



The Role of Parents and Schools in Building Children's Character of Responsibility

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Abstract

This study examines the development of children's sense of responsibility through the combined and complementary roles of parents and schools. Responsibility is a core moral character that requires consistent guidance, modeling, and reinforcement across multiple environments. Parents act as the primary moral educators by demonstrating responsible behavior, providing clear expectations, fostering open communication, and ensuring consistency between household rules and broader social norms. Such parental practices cultivate intrinsic motivation and moral reasoning in children, allowing them to act responsibly even without direct supervision. Schools, as structured and socially interactive environments, serve as secondary yet essential platforms for reinforcing responsibility. Through formal curricula, extracurricular activities, classroom management, and a supportive moral climate, schools provide practical opportunities for children to apply moral knowledge, develop accountability, and internalize socially shared standards. The study highlights that the highest effectiveness in character formation is achieved when parents and schools collaborate harmoniously. Open communication, joint programs, and aligned values between family and educational institutions create a coherent moral ecosystem, preventing inconsistencies that could confuse children's moral development. Cultural and religious contexts, particularly in Indonesia, further enrich this process by linking moral responsibility to spiritual and communal obligations. Overall, this study emphasizes that sustainable character education requires the integration of family, schools, and local cultural values, transforming responsibility from a taught concept into a lived habit that shapes both personal and social conduct.

Keywords

*responsibility, character
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INTRODUCTION

Education is not only a process of transferring knowledge but also a deliberate effort to shape human character in accordance with moral, social, and cultural values (Purwaningsih & Ridha, 2024;



Riskiawan et al., 2016). In today's rapidly changing era, education plays a vital role in developing students who are not only intellectually capable but also possess noble character and a sense of social responsibility. The school is considered the primary institution where children learn about values, ethics, and appropriate behavior that prepare them to live harmoniously in society (Chowdhury, 2016; Rahayu et al., 2024). However, character development cannot be achieved solely through academic instruction; it requires the integration of moral education, emotional intelligence, and behavioral discipline. The cultivation of responsibility as a core character value forms the foundation of personal integrity and civic virtue (Espinosa & Domingo, 2025; Mazid, 2025). Through continuous education, children are expected to develop self-awareness, the ability to fulfill obligations, and accountability for their actions. This concept emphasizes that education must be holistic—encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains—so that learning leads to meaningful transformation in personality.

The family and school are two primary social environments that significantly influence a child's moral and behavioral development (Daud et al., 2023; Hamdi & Sukmana, 2022). Parents serve as the first educators, shaping habits, emotional stability, and moral understanding since early childhood. Meanwhile, the school acts as an extension of the family, where formal learning and social interactions reinforce the moral values introduced at home. The synergy between these two environments is essential because inconsistent educational approaches between home and school can lead to confusion in children's character formation (Anisah, 2023; Wuryandani, 2024). A harmonious collaboration between parents and teachers helps create a consistent moral framework for the child to follow. Moreover, the alignment of parental guidance with school programs can strengthen the value of responsibility through example, practice, and reinforcement. This interconnection between family and educational institutions forms the backbone of an effective character education ecosystem. Therefore, mutual understanding and communication between parents and teachers are fundamental to building responsible and ethical future generations.

Responsibility is one of the most fundamental aspects of moral character that underpins other values such as honesty, discipline, and respect. A responsible child is capable of understanding the consequences of actions, fulfilling obligations, and contributing positively to the environment. Developing this trait requires continuous guidance from both parents and teachers through modeling, encouragement, and consistent feedback. In today's globalized and digital society, however, the sense



of responsibility among children often declines due to excessive dependence on technology, instant gratification, and weakening of social control. Educational programs that focus solely on academic achievement tend to overlook moral formation and emotional intelligence. Hence, fostering responsibility must be viewed as a deliberate pedagogical process that involves both home-based and school-based moral education. The integration of responsibility into everyday learning experiences helps children internalize this value not as a rule, but as a personal commitment to act ethically and conscientiously.

