

Role-Playing Activities in Improving Responsibility among Children Aged 5–6 Years: A Classroom Action Research

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Abstract

This study aimed to improve responsibility among children aged 5–6 years through role-playing activities at Baitul Muchlisin Kindergarten. The research employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) based on the cyclical model consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection stages. The participants involved 16 children aged 5–6 years in Group B. The study was conducted in two cycles, with each cycle consisting of two meetings designed to enhance children's responsibility, particularly in maintaining personal hygiene, following classroom routines, and completing simple tasks independently. Data were collected through observation, documentation, field notes, and assessment rubrics using qualitative and quantitative descriptive approaches. The intervention implemented “teacher–student” role-playing scenarios in which children alternated roles as teachers and students in simulated classroom situations related to personal hygiene and responsible behavior. Reflection results from Cycle I indicated that children still required considerable teacher guidance; therefore, Cycle II integrated additional learning supports, including role cards, hygiene posters, mirrors, personal hygiene tools, praise, and reward stickers to increase participation and independence. Quantitative findings demonstrated a significant improvement in responsibility scores from 50.19% in Cycle I to 91.02% in Cycle II. Qualitative findings further revealed improvements in children's confidence, independence, participation, and awareness in maintaining personal hygiene and encouraging peers to practice clean habits. These findings indicate that role-playing activities effectively strengthen responsibility and character development in early childhood education.

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Introduction

Early childhood education plays a fundamental role in shaping children's cognitive, emotional, social, and moral development during the golden age period, a stage characterized by rapid growth and significant developmental changes. At this stage, children require meaningful stimulation to support the development of positive behaviors, independence, and character values that will influence their future lives. One important character value that needs to be developed from an early age is responsibility. Responsibility enables children to complete tasks independently, follow rules, care for themselves, and interact positively with their environment. In early childhood education, responsibility is considered an essential foundation for developing self-discipline, self-regulation, and social competence that support children's readiness for future educational experiences (Piaget, 1962).

However, responsibility among young children does not emerge automatically but requires continuous stimulation through learning experiences that are appropriate to children's developmental characteristics. In kindergarten settings, learning activities should be designed in ways that are meaningful, concrete, and enjoyable because children learn most effectively through active participation and direct experience. Play-based learning is widely recognized as an effective approach in early childhood education because play provides opportunities for children to develop cognitive, emotional, language, and social skills naturally through enjoyable interactions (Vygotsky, 1978). Through play, children are more likely to engage actively in learning situations and internalize values embedded in classroom activities.

One form of play-based learning that is considered effective in developing responsibility is role-playing. Role-playing is a learning activity in which children imitate social roles or situations through symbolic play, allowing them to understand social expectations, follow rules, and practice certain behaviors in meaningful contexts (Suryani, 2019). Through role-playing activities, children are given opportunities to interact socially, cooperate with peers, and understand the consequences of their actions. Moreover, role-playing supports the development of imagination, communication skills, confidence, and social awareness because children actively participate in simulated experiences relevant to their daily lives (Rahayu, 2021).

Preliminary observations conducted at Baitul Muchlisin Kindergarten revealed that responsibility behavior among children aged 5–6 years had not yet developed optimally. Classroom observations indicated that several children still depended heavily on teacher reminders to complete simple responsibilities. Some children did not tidy up toys after use, ignored classroom cleanliness routines, and required repeated instructions to wash their hands or maintain personal hygiene independently. Out of 16 children observed, only a small proportion consistently demonstrated responsible behavior without assistance, while most children still required guidance to complete

daily classroom responsibilities. These findings indicate a discrepancy between the expected developmental achievements and children's actual behavior in classroom practice.

The low level of responsibility observed among children suggests the need for an alternative learning strategy that is concrete, contextual, and aligned with the characteristics of early childhood learning. In response to this issue, role-playing activities were selected as an intervention because they provide direct and meaningful experiences that allow children to practice responsibility through imitation and social interaction. Specifically, the "teacher-student" role-playing model was chosen because it reflects children's daily classroom experiences and enables them to understand responsibility through familiar social situations. By assuming the role of a "little teacher," children are encouraged to remind peers about classroom routines, personal hygiene, and behavioral expectations, thereby fostering responsibility through active engagement rather than passive instruction.

The implementation of role-playing activities is also aligned with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum in early childhood education, which emphasizes child-centered and play-based learning experiences. The curriculum encourages teachers to create contextual and meaningful learning activities that support children's character formation and socio-emotional development. Responsibility is one of the essential values emphasized in early childhood education because it contributes to children's independence, discipline, and positive daily habits. Therefore, integrating responsibility values into classroom learning through enjoyable and contextual methods is highly relevant to contemporary educational practices.

