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Developing Discipline And Responsibility Character In Elementary School Students

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Abstract

This study synthesizes empirical evidence on the development of discipline and responsibility character among elementary school students using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) based on the PRISMA 2020 framework. The review analyzed 15 articles selected from 120 records retrieved from Google Scholar (2021–2026). Data were examined through thematic coding and narrative synthesis. The findings indicate that discipline and responsibility character are shaped by multiple interrelated factors, including the role of teachers, active learning strategies such as Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and Numbered Heads Together (NHT), habituation through school rules, school environment, parenting, extracurricular activities, and character assessment practices. The results also show that character development occurs gradually through continuous and collaborative efforts among teachers, parents, and schools. These findings highlight that character formation in elementary education is a complex and multi-factor process with important implications for educational practice and future research.

Keywords: Discipline Character; Responsibility Character; Elementary School Students; Character Education; PRISMA; Systematic Literature Review

INTRODUCTION

Character education has long been regarded as one of the foundational pillars of elementary education, as it directly influences the formation of students' values, attitudes, and behaviors during a critical phase of human development. Elementary school is the developmental stage at which children begin to internalize moral norms, social rules, and personal habits that will shape their identity and conduct in later life. In this context, discipline and responsibility are widely considered two of the most essential character dimensions, since they underpin students' capacity to learn effectively, interact respectfully with others, and complete tasks independently. Strengthening these character traits early is

therefore not only a pedagogical issue but also a strategic effort to prepare students for academic, social, and civic life (Utamirohmahsari, 2024)

Within the elementary school setting, discipline character refers to students' ability to follow rules, manage time, regulate behavior, and demonstrate self-control in academic and non-academic activities. Responsibility character, on the other hand, reflects students' willingness to fulfill their duties, accept consequences for their actions, and contribute meaningfully to classroom and community life (Ramadhani et al., 2024). The two characters are closely interrelated: students who are disciplined tend to be more responsible, and students who internalize responsibility usually exhibit more consistent disciplinary behavior. Despite their importance, many elementary schools still face challenges in fostering these character dimensions due to inconsistent instructional practices, limited integration of character values into the curriculum, and varying support from families and the surrounding environment (Bashir et al., 2023).

A growing body of research has examined how discipline and responsibility character are developed in elementary schools, with studi(Rijal et al., 2023)es highlighting the role of teachers, learning models, school rules, parenting style, extracurricular activities, and assessment practices (Jumatullailah et al., 2024; Sumar et al., 2025). However, this literature remains scattered across diverse methodological approaches, settings, and conceptual frameworks. Existing studies frequently focus on a single intervention or factor, such as a particular learning model or a specific behavioral strategy, without offering a comprehensive synthesis that maps how these factors interact in shaping students' character. As a result, teachers, school leaders, and policy makers lack an integrated overview that can guide evidence-based decisions in designing character education programs at the elementary level. This indicates a clear research gap regarding the systematic synthesis of recent empirical findings on discipline and responsibility character development (Martinez & Partin, 2023).

To address this gap, the present study conducts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) using the PRISMA 2020 framework to examine how discipline and responsibility character are developed among elementary school students. Specifically, this review aims to identify the dominant themes and strategies reported in recent literature, the contextual factors that support or hinder character development, and the patterns that emerge across different educational settings. By synthesizing findings from 15 selected articles published between 2021 and 2026, this study seeks to provide a more coherent and analytical understanding of character development at the elementary school level. The article is organized as follows: the methodology section explains the SLR procedures based on the PRISMA framework; the results section presents the synthesized findings from the selected studies; the discussion section interprets these findings analytically across thematic dimensions; and the final section provides the conclusion and practical implications.

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METHOD

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach using the PRISMA 2020 (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework. This method was selected to ensure a systematic, transparent, and replicable

process in identifying, selecting, and synthesizing studies related to the development of discipline and responsibility character among elementary school students. By following the PRISMA protocol, the study ensures methodological rigor and reliability in the review process (Page et al., 2021).