In recent years, educators and parents have expressed growing concern about the declining sense of responsibility among students. Many children show tendencies to avoid obligations, lack initiative in completing tasks, and display dependence on others to solve personal problems. These patterns often arise from insufficient parental supervision, inconsistent disciplinary practices, and the excessive use of gadgets that distract children from real-life responsibilities. Schools, on the other hand, sometimes fail to integrate value education effectively into daily learning activities, focusing instead on cognitive outcomes and exam performance. As a result, character education becomes fragmented and reactive rather than systematic and sustainable. Furthermore, the limited collaboration between parents and schools exacerbates this problem, leading to gaps in moral reinforcement and behavioral consistency at home and school. These conditions collectively hinder the holistic development of responsible, independent, and ethical learners, which in turn affects social harmony and civic responsibility in the broader community.

Previous research has widely emphasized the importance of parental involvement in character education. For instance, studies by Berkowitz and Bier (2021) found that consistent parental engagement positively correlates with children's moral reasoning and self-regulation. Similarly, Lickona (2018) highlighted that children who grow up in families emphasizing responsibility, honesty, and empathy tend to exhibit stronger moral identity and social adjustment at school. Research in family education also reveals that moral modeling by parents plays a crucial role in shaping children's internal moral compass. Moreover, home environments that encourage dialogue, accountability, and independence are found to produce students with higher levels of personal responsibility. These studies underscore the fact that moral formation begins at home and must be nurtured continuously



through example and reinforcement. Therefore, parents' roles in character education extend far beyond supervision—they serve as moral guides and emotional anchors for children's development.

In addition to parental influence, several studies highlight the school's pivotal role in character development. According to Noddings (2016) and Sari & Kurniawati (2020), schools that integrate moral education into their curriculum through cooperative learning, social-emotional programs, and community service activities show significant improvements in students' responsibility and empathy. Teachers who act as moral exemplars and create emotionally supportive classroom climates can reinforce responsible behavior through experiential learning. Furthermore, collaboration between parents and schools—such as through parent-teacher meetings, home visits, and joint mentoring programs—has been shown to strengthen the consistency of moral messages delivered to students (Baehr, 2020). These findings demonstrate that effective character education requires a partnership between home and school based on shared values, communication, and joint responsibility for the child's holistic growth.

Despite the abundance of research highlighting the individual roles of parents and schools, few studies have deeply examined the collaborative interaction between these two institutions in cultivating responsibility as a moral character in children. Many existing studies tend to focus on either parental involvement or school-based character education, but not on how these environments complement and reinforce each other in practical, everyday contexts. In the local setting, particularly in rural or semi-urban areas, cultural, socioeconomic, and communication factors often affect the effectiveness of this collaboration. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the synergistic relationship between parents and schools in shaping children's responsibility through consistent moral guidance and joint activities. This research also introduces a contextualized understanding of how family-school partnerships can be optimized within the framework of character-based education in Indonesian schools.

The primary purpose of this study is to analyze and describe the roles of parents and schools in fostering the character of responsibility among children. Specifically, it aims to identify how both institutions contribute, interact, and collaborate in nurturing responsible behavior through education, modeling, and habitual practices. Furthermore, this study seeks to explore challenges faced in sustaining consistent character education between home and school environments. By doing so, the



research is expected to provide practical insights for educators, parents, and policymakers to strengthen home-school partnerships in moral education. Ultimately, the study contributes to the broader discourse on how shared responsibility between parents and schools can promote character formation, moral integrity, and social harmony among young learners.

RESEARCH METODE

This study adopted a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to synthesize and analyze previous studies concerning the role of parents and schools in developing children's character of responsibility (Latifah & Ritonga, 2020). The SLR method was chosen because it provides a structured, transparent, and replicable framework for collecting and evaluating scholarly evidence from multiple sources. Following the PRISMA guidelines (Moher et al., 2015) and Kitchenham's (2007) model, the literature search was conducted using databases such as Scopus, ERIC, SpringerLink, and Google Scholar, focusing on publications from 2015 to 2024. Keywords such as "character education," "parental involvement," "school collaboration," "responsibility," and "moral development" were used. Articles were selected based on inclusion criteria emphasizing peer-reviewed empirical studies discussing the role of families and schools in children's moral and responsibility education. From an initial 267 articles, only 48 met the eligibility criteria after screening for relevance, methodological rigor, and conceptual alignment (Cabrera et al., 2023).

