



## **The Role of Teachers in Fostering Students' Discipline and Responsibility**

Istighosah

Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Sunan Giri, Bojonegoro, Indonesia

### **Abstract**

This study aims to analyze the role of teachers in fostering students' discipline and responsibility through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. The research synthesizes findings from various empirical studies published between 2015 and 2025, focusing on how teachers design, implement, and reflect upon character education practices in primary and secondary schools. The results reveal that teachers play a central role as moral exemplars, facilitators, and designers of value-based learning environments. Effective strategies include modeling positive behavior, establishing consistent classroom routines, and promoting reflective and participatory learning activities. However, challenges such as limited time allocation, policy-practice gaps, and lack of institutional support hinder the sustainability of character education. The review also highlights the growing importance of digital literacy and ethical engagement in fostering responsibility in the modern learning context. Overall, this study emphasizes that teachers' moral integrity, pedagogical innovation, and systemic collaboration are crucial in developing students' discipline and responsibility as integral components of holistic education.

### **Keywords**

*teacher's Role; Discipline; Responsibility; Character Education*

email Corresponding:

[istighosah0212@gmail.com](mailto:istighosah0212@gmail.com)

## **1. Introduction**

Education, in its essence, aims not only to develop students' intellectual capacity but also to shape their personality and moral character (Baehr, 2016; Yusoff & Hamzah, 2015). In the context of 21st-century human resource development, character education becomes a crucial element as it is closely related to one's ability to adapt, collaborate, and take responsibility in a dynamic society (Cholifah & others, 2024; Iksal, Hayani, & Aslan, 2024). Character values such as discipline, responsibility, honesty, and hard work form the foundation for building individuals with integrity. Schools, as formal educational institutions, hold a major responsibility in internalizing these values through various learning activities (Islamic, Ishaq, Dayati, & others, 2024; Nurizka, Irawan, Sakti, & Hidayat, 2020). Through continuous character education, students are expected to develop positive habits that extend beyond the classroom and into their daily lives. Therefore, character education



has become an integral part of the national curriculum, particularly within the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes the development of the Pancasila Student Profile (Fauzan, Ansori, Dannur, Pratama, & Hairit, 2023; Ratnawati, Christiani, Karim, & others, 2024). In this regard, the formation of discipline and responsibility stands out as an essential aspect that requires deeper investigation.

Discipline and responsibility are two fundamental character traits that significantly influence students' success both academically and socially (Blegur, Manu, Souisa, & others, 2018). Discipline is related to self-control, adherence to rules, and effective time management, while responsibility reflects an individual's awareness of their duties toward themselves, others, and God. These two values complement each other, forming individuals who are independent, ethical, and reliable. In the school environment, discipline can be observed through punctuality, obedience to school regulations, and commitment to completing assignments properly. Meanwhile, responsibility manifests in students' seriousness in learning, active participation in class activities, and accountability in group tasks. Teachers play a crucial role in guiding, modeling, and directing students so that these values are not only understood but also practiced in daily behavior (Yang & others, 2023). Through a humanistic approach to teaching, teachers act not merely as transmitters of knowledge but also as mentors who nurture moral and social development.

However, the reality in schools shows that cultivating students' discipline and responsibility remains a significant challenge. Many students still lack awareness of following school rules, demonstrate low learning motivation, and fail to take responsibility for their academic and social tasks. The rapid growth of technology and globalization also influences students' behavior, where easy access to information sometimes fosters instant attitudes and weak consistency in learning. On the other hand, some teachers are still more focused on cognitive outcomes and have not fully integrated character education into their teaching practices. This situation requires strategic efforts to strengthen the teacher's role as a central figure in instilling discipline and responsibility. Therefore, research exploring how teachers carry out this role becomes highly relevant and necessary to support the enhancement of character education in both primary and secondary schools.

Several previous studies have highlighted the significant role of teachers in shaping students' character. For instance, Suryadi (2021) concluded that teachers serve as primary role models in developing discipline through consistent behavior and concrete examples in classroom activities. Similarly, Lestari and Kurniawan (2020) found that continuous



habituation and positive reinforcement from teachers effectively increase students' sense of responsibility toward school tasks. Ningsih (2022) also revealed that value-based learning strategies contribute greatly to nurturing students' discipline and responsibility. These studies collectively show that the success of character education is inseparable from teachers' active involvement in designing and implementing value-oriented teaching. Thus, teachers' roles extend beyond instructional delivery to include mentoring, modeling, and character building as integral components of the learning process.

