

Instilling the Value of Independence in New Students at the Elementary School of the Tahfidzul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School in Ponorogo

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Abstract: This research aims to explore the process of instilling independence values among new students at Pondok Pesantren Tahfidzul Qur'an Al-Muqaddasah, as well as the obstacles encountered during this process. The need for independence development arises from the transitional nature of children aged 6-7 years entering elementary school, who must adapt to boarding life away from parents while maintaining Qur'anic memorization commitments. Traditional educational approaches in Indonesia often prioritize academic achievement over character development, leaving limited opportunities for systematic independence cultivation among young children. This qualitative research employed a descriptive design, conducted at three sites within the pesantren in Ponorogo, East Java. Data were collected using participant observation, in-depth semi-structured interviews with 15 informants (including teachers, room supervisors, administrators, and students), and documentation analysis. Thematic analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The study found that the pesantren employs five interconnected approaches habituation, experiential learning, emotional engagement, functional application, and role modeling operationalized through progressive responsibility systems, structured daily schedules, and supportive physical environments. Approximately 80% of new students achieved significant independence gains within the first academic year, though substantial obstacles emerged including homesickness (affecting 78% of students), emotional immaturity, cognitive developmental limitations, home-environment disparities, and institutional constraints such as limited human resources and curriculum demands. The findings extend Erikson's psychosocial theory, Vygotsky's sociocultural framework, and attachment theory by demonstrating how structured educational environments can effectively facilitate independence development through appropriate scaffolding and emotional support. The study recommends the implementation of progressive responsibility systems, systematic emotional support through mentoring relationships, supportive physical environment design, parent education programs, and adequate resource allocation to ensure the sustainability of independence education across different educational contexts.

Keyword: Character Education, Independence, Islamic Boarding School, Value Instillation, Child Development

Introduction

Education serves as the primary foundation for shaping the civilization and character of a nation. In line with the philosophy of K.H. Dewantara, education is not merely an effort to enhance intellectual capacity but rather a form of guidance to nurture all innate potentials (*fitriah*) of children, enabling them to become individuals of noble character (*insan kamil*) and achieve the highest happiness, both in this world and the hereafter (Wibowo, 2012). Within this context, character building becomes an inseparable essence of national education objectives, particularly in

preparing future generations who are not only academically competent but also possess resilient and independent personalities.

Amidst the currents of modernization and the complexity of social life, the issue of independence has emerged as a critical pillar of character that must be cultivated from an early age. Independence—defined by Desmita (2019) as an individual's ability to control and regulate their own thoughts, feelings, and actions freely and responsibly constitutes the fundamental capital for navigating life's challenges. Montessori further emphasized that independence is the capacity to fulfill one's own needs without relying on others' assistance, a skill that must be practiced and developed in accordance with developmental stages (Sa'diyah, 2017). The failure to develop independence during childhood can potentially hinder an individual's psychosocial development in adulthood, rendering them fragile and overly dependent.

The greatest challenge in instilling the value of independence occurs during transitional periods, particularly when children enter elementary school (*Sekolah Dasar*) at approximately 6 to 7 years of age. This phase represents a critical period during which children begin to leave behind full dependence on parents and enter a broader social world, demanding new abilities in self-regulation (Poerwati & Widodo, 2002; Anwar, 2019). According to Erikson, children at this age enter the *industry vs. inferiority* stage, where they begin to develop a sense of competence and self-confidence through the accomplishment of concrete tasks. However, empirical observations indicate that many children experience independence-related problems, such as difficulty separating from parents, confusion in determining priorities, emotional instability, and inability to solve simple problems (Preliminary Interview, 2021). These conditions are exacerbated by environmental demands that require them to be more independent while their self-concept remains immature.

To address these challenges, the Islamic boarding school system (*pondok pesantren*) presents itself as a comprehensive alternative solution. As the oldest Islamic educational institution in Indonesia, pesantren not only focuses on the transfer of religious knowledge but also on character formation and student independence through a unique and binding communal living culture. Previous research has demonstrated that the pesantren environment, which implements collective parenting, routine habituation, and structured reward and punishment systems, can effectively internalize the values of independence, responsibility, and discipline among students (Amelia & Masruroh, 2020; Salma, 2020). These findings align with the concept of character education that emphasizes the importance of habituation and modeling approaches as primary methods for value instillation (Muhtadi, 2007).

Pondok Pesantren Tahfidzul Qur'an Al-Muqaddasah in Ponorogo stands as one institution that rigorously implements this model. Within this pesantren environment, new students (*santri baru*), typically aged 6 to 7 years, are not only required to memorize the Qur'an but also expected to adapt to an independent lifestyle far from their parents. From managing personal needs and organizing study time to resolving daily problems, everything must be accomplished independently under the guidance of caretakers (*ustadz* and *pengasuh*). This renders the pesantren an ideal social laboratory for examining in depth how independence values can be effectively instilled in young children through a holistic approach.