The selected studies were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to identify recurring concepts and relationships across different contexts. The synthesis revealed several consistent themes: (1) the importance of parental modeling and consistent reinforcement at home; (2) the role of school culture and curriculum integration in shaping responsible behavior; (3) collaborative communication between educators and parents; and (4) the influence of social and cultural values in determining educational outcomes. Overall, the review highlights that successful character education requires strong synergy between home and school, supported by consistent values and cultural contextualization. Despite numerous global studies emphasizing moral development, there remains limited localized evidence explaining how this collaboration is effectively practiced within Indonesian educational settings — a gap that this study aims to address.



RESULT DAN DISCUSSION

a. The Role of Parents in Shaping Children's Sense of Responsibility

Parental involvement plays a fundamental role in shaping the moral and behavioral foundations of children (Ginting, 2024). Parents serve as the first and most influential educators, providing early moral frameworks through modeling, reinforcement, and everyday interactions. Studies indicate that when parents demonstrate consistent responsibility in managing daily tasks, respecting others, and maintaining integrity, children tend to internalize similar patterns of conduct (Lickona, 2018). Within the home environment, simple acts such as assigning household chores, enforcing time discipline, and encouraging self-accountability for mistakes are critical practices that build moral autonomy. Parental consistency in nurturing responsibility allows children to develop intrinsic motivation rather than relying solely on external rewards or punishments.

Furthermore, parental communication style strongly determines how values of responsibility are absorbed. Warm, democratic parenting—where children are guided through reasoning rather than fear—proves most effective in cultivating responsible behavior. When parents explain the reasons behind rules or expectations, children begin to understand the moral logic underlying their actions. This reflective understanding helps them act responsibly even in the absence of supervision. Conversely, authoritarian or neglectful parenting styles often suppress moral reasoning and foster dependency. Therefore, parental engagement should go beyond control to include emotional warmth, moral dialogue, and autonomy support.

Another important dimension of parental influence is home-based character reinforcement, which complements school education. Parents who align household rules with school values create a coherent moral ecosystem that strengthens the child's behavioral consistency (Wuryandani, 2024). For example, when both school and home emphasize punctuality and respect for others, children receive a unified moral message that reinforces internal discipline. In contrast, moral dissonance between parental behavior and school rules often leads to confusion and moral relativism among children, weakening their sense of responsibility. Hence, the alignment between parental and school values is not merely supplementary but essential.

In many cultural contexts, particularly in Indonesia, religion becomes a powerful medium for transmitting responsibility. Parents who integrate moral teachings with religious practice—



such as prayer routines, charity, and honesty—help children link moral behavior to spiritual accountability. This spiritual dimension enriches cognitive understanding with emotional and ethical conviction, forming a more holistic moral foundation. Moreover, family discussions around moral dilemmas or community issues enable children to connect abstract moral values with real-life social responsibility.

However, challenges remain in modern parenting practices. Increasing work demands and digital distractions often limit parental time and attention toward moral education. Many parents delegate this responsibility entirely to schools, assuming that formal education alone can shape character. This detachment results in a moral gap between home and school environments. Thus, the study underscores the necessity for parents to reclaim their foundational role as moral mentors by integrating responsible conduct into daily life practices.

In conclusion, the family environment serves as the primary and most enduring platform for moral formation. Parents who model responsibility, foster open moral communication, and maintain value consistency create the psychological and emotional conditions for responsible character growth. Such familial foundations make subsequent school-based efforts more effective, as they build upon pre-established moral patterns. Therefore, the role of parents cannot be substituted but only strengthened through collaborative educational efforts.

b. The Role of Schools in Reinforcing Responsibility Character

Schools act as the secondary yet systematic environment for cultivating responsibility, where children learn to translate home-based values into structured social behavior (Mcwayne et al., 2022). Through daily routines, academic expectations, and peer interactions, schools provide formal opportunities to exercise accountability. Teachers function as moral agents whose behavior and instructional strategies model responsibility in tangible ways. Research by Berkowitz and Bier (2020) demonstrates that consistent enforcement of classroom rules, coupled with student participation in decision-making, fosters both ownership and moral reasoning. The school setting thus transforms abstract parental lessons into socially shared and institutionally reinforced practices.