Nevertheless, most previous studies still focused on theoretical discussions and did not deeply explore the practical actions teachers take to cultivate discipline and responsibility in specific school contexts. Many of these studies emphasized classroom management or general teaching methods without highlighting the character dimension. Moreover, few studies have examined the obstacles teachers face and the adaptive strategies they employ in addressing diverse student behaviors. Some also overlooked the relationship between teachers' roles, school environments, and student participation in forming consistent character habits. Hence, there remains a need for research that investigates teachers' real-life practices in character formation within their social and cultural contexts, especially in primary education settings where foundational values are first developed.

Based on this review, the present study offers novelty by holistically examining the teacher's role in fostering discipline and responsibility through a descriptive qualitative approach. Unlike previous research that tended to be quantitative or conceptual, this study emphasizes an in-depth understanding of teachers' practices, strategies, and reflections in real classroom settings. It also explores the dynamic interaction between teachers and students in character formation through daily routines, thematic learning, and value-based modeling. Furthermore, the study seeks to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors influencing the success of teachers in nurturing these two key character traits. Therefore, this research contributes practically to developing a more contextual and applicable model of character education implementation in schools.

The purpose of this study is to describe in depth the role of teachers in fostering students' discipline and responsibility within the school environment. Specifically, it aims to identify the strategies and methods teachers employ to instill these values during the learning process. Additionally, the research seeks to uncover the challenges teachers face and the solutions they adopt to overcome them. It also examines how the school environment,



principal support, and student participation contribute to successful character formation. The findings of this study are expected to provide relevant recommendations for teachers and schools in developing effective, sustainable, and student-centered character education models suited to the needs of the modern era.

## 2. Method

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to comprehensively examine the role of teachers in fostering students' discipline and responsibility (Fitriadi, Sinaga, & Muhammad, 2024). The SLR method was chosen to ensure that the review process follows a structured, transparent, and replicable procedure in identifying, analyzing, and synthesizing relevant research evidence. According to Kitchenham (2004), an SLR provides a rigorous framework that minimizes bias and allows researchers to summarize existing findings systematically. This approach enables a critical understanding of how teachers' roles in character education have been conceptualized, implemented, and evaluated across various educational settings.

The research procedure followed three main stages: planning, conducting, and reporting. In the planning stage, the research objectives were formulated, and the key research questions were defined, namely: (1) How do teachers contribute to fostering students' discipline and responsibility? (2) What strategies and practices have been reported as effective in promoting these character values? and (3) What challenges and solutions have been identified in previous studies regarding teachers' roles in character formation? Based on these questions, a review protocol was designed to ensure consistency and accuracy during the data collection and analysis process.

In the conducting stage, the researcher identified and selected relevant literature from reputable academic databases, including Scopus, ERIC, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect, published between 2015 and 2025. The keywords used in the search process included combinations such as "teacher role", "student discipline", "student responsibility", "character education", and "moral development". The inclusion criteria consisted of (1) peer-reviewed journal articles, (2) studies focusing on primary and secondary education, (3) publications written in English, and (4) research that explicitly discussed the teacher's role in character formation. Exclusion criteria were applied to studies lacking methodological clarity, non-academic reports, or unrelated to the research focus.

All selected studies were then screened through a two-step process: title and abstract review, followed by full-text analysis. To ensure the quality of selected literature, the



researcher adopted a PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) flow model for identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. Each article was assessed using specific criteria such as research design, participant characteristics, data collection methods, and key findings. The final dataset consisted of a carefully curated collection of studies that met the inclusion standards and provided rich insights into the teacher's role in shaping discipline and responsibility.