The data sources were obtained from Google Scholar as the primary database, due to its broad coverage of academic publications including peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, and scholarly reports. The search process was conducted using relevant keywords such as “discipline character,” “responsibility character,” “character education,” “elementary school students,” “primary education,” and “student behavior development.” The search was limited to publications from 2021 to 2026 to ensure the recency and relevance of the findings. All selected articles were downloaded in full-text format prior to the screening process.

To maintain the quality and relevance of the studies, inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied as presented in Table 1

Tabel 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Category	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Language	Articles published in English or Indonesian	Articles published in other languages
Publication Year	Studies published between 2021–2026	Studies published before 2021
Accessibility	Full-text articles available	Articles without full-text access
Context & Focus	Studies focusing on discipline and responsibility character development in elementary or primary school students	Studies focusing on secondary or higher education, or not related to character development
Type of Study	Empirical studies, case studies, and literature reviews	Abstract-only papers, opinion papers, or studies without clear methodology

The study selection process followed the PRISMA flow stages. In the identification stage, a total of 120 records were identified from Google Scholar. Before the screening process, 20 duplicate records were removed, along with 10 records excluded due to irrelevant titles or non-academic sources. As a result, 90 records remained for further screening.

During the screening stage, titles and abstracts were reviewed to determine their relevance to the research topic. A total of 50 records were excluded because they did not meet the inclusion criteria. Consequently, 40 reports were sought for retrieval. However, 5 reports could not be retrieved due to limited access to full-text documents, leaving 35 articles to be assessed for eligibility.

In the eligibility stage, full-text articles were carefully evaluated based on the predefined criteria. A total of 20 articles were excluded for specific reasons: 8 articles did not focus on elementary school contexts, 6 articles were not specifically related to discipline and

responsibility character development, and 6 articles had methodological limitations or insufficient rigor. Finally, 15 articles met all the criteria and were included in the final review.

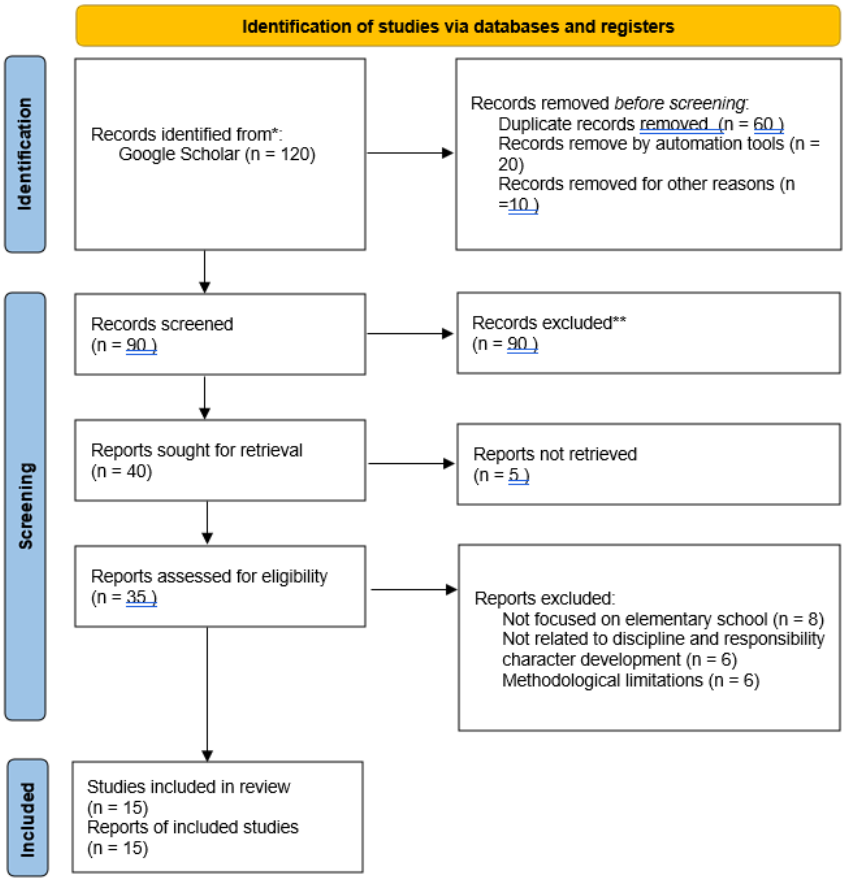

Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram of Study Selection Process