Theoretically, the effectiveness of role-playing activities can be explained through Piaget's cognitive development theory and Vygotsky's social constructivism theory. Piaget explains that children aged 5-6 years are in the preoperational stage, where symbolic thinking, imagination, and pretend play develop rapidly (Piaget, 1962). At this stage, children understand concepts more effectively through symbolic representation and concrete experiences rather than abstract explanations. Meanwhile, Vygotsky emphasizes the importance of social interaction and adult guidance in helping children construct understanding and behavioral habits through meaningful experiences (Vygotsky, 1978). Through interaction with teachers and peers during role-playing, children gradually internalize responsible behavior and social norms.

Several previous studies have reported that role-playing activities contribute positively to children's social-emotional development, independence, and classroom participation. For instance, Sari and Widodo (2019) found that role-playing improved children's independence and engagement in classroom learning activities. Similarly, Rahayu (2021) reported that role-playing activities enhanced children's communication and social interaction skills. However, previous studies generally focused on social

competence, communication, and participation, while limited research specifically investigates the improvement of responsibility related to personal hygiene through contextual “teacher–student” role-playing activities in early childhood settings. Therefore, this study offers novelty by focusing specifically on the use of role-playing activities to improve responsibility related to personal hygiene among children aged 5–6 years through familiar classroom role simulations.

Based on the identified problems and research gap, this study aims to determine how role-playing activities can improve responsibility among children aged 5–6 years at Baitul Muchlisin Kindergarten. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of effective play-based learning strategies that support responsibility and character education in early childhood learning environments.

Method

This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) based on the cyclical model proposed by Arikunto (2017), consisting of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The study was conducted at Baitul Muchlisin Kindergarten and involved 16 children aged 5–6 years in Group B as research participants. Classroom Action Research was selected to address practical classroom problems related to children’s responsibility behavior through continuous improvement of learning practices. Preliminary observations indicated that many children demonstrated low levels of responsibility, particularly in maintaining personal hygiene, following classroom routines, and completing simple tasks independently. The research was implemented in two cycles, with each cycle consisting of two meetings. During the planning stage, the researcher prepared lesson plans, role-playing scenarios, observation sheets, learning media, and assessment instruments. The action stage involved the implementation of “teacher–student” role-playing activities designed to foster children’s responsibility and personal hygiene awareness through simulated classroom situations in which children alternated roles as teachers and students. Observation was conducted collaboratively with the classroom teacher to document children’s participation, behavioral responses, and responsibility development during the activities, while reflection was carried out after each cycle to evaluate learning outcomes and determine improvements for the subsequent cycle. Data were collected through observation, documentation, field notes, and assessment rubrics focusing on four indicators of responsibility related to personal hygiene, namely body cleanliness, clean living habits, hair and nail neatness, and clothing cleanliness and neatness. The collected data were analyzed using qualitative and quantitative descriptive techniques. Qualitative analysis described children’s behavioral changes, participation, confidence, and responsibility during the learning process, whereas quantitative analysis was conducted by calculating the percentage of achievement for each indicator using the

formula $P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$ where P represents the achievement percentage, F refers to the total score obtained, and N indicates the maximum possible score. The findings from Cycle I and Cycle II were compared to determine the effectiveness of the intervention. The study was considered successful when at least 80% of children demonstrated responsible behavior independently across the observed indicators. Based on the reflection results from Cycle I, several improvements were introduced in Cycle II, including the use of visual learning media, hygiene posters, role cards, mirrors, personal hygiene tools, and positive reinforcement through praise and reward stickers to enhance children's participation, motivation, and independence during role-playing activities.

Results and Discussion

Results

The results of this study describe the improvement of responsibility among children aged 5–6 years through the implementation of role-playing activities conducted in two cycles at Baitul Muchlisin Kindergarten. Each cycle consisted of two meetings involving planning, action, observation, and reflection stages. The aspects of responsibility assessed in this study included body cleanliness, clean living habits, hair and nail neatness, and clothing cleanliness and neatness.

The implementation of Cycle I focused on introducing responsibility through “teacher–student” role-playing activities related to personal hygiene. During the first meeting, most children were still unfamiliar with their roles and depended heavily on teacher guidance during activities. Several children showed enthusiasm while participating in role-play scenarios; however, responsible behavior had not yet developed consistently. Some children still needed repeated reminders to wash their hands, tidy clothing, organize personal belongings, and maintain classroom cleanliness.

