers played roles as facilitators, role models, motivators, and evaluators in transforming a messy play area into a meaningful learning opportunity to develop children's sense of responsibility. The strategies implemented included providing direct examples, habituating children to tidy up play materials after use, giving guidance and motivation, and reinforcing positive behavior through praise. Supporting factors included collaboration between teachers and the school, the availability of play facilities, and consistent habituation. Meanwhile, the inhibiting factors included differences in children's characteristics, the low level of concentration and awareness among some children, and the lack of responsibility habituation within the family environment. Overall, teachers successfully transformed messy play areas into effective learning moments for fostering responsibility in early childhood

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1. INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education (PAUD) is a fundamental stage in shaping a child's character and personality, including instilling the value of responsibility from an early age. At an early age, children are in a golden age, which is crucial for the development of cognitive, socio-emotional, and moral aspects (Suyadi, 2021). Therefore, the learning process in PAUD institutions focuses not only on academic aspects but also on character formation through meaningful, hands-on experiences. One important character value to develop in early childhood is responsibility. Responsibility can be instilled in children through daily habits, such as tidying up toys after use and maintaining a clean play environment (Wiyani, 2022). However, in practice, play areas are often messy after play activities have taken place. This situation indicates that children's sense of responsibility still needs to be optimally developed.

A messy play area actually has the potential to be used as a contextual learning medium. Teachers have a strategic role in transforming such situations into meaningful learning moments

for children. According to Mulyasa (2023), teachers act as facilitators, motivators, and guides, capable of transforming every situation into an effective learning opportunity. Therefore, a disorganized play area can be used as a means to train children's responsibility through tidying and reorganizing the play environment.

The teacher's role in this process is crucial, particularly in modeling, guiding, and fostering habits for children. Bandura's Social Learning Theory states that children learn through observing and imitating the behavior of adults around them (Santrock, 2021). Therefore, teachers must demonstrate responsibility and consistently guide children in tidying up the play area.

Furthermore, an experiential learning approach supports this transformation process. Children will more easily grasp the concept of responsibility if they are directly involved in real-life activities (Prala et al., 2022). By making messy play areas part of the learning experience, children not only understand the concept of responsibility theoretically but also practice it directly.

Several previous studies have examined the teacher's role in fostering responsibility in early childhood. Fitri and Diana (2024) found that teachers can build children's sense of responsibility through effective, empathetic, and polite communication, while Maidina and Wahyuni (2024) analyzed the teacher's role in training early childhood responsibility within general classroom routines. Mulianingsih (2024) demonstrated that children's responsible attitudes can be improved through the habituation of structured group activities, and Ningsih and Rasyid (2023) showed that assigning specific tasks to children has a positive effect on their sense of responsibility. However, these studies generally examine responsibility training through planned, teacher-initiated activities or communication strategies, rather than through spontaneous, unplanned situations that naturally arise during play, such as a messy play area left behind by children themselves. This leaves a research gap regarding how teachers can transform an unplanned, incidental situation, namely a disorganized play area, into a meaningful, contextual learning moment for fostering responsibility, which is the specific focus this study seeks to address.

Based on observations at the research location, at RA Teladan Imam Syafi'i, teachers play a strategic role in transforming these conditions into meaningful learning moments. Through the right approach, teachers can guide children to understand the importance of maintaining tidiness and being responsible for the play equipment used. This shows that the role of teachers is very important in transforming a messy play area into a learning moment that can instill the value of responsibility in children. The purpose of this study is to describe the role of teachers in transforming a messy play area into a learning moment about responsibility, as well as describing the supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of these activities.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive approach. Qualitative research is a research method used to examine natural object conditions, where the researcher serves as the key instrument, data collection techniques are triangulated, and data analysis is inductive (Sugiyono, 2022). The qualitative approach was used to deeply understand the phenomenon of teachers' roles in transforming messy play areas into learning moments about responsibility for children. This descriptive study aims to describe the existing phenomenon, emphasizing the characteristics, quality, and interrelationships between activities. The location of this research was RA Teladan Imam Syafi'i, Jalan Lading-Lading, Tanjung Village, Tanjung District, which is relevant to the focus of the study.

The data sources in this study are divided into primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from primary sources in the field, namely the Group A homeroom teacher and all 15 Group A children (8 boys and 7 girls, aged 4-5 years) enrolled at RA Teladan Imam Syafi'i in the 2025/2026 academic year, as well as the school principal. The teacher and the 15 children were determined as the main research subjects using a purposive sampling technique, based on the consideration that Group A was the class in which the phenomenon of a messy play

area being transformed into a learning moment about responsibility was most consistently observed during the researcher's preliminary observations. The principal was included as a supporting informant selected for the same reason, namely to provide institutional context and to confirm the school's support for the teacher's strategies. Secondary data were obtained from documents, archives, and literature such as RPPH (child development plan), child development records, and activity documentation.

The data collection techniques used included observation, interviews, and documentation. The observations used passive participant observation, meaning the researcher was present on-site but not directly involved in the learning activities, but merely observing. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with classroom teachers and students to gather in-depth information. Documentation was used to substantiate the observational data and serve as evidence of the research activities.