The data analysis stage involved thematic synthesis, which included coding, categorizing, and identifying emerging themes across the selected studies. According to Thomas and Harden (2008), thematic synthesis allows researchers to integrate findings from different qualitative studies by identifying patterns, similarities, and contrasts. The data were analyzed to generate comprehensive themes related to teacher strategies, pedagogical approaches, challenges, and contextual factors influencing character formation. This analytical process aimed to construct a conceptual understanding of how teachers' roles contribute to the development of disciplined and responsible students in diverse educational environments.

To enhance the validity and reliability of the review, the researcher conducted data triangulation through cross-comparison of multiple sources and double-checking extracted data. The entire process was carefully documented to ensure transparency and replicability. The findings derived from this SLR are expected to provide theoretical insights and practical implications for educators, policymakers, and researchers in strengthening the implementation of character education in schools. Through this systematic review, the study offers a comprehensive synthesis of global perspectives on the teacher's role in fostering students' discipline and responsibility.

### 3. Finding and Discussion

#### Findings

##### A. Teachers' Role as Role Models in Building Discipline and Responsibility

The first theme identified from the reviewed literature highlights the teacher's role as a role model in shaping students' discipline and responsibility. Numerous studies consistently emphasize that teachers serve as living examples whose behavior, consistency, and work ethic directly influence students' attitudes. According to Suryadi (2021) and Rahman (2020), students tend to internalize



values of discipline not merely through instruction but through observation of teachers' actions, such as punctuality, commitment, and fairness. When teachers demonstrate consistent behavior—arriving on time, following school rules, and maintaining professional conduct—students are more likely to imitate such behaviors. This underscores the centrality of modeling as a form of indirect but powerful pedagogy in character education.

Teachers who embody discipline in their daily practices create a classroom environment that promotes order, respect, and focus. The literature suggests that the visible consistency between teachers' words and actions strengthens students' trust and respect, fostering intrinsic motivation to behave responsibly. For instance, Setiawan (2019) found that students in classrooms where teachers displayed consistent discipline demonstrated higher levels of self-regulation and task completion. This finding implies that character development is not only taught but also caught through daily interactions and consistent reinforcement. Thus, modeling behavior serves as the foundation upon which teachers cultivate moral authority and influence student conduct.

Beyond discipline, the teacher's personal integrity and sense of responsibility also play an essential role in shaping students' moral consciousness. Teachers who take responsibility for classroom outcomes—whether in academic success or behavioral improvement—instill the same sense of accountability in students. Research by Lestari and Kurniawan (2020) shows that when teachers are transparent about their responsibilities and expectations, students respond with greater awareness of their duties. Moreover, the act of acknowledging mistakes and showing accountability reinforces the notion that responsibility is an ongoing moral practice, not merely a rule to follow. Consequently, teachers' self-accountability becomes a crucial teaching tool in character formation.

Several studies also underline the emotional dimension of modeling discipline and responsibility. Emotional consistency—such as patience, empathy, and fairness—enables teachers to establish positive relationships that support behavioral development. According to Ningsih (2022), when teachers handle



disciplinary issues with empathy rather than punishment, students learn to regulate emotions and understand the moral reasoning behind rules. Such emotional modeling contributes to the internalization of discipline as a value rather than compliance to authority. In this sense, character education through modeling involves both behavioral demonstration and emotional guidance.

Furthermore, studies reveal that modeling requires alignment between individual teacher behavior and the school's collective ethos. Teachers who work in schools with strong cultural reinforcement of discipline tend to exhibit higher consistency in their actions. Conversely, in schools where moral guidance is weak, teachers face greater difficulty sustaining discipline-oriented behavior. This dynamic highlights the interplay between personal professionalism and institutional culture in shaping students' character development. Therefore, the teacher's modeling role cannot be isolated from the broader moral environment of the school community.

In conclusion, the literature confirms that teachers' exemplary behavior forms the moral backbone of school-based character education. The consistency between teachers' attitudes, language, and actions significantly influences students' ability to internalize discipline and responsibility. However, this role demands continual self-reflection, institutional support, and professional integrity from teachers. Modeling alone is insufficient without conscious effort to connect actions with moral reasoning and educational goals. Thus, the teacher's identity as a moral exemplar remains one of the most crucial yet complex aspects of fostering students' discipline and responsibility.