The selected studies were analyzed using a structured data extraction process, including information on authors, publication year, research design, research context, and key findings. The analysis was conducted using thematic coding to identify recurring patterns related to discipline and responsibility character development, strategies implemented in elementary school settings, challenges encountered, and their impact on students' character formation.

A narrative synthesis approach was employed to integrate findings across studies, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of how discipline and responsibility character are developed among elementary school students. This approach enables the identification

of trends, relationships, and key insights from the selected literature, providing a strong foundation for the results and discussion sections.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Based on the analysis of 15 selected articles published between 2021 and 2026, the findings indicate that the development of discipline and responsibility character in elementary school students is influenced by multiple interconnected factors. The studies, predominantly conducted in Indonesia with diverse methodological approaches, identify key themes such as the role of teachers, learning strategies, habituation practices, school environment, parenting, extracurricular activities, and character assessment. Among these, the role of teachers, the use of active learning strategies, and habituation practices appear as the most frequently reported factors.

The findings further show that discipline and responsibility character are not formed through a single approach, but emerge through the interaction of instructional processes, environmental support, and social influences. Learning strategies such as Problem-Based Learning and cooperative models contribute to student engagement and responsibility, while consistent rules and routines strengthen discipline. In addition, support from family and participation in extracurricular activities reinforce character development, while assessment practices help monitor students' progress.

Tabel 2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

No	Author & Year	Study Location	Method	Research Focus	Key Findings
1	Qonita et al. (2022)	Indonesia	Classroom Action Research	Discipline through punishment method	Punishment improves discipline behavior
2	Nurdien et al. (2025)	Indonesia	Qualitative	Discipline in character education	Discipline strengthens responsibility
3	Rahmawati & Utomo (Rahmawati & Utomo, 2024)	Indonesia	Quantitative	School environment & discipline	Environment influences discipline
4	Hasanov (2025)	Lithuania	Qualitative	Positive discipline	Improves classroom behavior
5	Judijanto et al. (2025)	Indonesia	Literature Review	Character education	Improves discipline via school system
6	Santosa et al. (2025)	Indonesia	Case Study	Discipline & responsibility	Built through rules & collaboration
7	Anam et al.	Indonesia	Case Study	Teacher role	Teachers shape

	(2026)				discipline & responsibility
8	Alifiyarti et al. (2023)	Indonesia	Qualitative	Responsibility character	Developed through learning process
9	Sumunaringtyas et al. (2024)	Indonesia	Development	Character assessment	Valid instruments improve measurement
10	Sa'diyah et al. (2023)	Indonesia	Quasi-Experiment	PBL & discipline board	Improves discipline & responsibility simultaneously
11	Purwati et al. (2023)	Indonesia	Qualitative	Parenting & responsibility	Parenting strongly influences responsibility
12	Hardiansyah (2022)	Indonesia	Qualitative	Snowball throwing model	Improves responsibility character
14	Safi et al. (2024)	Indonesia	Qualitative (Case Study)	Extracurricular (Tapak Suci)	Builds discipline, responsibility, and social character through habituation
15	Fulgencio et al. (2023)	Philippines	Quantitative (Survey)	Positive discipline model	Teacher awareness & implementation influence discipline effectiveness

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the development of discipline and responsibility character in elementary school students is shaped by interconnected pedagogical and social processes. Discipline functions as a foundational construct that supports the emergence of responsibility, as students learn to regulate their behavior and fulfill obligations consistently (Nurdien et al., 2025). This relationship aligns with the concept of character internalization, where repeated behavioral regulation leads to the formation of stable moral traits. Empirical evidence also shows that structured disciplinary approaches, including the use of punishment in a pedagogical context, can reinforce rule compliance and behavioral control (Qonita et al., 2022). These findings suggest that discipline is not merely control-oriented but serves as a basis for developing responsible behavior.