During the second meeting, children began to demonstrate better participation in role-playing activities. Some children appeared more confident when acting as “little teachers” responsible for reminding peers to maintain hygiene and classroom routines. Nevertheless, several children still experienced difficulty maintaining responsibility independently, especially regarding hair and nail neatness, clothing tidiness, and consistent hygiene habits.

The observation results in Cycle I showed that responsibility behavior had begun to improve, although the results had not yet reached the predetermined success criterion of 80%. The aspect of body cleanliness reached 54.68%, clean living habits reached 46.87%, hair and nail neatness reached 42.18%, and clothing cleanliness and neatness reached 34.37%. These findings indicate that children still required teacher assistance and repeated reinforcement to perform responsible behaviors independently.

Table 1. Responsibility Achievement in Cycle 1

Indicator	Achievement (%)
Body Cleanliness	54.68
Clean Living Habits	46.87
Hair and Nail Neatness	42.18
Clothing Cleanliness and Neatness	34.37
Average	44.53

As presented in Table 1, body cleanliness obtained the highest achievement score (54.68%), whereas clothing cleanliness and neatness showed the lowest achievement (34.37%). These findings indicate that children still required substantial teacher guidance to perform responsible behaviors independently.

The reflection stage conducted after Cycle I identified several challenges during the learning process. First, children were still dependent on teacher instructions because learning activities relied primarily on verbal explanations. Second, some children had difficulty understanding their roles during role-playing sessions. Third, the learning activities lacked sufficient visual and concrete learning support to strengthen children's understanding of responsible behavior. Therefore, several improvements were planned for Cycle II to address these limitations.

Based on the reflection results from Cycle I, several modifications were implemented in Cycle II to improve the effectiveness of role-playing activities. The teacher introduced additional learning supports, including role cards, hygiene posters, mirrors, personal hygiene tools, and reward stickers to increase children's engagement and motivation. Children were also given broader opportunities to act as "little teachers," allowing them to model and remind peers about personal hygiene practices and classroom responsibilities.

The implementation of Cycle II showed significant improvements in children's participation, confidence, and responsible behavior. Children became more actively involved in role-playing activities and demonstrated greater independence in maintaining personal hygiene. Most children were able to wash their hands independently, tidy their clothes, and maintain body cleanliness without repeated teacher reminders. Furthermore, children became more confident in reminding peers to maintain classroom cleanliness and hygiene habits during role-playing activities.

The observation results in Cycle II demonstrated substantial improvement across all responsibility indicators. The aspect of body cleanliness increased to 93.75%, clean living habits improved to 90.62%, hair and nail neatness increased to 87.50%, and clothing cleanliness and neatness reached 89.06%. These findings indicate that the implementation of contextual role-playing activities effectively enhanced children's responsibility toward personal hygiene and classroom routines.

Table 2. Responsibility Achievement in Cycle II

Indicator	Achievement (%)
Body Cleanliness	93.75
Clean Living Habits	90.62
Hair and Nail Neatness	87.50
Clothing Cleanliness and Neatness	89.06
Average	90.23

Table 2 demonstrates that all responsibility indicators exceeded the predetermined success criterion of 80%. The highest achievement was found in body cleanliness (93.75%), indicating that children became increasingly independent in maintaining personal hygiene.

Table 3. Comparison of Responsibility Achievement Between Cycle I and Cycle II

Indicator	Cycle I (%)	Cycle II (%)	Increase (%)
Body Cleanliness	54.68	93.75	39.07
Clean Living Habits	46.87	90.62	43.75
Hair and Nail Neatness	42.18	87.50	45.32
Clothing Cleanliness and Neatness	34.37	89.06	54.69
Average	44.53	90.23	45.70