#### B. Pedagogical Strategies in Fostering Discipline and Responsibility

The second theme emerging from the literature pertains to pedagogical strategies employed by teachers to foster discipline and responsibility among students. Beyond personal modeling, effective teachers consciously integrate character values into instructional design, classroom routines, and learning activities. Studies by Yusuf and Hamidah (2021) reveal that pedagogical integration of character education yields greater long-term impact than separate,



moral lessons. Teachers achieve this by embedding value-based reflections, rule-based learning contracts, and collaborative assignments that require accountability. The pedagogical process, therefore, becomes a medium through which moral values are both taught and practiced.

One of the most frequently cited strategies is the establishment of structured classroom management systems. Research indicates that clear routines, explicit expectations, and consistent consequences help students internalize discipline as a daily habit. For example, Pratiwi (2020) found that teachers who co-construct classroom rules with students generate stronger ownership of discipline, as learners feel involved in defining acceptable behaviors. Similarly, incorporating reflective discussions after rule violations encourages moral reasoning rather than mere compliance. This combination of order and reflection builds a balance between external control and internal motivation.

Collaborative learning models also contribute significantly to promoting responsibility. Through group projects, peer assessment, and cooperative problem-solving, students are encouraged to share accountability and respect deadlines. The literature suggests that when students experience interdependence, they begin to perceive responsibility not only as individual duty but also as social commitment. For instance, Wardani (2019) demonstrated that group-based learning activities increased students' sense of accountability and improved interpersonal discipline. These findings affirm that character formation thrives in participatory learning environments where responsibility is distributed and reinforced through social interaction.

Integrating reflective pedagogy is another essential strategy in character education. Teachers who allocate time for students to reflect on their behavior, challenges, and learning progress help nurture self-awareness and responsibility. Reflection journals, moral dilemmas, and value discussions are effective tools mentioned in studies by Hadi and Nurlaela (2022). Such approaches transform discipline from a rule-based system into a process of moral reasoning and self-



assessment. Consequently, students develop not only behavioral compliance but also the capacity to evaluate the ethical dimensions of their choices.

The literature also emphasizes the role of positive reinforcement in strengthening disciplined behavior. Teachers who use praise, recognition, and feedback to acknowledge responsible actions create a motivational climate conducive to moral growth. According to Wijayanti (2021), students who receive consistent positive feedback exhibit higher self-control and persistence in task completion. This aligns with social learning theory, which posits that behavior reinforced by positive outcomes is more likely to be internalized. Hence, effective pedagogical strategies combine both behavioral management and emotional encouragement to sustain moral development.

In summary, the reviewed studies indicate that pedagogical strategies for fostering discipline and responsibility must balance structure and autonomy. Teachers act not only as instructors but as designers of moral learning environments where students experience, reflect, and act upon values. The successful implementation of these strategies depends on teacher creativity, contextual sensitivity, and continuous adaptation to students' developmental needs. Ultimately, pedagogy that integrates moral values transforms education into a process of character cultivation rather than mere knowledge transmission.

### C. Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing Character Education

The third major theme identified in the review concerns the challenges teachers face and the opportunities that emerge in implementing character education related to discipline and responsibility. Despite growing awareness of the importance of moral education, many teachers encounter obstacles such as lack of institutional support, curriculum overload, and limited training in moral pedagogy. According to Putri (2020), teachers often struggle to balance academic targets with the cultivation of students' character, resulting in the marginalization of value-based learning. Furthermore, differences in students' backgrounds and



parental support create varying degrees of moral readiness, complicating teachers' efforts to foster consistent discipline.

Another significant challenge lies in the inconsistency between school rules and their enforcement. Studies reveal that when schools fail to implement policies fairly, students perceive disciplinary measures as arbitrary, leading to resistance rather than respect. Teachers, therefore, find themselves in dilemmas between maintaining authority and fostering understanding. Research by Fadilah (2021) emphasizes that without institutional alignment, teachers' individual efforts to instill responsibility are often undermined. Consequently, sustainable character education requires systemic support where teachers, administrators, and parents share a unified moral vision.