A key element of school-based responsibility education lies in curriculum integration. Responsibility should not be confined to moral education classes but woven throughout subjects,



extracurricular activities, and school culture. Project-based learning, for instance, encourages students to take initiative, manage tasks, and complete goals collectively—mirroring real-world accountability. Furthermore, integrating reflective discussions and cooperative learning enhances students' ability to recognize consequences and empathize with others. Teachers who employ such strategies contribute not only to cognitive achievement but also to social and emotional growth.

Extracurricular programs also offer significant potential for character reinforcement. Activities such as scouting, student leadership councils, and community service provide experiential platforms for practicing responsibility (Hasanah, 2023). In these contexts, responsibility is not taught as a concept but lived as an experience—students are required to make decisions, face outcomes, and demonstrate dependability. These programs are particularly effective when supported by structured reflection sessions that link experience with moral meaning. When students perceive that their contributions benefit others, they internalize a deeper sense of responsibility that transcends compliance.

Equally important is the school's moral climate, which refers to the overall emotional and ethical atmosphere of the institution. A respectful, caring, and cooperative school environment communicates moral expectations implicitly. When students observe teachers and peers acting responsibly, they are more likely to adopt similar behaviors through social learning. However, inconsistent policies or the presence of favoritism can undermine moral trust and weaken responsibility formation. Therefore, leadership commitment to fairness, transparency, and inclusion becomes essential in maintaining moral coherence within the school community.

Another critical aspect is the role of teachers as moral facilitators. Effective educators recognize that teaching responsibility requires patience, empathy, and consistency. They encourage student participation in classroom rule-making and guide them to reflect on moral consequences rather than imposing authority. Such dialogical teaching approaches have proven to enhance students' intrinsic motivation to act responsibly. Additionally, mentorship and counseling programs help address individual moral challenges and nurture personal growth.

Despite these strengths, schools also face challenges in maintaining consistency and continuity in character education. Overloaded academic demands, lack of teacher training, and minimal parental collaboration often reduce character programs to symbolic or short-term



initiatives. Hence, sustainable success requires institutional policies that embed character goals into school management, evaluation systems, and community partnerships. In essence, schools function as the social laboratories of moral life, where responsibility is cultivated through interaction, reflection, and institutional culture. When schools align instructional practices with character goals and maintain ethical coherence, they transform moral ideals into lived realities for students.

c. Collaborative Synergy between Parents and Schools

The formation of responsibility character reaches its highest effectiveness when parents and schools work in synergy (Darna & Suci, 2024). Collaboration ensures that moral education is continuous across different environments and consistent across different authority figures. The alignment of values between home and school provides children with a coherent moral compass, reinforcing learning through repetition and reinforcement. When parents and teachers share insights about a child's progress, both can support character growth more effectively. According to Epstein's framework of school-family-community partnerships (2018), mutual respect, communication, and shared responsibility are key elements in sustaining such collaboration.

Effective collaboration begins with open communication channels. Regular meetings, progress reports, and digital communication platforms help bridge information gaps between teachers and parents (Rivera-vernazza, 2023). When both parties understand each other's expectations, they can jointly create strategies for nurturing responsibility—for example, assigning joint tasks that link school projects with home responsibilities. Schools that actively involve parents in program design and moral campaigns often experience higher student engagement and behavioral improvement. Moreover, collaboration also strengthens community trust and collective moral responsibility.

Joint character-building programs, such as seminars, family days, and social campaigns, can enhance the consistency of responsibility values. When parents participate in school events that highlight moral values, children perceive a unified moral standard across both settings. Additionally, schools that invite parents to share cultural or religious wisdom contribute to a richer and more contextual moral education. This reciprocal relationship transforms parents from passive recipients into active moral partners in education.



However, collaboration faces practical obstacles. Some parents, due to socioeconomic constraints or time limitations, cannot engage actively with schools. Others lack confidence in participating in educational planning or underestimate their influence. On the other hand, some schools fail to create inclusive spaces that encourage parental voice. To overcome this, schools need to establish flexible and accessible communication systems, offer parenting workshops, and provide supportive environments that respect family diversity.