Data analysis used an interactive model from Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, which includes data collection, data condensation (selection and simplification of relevant data), data presentation in narrative text, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data validity testing was conducted using data source triangulation techniques (comparing interview data from various sources) and method triangulation (comparing data from observations, interviews, and documentation).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted by researchers at RA Teladan Imam Syafi'i, it was found that teachers have a very important role in transforming a messy play area into a learning moment about responsibility for children in group A. The role of teachers in this activity can be seen through several forms of roles as follows:

1. Teacher as Facilitator

After the play activity ended, the play area looked messy. The blocks were arranged in a haphazard manner, some puzzle pieces were under the table, and cooking utensils were still scattered on the floor. The teacher did not immediately tidy up the toys. She invited all the children to pay attention to the classroom, saying, "Come on, children, let's tidy up our toys so our classroom will be neat again." The teacher also provided a toy storage area that was easily accessible to the children, making it easier for them to return the toys independently. Based on an interview with the teacher, she stated that she did not immediately tidy up the toys, but instead invited the children to observe the classroom, discuss who used the toys, and where they should be returned. Through this role, children gained direct experience in maintaining their play environment.

2. Teachers as Guides

When playtime was over, some children went straight to their seats without tidying up their toys. The teacher approached the children in a gentle voice and asked, "Who was playing in the kitchen?" Then, she instructed the children that once they were finished playing, they should return the toys to prevent damage. The teacher accompanied each child one by one, showing them where the toys were stored. The teacher did not scold the children who refused to tidy up, but continued to provide guidance. The teacher explained that scattered toys were a learning opportunity and invited the children to discuss the consequences.

3. Teachers as Motivators

Teachers encourage and encourage children to participate in tidying up the play area. Praise, such as "Oh my God, you're all great today! You're all putting your toys back in their place," makes children feel appreciated and motivated to repeat the same positive behavior in future activities.

4. Teachers as Role Models

The teacher provides a direct example of how to properly return toys to their proper place. The teacher removes toys according to their type, one by one, and then places them in the designated

area. The teacher's example positively influences the development of responsible character in children, given that early childhood learners learn through observation.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

There are several supporting factors for teachers, namely:

- a. Supportive Learning Environment: Classrooms are clean, safe, and storage space is available to make it easy for children to tidy up their toys.
- b. Teacher Creativity: Teachers package toy tidying activities in the form of competitions or star-collecting games to make children enthusiastic.
- c. Consistent Habits: Reminding children of the rules of play and responsibilities repeatedly every day.
- d. Principal Support & Parent Cooperation: Availability of facilities and regular communication between teachers and parents through class groups.

The inhibiting factors include:

- e. Differences in Children's Characteristics: Some children are independent, while others need intensive guidance.
- f. Low Awareness & Short Concentration Span: Some children leave toys scattered around, are easily distracted, and assume play is over.
- g. Limited Time & Lack of Habits at Home: Limited school time and different parenting styles at home affect children's level of independence.

Discussion

Based on the research results, it was found that teachers play a crucial role in transforming messy play areas into learning moments about responsibility. As facilitators, teachers provide opportunities for children to be directly involved in tidying up the play area. This demonstrates that teachers strive to create meaningful learning experiences. This finding aligns with expert opinion that teachers, as facilitators, are tasked with providing a learning environment that allows students to actively engage in learning experiences (Mulyasa, 2023). The teacher's role as a guide is also essential. Teachers explain the importance of maintaining a clean and tidy play environment. This finding aligns with Lickona's (2021) opinion, which explains that character development in children requires consistent guidance. Early childhood children are not yet able to grasp the abstract concept of responsibility and therefore require ongoing guidance.

The teacher's role as a role model supports Bandura's Social Learning theory (Santrock, 2021), which states that children learn through observation and imitation. Teachers also act as motivators by providing praise and positive reinforcement, which aligns with reinforcement theory in early childhood learning. A teacher's success in transforming a messy play area into a learning moment is greatly influenced by their ability to simultaneously fulfill these four roles.

The character-building efforts at RA Teladan Imam Syafi'i are also reinforced by research findings conducted by Alawiyah and Nuriani (2022). In their study, they emphasized the importance of innovative learning methods to shape children's Islamic character values. Teachers are required to avoid monotonous methods, but rather to be creative in collaborating between learning themes and daily habits to touch the deepest aspects of children's motivation. The character values of responsibility and discipline taught through habits at RA Teladan Imam Syafi'i have a very strong relevance to Islamic character values. Through the process of repetition and habituation in daily life (such as tidying up play equipment after use), children indirectly form positive attitudes and behavior patterns. Alawiyah and Nuriani (2022) proved that routine activities and habituation methods applied consistently over a period of time can significantly improve children's character development, as evidenced by a jump in classical completion from 50% in cycle I to 85% in cycle II. The integration of consistent, creative, and innovative teacher roles as seen in these two studies is the main foundation for the success of instilling moral character in early childhood.

Regarding supporting factors, a conducive learning environment makes it easier for

children to understand responsibility. Teacher creativity ensures children don't feel burdened, in line with the principle of playing while learning. Consistent habits are key to character development. Barriers such as children's short attention spans and differences in parenting styles emphasize that developing responsibility in early childhood requires continuous practice, teacher role models, and strong family support (Nur'aini & Tejaningsih, 2021).

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that teachers play a crucial role, as facilitators, role models, motivators, and evaluators, in transforming a messy play area into a meaningful learning moment that fosters children's sense of responsibility at RA Teladan Imam Syafi'i, mainly through habituating children to tidy up after play, providing direct guidance and positive reinforcement, and modeling responsible behavior themselves. Key supporting factors include collaboration between teachers and the school, the availability of play facilities, and consistent habituation, while key inhibiting factors include differences in children's characteristics, low concentration and awareness among some children, and limited reinforcement of responsibility habits at home. Overall, these findings indicate that an unplanned, everyday situation such as a messy play area can be deliberately leveraged by teachers as an authentic, contextual medium for instilling responsibility from an early age. Teachers are advised to maintain creative strategies, schools to provide character education resources, and parents to consistently reinforce responsibility habits at home.

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