In addition, the increasing influence of technology and social media presents both obstacles and opportunities. On one hand, digital distractions reduce students' attention span and weaken their sense of discipline. On the other hand, digital tools can be leveraged for value-based learning, such as online reflective activities or digital citizenship programs. As highlighted by Hasanah (2022), teachers who integrate responsible technology use into lessons help students practice self-control and ethical behavior in digital spaces. This dual nature of technology requires teachers to act as digital mentors, guiding students toward responsible digital citizenship as part of their broader moral education.

The reviewed literature also points out that teachers' professional development plays a critical role in addressing these challenges. Many teachers express the need for structured training programs focused on integrating character education within academic subjects. Workshops, mentoring, and peer-sharing sessions are proven effective in enhancing teachers' pedagogical and reflective capacities. Studies by Kurniasih (2021) indicate that teachers who receive professional support demonstrate higher confidence and consistency in implementing moral instruction. Therefore, building teachers' moral competence is as vital as improving their academic expertise.



Despite the difficulties, several opportunities arise from community involvement and school culture. Strong collaboration among teachers, parents, and the community reinforces moral values beyond the classroom. Schools that implement character-based programs involving parents' participation report more consistent student behavior. Additionally, institutional rituals such as flag ceremonies, service learning, and student leadership activities serve as real-life contexts for practicing discipline and responsibility. These opportunities demonstrate that character education flourishes best when embedded within a holistic ecosystem of moral support.

In conclusion, the literature reveals that while the implementation of character education faces multiple barriers, it also offers rich opportunities for innovation and collaboration. The key lies in viewing challenges not as limitations but as entry points for pedagogical creativity and systemic improvement. Teachers who adopt reflective, context-sensitive, and community-oriented practices are better positioned to cultivate disciplined and responsible learners. Hence, strengthening teacher capacity, institutional coherence, and moral partnerships remains essential for advancing character education in the modern educational landscape.

### **Discussion**

The results of this review reaffirm the fundamental role of teachers as moral agents within the educational system. Consistent with Bandura's Social Learning Theory, the teacher's behavior serves as a powerful model through which students internalize values of discipline and responsibility. The findings show that character formation is most effective when teachers embody the principles they seek to teach, demonstrating congruence between words and actions. This relationship between modeling and moral learning underlines that students' ethical development is not primarily cognitive, but affective and behavioral. Therefore, the teacher's personality, professionalism, and moral integrity form the cornerstone of value-based education. This emphasizes that pedagogical competence alone is insufficient without moral consistency and emotional maturity in the educator.



Paragraph 2:

Moreover, the integration of pedagogical strategies into the character-building process reflects the growing recognition that values cannot be taught in isolation from learning experiences. The reviewed studies highlight how structured routines, collaborative learning, and reflective pedagogy transform classrooms into microcosms of moral practice. These strategies align with the constructivist paradigm, which views students as active participants in their moral development. Discipline and responsibility are thus cultivated through participation, reflection, and repeated engagement rather than direct instruction. The implications of this finding are significant: teacher education programs must prepare future educators not only in subject knowledge but also in moral pedagogy — the art of designing learning experiences that implicitly shape values.

However, this review also reveals that systemic and contextual factors substantially influence the success of character education. The gap between policy and practice remains a recurring theme in the literature. Although national curricula often emphasize moral education, teachers struggle with implementation due to time constraints, assessment pressure, and lack of institutional coherence. These structural barriers echo findings from moral education research in both developed and developing countries, where moral formation competes with the demands of academic achievement. The inconsistency between policy rhetoric and classroom reality suggests that character education requires not just pedagogical reform but also systemic alignment, including curriculum design, school culture, and leadership commitment.

In addition, the digital era introduces both complexities and new possibilities for moral formation. As students' social interactions increasingly shift to digital environments, the concept of discipline and responsibility must extend beyond physical classrooms. The literature indicates that teachers who leverage digital tools for reflective learning or digital citizenship instruction effectively bridge moral



education with 21st-century competencies. This finding corresponds with emerging frameworks such as Digital Character Education and Moral Literacy in the Information Age, which argue for the integration of ethics into digital practices. Consequently, teachers' roles must evolve from traditional moral instructors to digital mentors who guide students in navigating online behavior responsibly.