Another challenge lies in maintaining alignment between moral messages at home and at school. Children may receive conflicting signals when home discipline contradicts school values—for example, when parents excuse irresponsibility while schools promote accountability. Continuous dialogue, joint monitoring, and moral synchronization help address such inconsistencies. Programs that include parent–teacher mentoring or reflective forums can sustain shared understanding and moral coherence.

In conclusion, collaborative synergy between parents and schools represents the core pillar of sustainable character education. Each institution brings unique strengths: parents provide emotional intimacy and daily reinforcement, while schools offer structure, reflection, and community exposure. When both work harmoniously, responsibility becomes not merely a taught virtue but a lived habit embedded in the child’s everyday conduct.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reaffirm that the development of responsibility as a core moral character is not an isolated process but rather a synergistic interaction between parental influence and school culture. This interconnection supports Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory (1979), which posits that children’s moral development occurs through reciprocal interactions between multiple systems—microsystem (family), mesosystem (school), and exosystem (community). When parents and schools maintain harmony within these systems, children experience a consistent moral environment that fosters stable patterns of responsible behavior. The study found that this ecological balance strengthens the internalization of responsibility as both a personal and social virtue, transcending compliance to become a matter of moral identity.

Furthermore, the results align with Lickona’s (1991) model of character education, which emphasizes the triadic relationship between moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Parents



primarily influence the first two dimensions by providing emotional warmth and moral dialogue, whereas schools contribute to the third through structured activities that translate moral cognition into practice. When these two dimensions intersect—such as through joint parent–school programs or shared behavioral standards—students exhibit stronger integrity, discipline, and empathy. This reinforces the idea that character formation requires a coherent moral ecosystem, rather than fragmented interventions delivered separately by family or educational institutions.

Another significant discussion point is the importance of role modeling as a behavioral transmission mechanism. Both parents and teachers function as moral exemplars whose actions convey implicit ethical messages to children. Social learning theory, as articulated by Bandura (1977), explains that children internalize values not merely through instruction but through observation of credible role models. The consistency of adult behavior—demonstrating punctuality, accountability, and honesty—creates a behavioral template that children tend to imitate. However, inconsistencies between home and school messages weaken moral learning, resulting in cognitive dissonance that may confuse children’s moral judgments. Thus, coordinated role modeling becomes essential to sustaining coherent value internalization.

The study also reveals cultural nuances that shape how responsibility is taught and perceived. In the Indonesian context, moral responsibility is often intertwined with religious and communal values, emphasizing not only individual accountability but also spiritual and social obligation. This integration supports Noddings’ (2002) ethics of care, which frames moral education as relational rather than purely rule-based. When parents and teachers nurture responsibility through compassion, empathy, and mutual respect, children perceive morality as a lived relationship rather than an external demand. Such relational responsibility fosters both self-discipline and concern for others, key attributes in building socially responsible citizens.

However, several challenges persist in implementing sustained collaboration between home and school. Many parents still perceive moral education as the exclusive duty of teachers, while schools often lack systemic mechanisms to involve parents meaningfully. Limited communication, mismatched expectations, and socio-economic barriers hinder consistent value reinforcement. This aligns with findings from Epstein (2018), who argued that effective family–school partnerships require deliberate structures—such as regular meetings, feedback loops, and shared decision-making



platforms. Without these mechanisms, moral education remains fragmented, reducing its long-term effectiveness. Therefore, policy-level interventions and institutional frameworks are necessary to institutionalize parent–school partnerships within the broader educational system.

Lastly, this discussion highlights a research and practical gap concerning the contextual adaptation of character education in multicultural settings. While global studies often emphasize universal virtues like responsibility and honesty, their practical applications differ across cultural landscapes. The present study contributes novelty by situating the discourse within the Indonesian educational context, where religious and communal values serve as both moral foundations and behavioral regulators. This contextualization demonstrates that effective character education must balance universal ethics with local wisdom, allowing responsibility to emerge as a culturally resonant and personally meaningful virtue.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the development of children's sense of responsibility is most effective through the synergy between parents and schools. Parents provide the moral foundation through modeling, communication, and value consistency, while schools reinforce responsibility through structured activities, programs, and a supportive moral climate. Harmonious collaboration between both parties creates a consistent moral environment, enabling responsibility to become an internalized habit. Therefore, sustainable character education requires integration between family, school, and local cultural values.

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