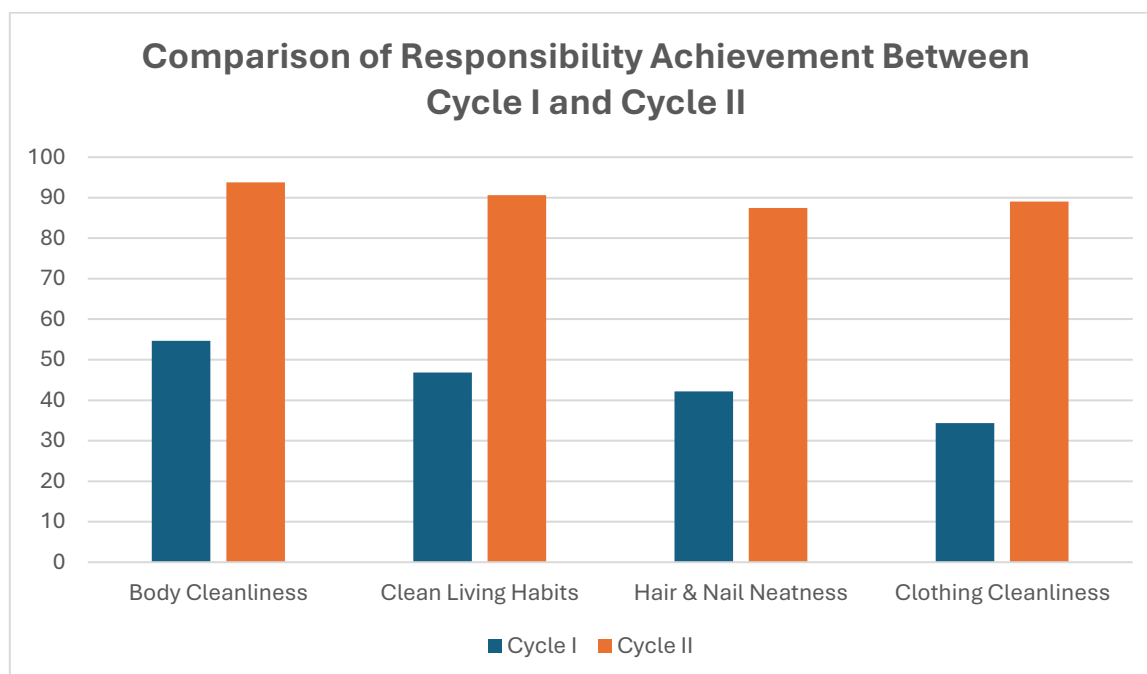


Chart 1. Comparison of Responsibility Achievement Across Indicators in Cycle I and Cycle II

Chart 1 visually illustrates the improvement in responsibility achievement across all indicators from Cycle I to Cycle II. The figure shows a consistent upward trend in children's responsible behavior following the implementation of improved role-playing activities. The most substantial increase was observed in clothing cleanliness and neatness, while body cleanliness achieved the highest final score in Cycle II.

The comparison between Cycle I and Cycle II demonstrates a meaningful increase in children's responsibility behavior following the implementation of improved learning strategies. The integration of visual learning media, concrete materials, and positive reinforcement in Cycle II contributed significantly to children's understanding and participation in role-playing activities. As a result, children demonstrated greater independence, awareness, and responsibility during classroom learning activities.

Overall, the findings indicate that responsibility among children aged 5–6 years improved substantially from Cycle I to Cycle II through the implementation of role-playing activities. The average achievement score increased from 44.53% in Cycle I to 90.23% in Cycle II, exceeding the predetermined success criterion. These findings suggest that role-playing activities provide meaningful, concrete, and enjoyable learning experiences that support the development of responsibility, independence, and positive behavioral habits among early childhood learners.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that role-playing activities effectively improved responsibility among children aged 5–6 years at Baitul Muchlisin Kindergarten, particularly in maintaining personal hygiene and completing simple classroom responsibilities independently. The improvement observed from Cycle I to Cycle II demonstrates that role-playing provided meaningful and contextual learning experiences that enabled children to practice responsible behavior directly rather than merely receiving verbal instructions. This finding suggests that responsibility in early childhood can develop more effectively when children are actively involved in concrete and enjoyable learning activities that reflect their daily experiences.

The improvement in children's responsibility can be understood through the characteristics of role-playing activities, which allow children to learn through direct participation and imitation. In this study, children actively assumed the roles of "teachers" and "students," enabling them to experience social expectations and responsibilities in familiar classroom situations. Through the role of "little teacher," children learned to remind peers to wash hands, maintain cleanliness, tidy clothing, and follow classroom routines. This active participation encouraged children to internalize responsible behavior because they were directly involved in meaningful social interactions rather than functioning solely as passive learners.

The findings are consistent with Piaget's cognitive development theory, which explains that children aged 5–6 years are in the preoperational stage, where symbolic

play and imagination significantly support learning processes (Piaget, 1962). At this developmental stage, children tend to understand abstract concepts more effectively through concrete experiences and symbolic representation. Responsibility, which is often difficult for young children to understand conceptually, became more meaningful through role-playing because children were able to experience responsible behavior in realistic classroom scenarios. Thus, role-playing transformed abstract moral values into concrete actions that children could easily understand and imitate.