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings contribute to the ongoing discourse on the relationship between moral education and character education. While moral education emphasizes ethical reasoning, character education focuses on habitual behavior and emotional regulation. The studies reviewed demonstrate that effective teachers synthesize both dimensions—promoting moral reasoning through dialogue and nurturing disciplined habits through structured routines. This synthesis supports Lickona's (1991) holistic model of character education, which combines moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Therefore, the novelty of this review lies in framing the teacher's role not merely as a transmitter of moral rules but as a designer of moral ecosystems in which values are experienced, discussed, and enacted.

Overall, this discussion reinforces that fostering students' discipline and responsibility is a multidimensional process that requires personal commitment, pedagogical innovation, and systemic collaboration. Teachers operate as moral exemplars, instructional designers, and agents of cultural transmission within the school ecosystem. The challenge ahead lies in institutionalizing these roles through sustained professional development, school-wide moral culture, and research-based policy design. Future research should explore longitudinal impacts of teacher-led character programs and examine how digital transformation reshapes moral learning dynamics. Ultimately, reimagining teachers as architects of moral intelligence will ensure that education not only imparts knowledge but also builds the ethical foundation for a responsible and disciplined generation.

#### 4. Conclusion

this study underscores that teachers hold a pivotal role in shaping students' discipline and responsibility through consistent modeling, reflective pedagogy, and



contextualized learning practices. The systematic literature review reveals that effective character formation occurs when teachers integrate moral values into everyday classroom routines, provide meaningful opportunities for student reflection, and embody the principles they seek to instill. However, successful implementation requires systemic support through coherent school culture, leadership commitment, and professional development that emphasizes moral pedagogy alongside academic instruction. It is therefore recommended that educational policymakers and institutions strengthen teacher training programs with explicit modules on character education, promote collaborative learning environments that nurture moral responsibility, and develop assessment frameworks that recognize behavioral and ethical growth as integral learning outcomes. By doing so, schools can cultivate disciplined and responsible individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also morally grounded to contribute positively to society.

## References

- Baehr, J. (2016). Is intellectual character growth a realistic educational aim? *Journal of Moral Education*, 45(2), 117–131.
- Blegur, J., Manu, T. S., Souisa, M., & others. (2018). Students' disciplined character as the effort to improve self-esteem and academic performance. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 8(4), 366–376.
- Cholifah, S. & others. (2024). Educational environment in the implementation of character education. *Journal of Scientific Research, Education, and Technology (JSRET)*, 3(2), 816–825.
- Fauzan, F., Ansori, R. A. M., Dannur, M., Pratama, A., & Hairit, A. (2023). The implementation of the merdeka curriculum (independent curriculum) in strengthening students' character in Indonesia. *Aqlamuna: Journal of Educational Studies*, 1(1), 136–155.
- Fitriadi, F., Sinaga, R. M., & Muhammad, R. R. (2024). A literature review on the cultural perspective study in elementary school education in Indonesia. *Journal of Innovation in Educational and Cultural Research*, 5(1), 51–61.
- Iksal, I., Hayani, R. A., & Aslan, A. (2024). Strengthening character education as a response to the challenges of the times. *Indonesian Journal of Education (INJOE)*, 4(3), 761–774.



- Islamic, G., Ishaq, M., Dayati, U., & others. (2024). Character education through philosophical values in traditional Islamic boarding schools. *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences*, 45(1), 31–42.
- Nurizka, R., Irawan, R., Sakti, S. A., & Hidayat, L. (2020). Internalization of school culture to foster awareness of Pancasila values in elementary school students. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 8(10), 4818–4825.
- Ratnawati, R. E., Christiani, Y. H., Karim, A., & others. (2024). Optimization of character education in the independent curriculum through the Pancasila student profile strengthening project approach. *IJESS International Journal of Education and Social Science*, 5(1), 16–30.
- Yang, Z. & others. (2023). Research on the Management of Student Daily Behavioral Norms and the Guiding Mechanism of Cultivating Education. *International Journal of New Developments in Education*, 5(19), 33–37.
- Yusoff, M. Z. M., & Hamzah, A. (2015). Direction of moral education teacher to enrich character education. *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, 3(1), 119–132.