The role of teachers is identified as a central element in shaping character, which can be explained through social learning theory. Students tend to model behaviors demonstrated by teachers, making teachers key agents in transmitting discipline and responsibility values (Anam et al., 2026). The effectiveness of discipline is also influenced by how teachers implement it, as positive discipline approaches improve classroom behavior while

maintaining supportive interactions (Hasanov, 2025). Furthermore, teacher awareness and consistency in applying discipline significantly determine its impact on student behavior (Fulgencio et al., 2023). This indicates that character education depends heavily on teachers' ability to integrate moral values into daily instructional practices.

In terms of instructional strategies, constructivist learning theory provides a useful explanation for how character is developed through active engagement. Learning models such as Problem-Based Learning (PBL) enable students to take responsibility for their learning through problem-solving and decision-making processes (Sa'diyah et al., 2023). Similarly, interactive approaches like Snowball Throwing encourage participation and accountability, which contribute to responsibility development (Hardiansyah, 2022). These findings demonstrate that character values are more effectively formed when students are actively involved in the learning process. Thus, instructional design plays a critical role in facilitating the development of discipline and responsibility.

The process of habituation also emerges as a key mechanism in character formation, consistent with behaviorist perspectives on learning. Repetition of rules, routines, and expectations enables students to internalize discipline as part of their daily behavior (Judijanto et al., 2025). Over time, these repeated actions develop into consistent habits that reflect responsibility and self-regulation. This process is further strengthened when schools implement structured systems that reinforce discipline through clear expectations and consistent practices. Therefore, character development can be understood as a gradual process shaped by continuous reinforcement.

The school environment contributes significantly to shaping students' character, as explained by ecological systems theory. A supportive and structured environment provides the context in which discipline and responsibility can develop effectively (Rahmawati & Utomo, 2024). In addition, collaborative practices within the school, including rule enforcement and shared values, strengthen character formation (Santosa et al., 2025). This indicates that character development is influenced not only by individual factors but also by the broader institutional environment. A positive school climate therefore becomes a critical factor in sustaining character education.

Family influence also plays a crucial role in reinforcing responsibility character through early socialization processes. Parenting practices that emphasize independence and accountability contribute to the development of responsible behavior in children (Purwati et al., 2023). When family values align with school expectations, students experience consistency that strengthens character internalization. Conversely, discrepancies between home and school environments may weaken the development process. This highlights the importance of collaboration between parents and schools in supporting character education.

Extracurricular activities and assessment practices also play a significant role in supporting character development. Activities such as Tapak Suci provide experiential learning opportunities where students practice discipline, responsibility, and social interaction in structured settings (Safi'i et al., 2024). In parallel, the use of valid and reliable assessment instruments enables educators to measure character development more objectively and systematically (Sumunaringtyas et al., 2024). These elements indicate that character education extends beyond classroom instruction and involves broader learning

experiences. The development of discipline and responsibility character is therefore shaped through the integration of instructional processes, environmental support, and social interaction.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that the development of discipline and responsibility character in elementary school students is a complex and integrated process influenced by multiple interrelated factors. Teachers, learning strategies, habituation, school environment, parenting, extracurricular activities, and assessment practices collectively shape character formation. These findings emphasize that character development does not occur instantly but requires continuous, consistent, and collaborative efforts across school and family contexts. The study highlights the importance of coordinated approaches in implementing character education and provides implications for educators and future research to design more contextual and sustainable character development programs.

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