Furthermore, the results of this study support Vygotsky's social constructivism theory, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction and guidance in children's learning (Vygotsky, 1978). During the role-playing process, children did not only receive guidance from teachers but also learned through interaction with peers. Social interaction became an important mechanism for developing responsibility because children observed, imitated, and reinforced positive behavior collaboratively. When children acted as "little teachers," they demonstrated increased confidence in guiding peers and became more aware of classroom responsibilities. This finding indicates that peer interaction contributed positively to children's behavioral development.

The findings also demonstrate that the modifications introduced in Cycle II contributed substantially to the improvement of responsibility behavior. Reflection results from Cycle I revealed several challenges, including children's dependence on teacher instructions, limited understanding of role expectations, and low engagement during activities. In Cycle I, responsibility behaviors had not yet developed optimally because learning activities relied mainly on verbal explanation and lacked sufficient visual or concrete support. These limitations reduced children's understanding of responsibility practices and made it difficult for them to consistently perform responsible behaviors independently.

To address these challenges, several improvements were implemented in Cycle II, including the use of role cards, hygiene posters, mirrors, personal hygiene tools, and reward stickers as reinforcement strategies. The integration of visual and concrete learning media helped children better understand the expected behaviors because early childhood learners tend to respond more effectively to tangible experiences and visual stimulation. In addition, reward stickers and verbal praise increased children's motivation and participation during role-playing activities. As a result, children became more actively engaged and demonstrated greater independence in practicing responsibility during classroom activities.

The improvement observed in this study is consistent with findings from previous research highlighting the benefits of role-playing for children's social-emotional and character development. Sari and Widodo (2019) found that role-playing activities improved children's participation and independence in classroom settings, while Rahayu (2021) reported that role-playing enhanced children's communication and

social interaction skills. Similarly, the present study found that role-playing contributed not only to increased responsibility scores but also to behavioral improvements, including children's willingness to maintain personal hygiene, follow classroom routines, and remind peers about cleanliness practices. These findings reinforce the argument that role-playing serves as an effective strategy for integrating character education into early childhood learning environments.

An important finding of this study is that children's responsibility improved significantly when they were given opportunities to act as social agents rather than passive learners. The role of "little teacher" appeared to strengthen children's sense of ownership and autonomy in classroom activities. When children were responsible for guiding peers, they became more aware of their own behavior and demonstrated stronger commitment to maintaining classroom rules and personal hygiene. This suggests that responsibility development among young children may be enhanced when learning activities promote active participation, peer interaction, and opportunities for leadership.

However, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, this study involved a relatively small number of participants in a single kindergarten setting, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Second, the focus of responsibility assessment was limited primarily to personal hygiene and classroom routines, while broader dimensions of responsibility were not explored comprehensively. Third, although reward stickers contributed positively to children's participation, it is possible that some behavioral improvements were influenced by external motivation. Therefore, future research is recommended to examine whether responsible behavior can be sustained after reinforcement strategies are gradually reduced and to explore broader indicators of responsibility across different educational contexts.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that role-playing activities constitute an effective strategy for improving responsibility among children aged 5–6 years. By providing direct, contextual, and enjoyable learning experiences, role-playing supports the development of independence, self-awareness, discipline, and positive social interaction among young children. These findings contribute to early childhood education practices by emphasizing that play-based learning can be used not only to support academic readiness but also to strengthen children's character development and responsible behavior.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the implementation of "teacher–student" role-playing activities effectively improved responsibility among children aged 5–6 years at Baitul Muchlisin Kindergarten, particularly in maintaining personal hygiene, following classroom routines, and completing simple tasks independently. The findings indicate that children's responsibility developed significantly through contextual, participatory,

and experiential learning activities that allowed them to actively engage in peer interaction, imitation, and social practice within familiar classroom situations. The effectiveness of the intervention was further strengthened through the integration of visual learning media, hygiene tools, peer-modeling roles, and positive reinforcement strategies, which collectively supported children's self-regulation, independence, and awareness of responsibility. The improvement observed from Cycle I to Cycle II demonstrates that role-playing activities can serve as an effective and sustainable pedagogical approach for character development in early childhood education. Nevertheless, this study acknowledges that behavioral improvement may also have been influenced by external motivational supports, such as praise and reward stickers; therefore, future studies are recommended to examine the long-term sustainability of responsible behavior after reinforcement is gradually reduced and to explore broader dimensions of responsibility across different early childhood learning contexts.

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Authors' Note

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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