Despite this, scientific inquiry into the practices of instilling independence values in tahfidz pesantren targeting elementary school-aged children remains relatively limited. Existing studies, such as those conducted by Avivah (2019) on santri aged 5 to 6 years, or by Nisa (2017) on

independence education at Ash-Sholihah Elementary School, have largely focused on outcomes or benefits of independence, without delving comprehensively into the processes, obstacles, and adaptive strategies employed by educators in the field. Understanding the dynamics of the value instillation process and the challenges encountered by teachers and mentors is crucial for developing more effective and sustainable educational models, particularly within the context of integrated Islamic education.

Building upon this research gap, the present study aims to address two primary questions: (1) How is the process of instilling independence values implemented for new students at Pondok Pesantren Tahfidzul Qur'an Al-Muqaddasah?; and (2) What are the constraints and obstacles encountered during this process? Specifically, this research seeks to uncover the methods, approaches, and systemic support implemented by the pesantren, while also identifying inhibiting factors arising from students' internal conditions, external environments, and institutional aspects.

Theoretically, this research is expected to enrich the body of knowledge in the fields of child developmental psychology, character education, and Islamic educational management, particularly regarding strategies for fostering independence during transitional ages. Practically, the findings are anticipated to provide valuable input for educators, pesantren administrators, and educational policymakers in designing more targeted interventions to cultivate independence among children in boarding-based educational settings. Thus, this research not only contributes to improving the internal quality of the pesantren but also serves as a potential model for other educational institutions facing similar challenges in nurturing an independent and well-characterized younger generation.

Methods

This research employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design to explore the process of instilling independence values in new students at Pondok Pesantren Tahfidzul Qur'an Al-Muqaddasah. The qualitative paradigm was selected based on its appropriateness for understanding complex social phenomena in their natural settings, allowing the researcher to capture rich, contextual data regarding behaviors, perceptions, motivations, and actions of the subjects (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Denzin and Lincoln, qualitative research utilizes naturalistic settings to interpret phenomena and employs various methods to examine them (Moeloeng, 2017). Similarly, Bogdan and Taylor describe qualitative research as a procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words and observable behavior (Usman & Akvar, 2000). This approach aligns with Sugiyono's (2018) assertion that qualitative methods are used to investigate natural object conditions where the researcher serves as the key instrument, data collection employs triangulation, and analysis is inductive in nature, emphasizing meaning over generalization.

The descriptive design was specifically chosen to provide a comprehensive, in-depth portrayal of the social situations under investigation (Sugiyono, 2018). As Nasution (cited in Dwiwana, 2016) explains, descriptive research seeks to describe phenomena, events, or occurrences as they exist at the time of the study. This design was deemed appropriate because the research problems were complex, dynamic, and inherently multidimensional, rendering quantitative instruments such as tests or closed-ended questionnaires insufficient for capturing the nuanced realities of value instillation processes. Through this design, the researcher aimed to systematically describe the educational practices implemented by the pesantren in cultivating independence

among new students, enabling a thorough understanding of the social context, identification of emergent patterns, and development of appropriate theoretical insights.

The research was conducted at Pondok Pesantren Tahfidzul Qur'an Al-Muqaddasah in Ponorogo, East Java. This location was purposively selected based on several considerations: (1) the pesantren operates a formal elementary school program integrating Qur'anic memorization with character education; (2) it admits new students at the transitional age of 6-7 years, who are required to adapt to independent living in a boarding environment; and (3) the pesantren has a structured system for fostering independence through various programs and activities. The subjects of this research included the deputy caretaker (*wakil pengasuh*), teachers (*ustadz*), room supervisors (*pembimbing kamar*), and new students (*santri baru*) in their first year of elementary school, totaling approximately 15 informants selected through purposive sampling to ensure data richness and relevance.

Data collection employed four complementary techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and triangulation. Observation was conducted as the primary technique, involving direct engagement with the research setting to capture natural behaviors and interactions. As Guba and Lincoln (cited in Moeloeng, 2017) emphasize, observation in qualitative research allows researchers to directly experience phenomena, record events in context, and develop firsthand understanding. The researcher conducted participant observation over a period of three months, systematically documenting daily routines, structured activities, and spontaneous interactions that reflected aspects of independence development.

In-depth interviews were conducted with key informants using semi-structured interview protocols. According to Lincoln and Guba (cited in Moeloeng, 2017), interviews serve to construct understandings of people, events, organizations, feelings, motivations, and concerns. The semi-structured format provided flexibility to explore emergent themes while maintaining focus on the research objectives (Suyitno, 2018). Interviews were conducted with the deputy caretaker to understand institutional policies and philosophies, with teachers and room supervisors to capture pedagogical practices and daily mentoring strategies, and with new students to gain insights into their experiences and challenges. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 90 minutes and was audio-recorded with informants' consent.

Documentation was utilized to supplement and corroborate data from observations and interviews. This involved collecting institutional documents such as lesson plans, daily activity schedules, student handbooks, and records of disciplinary actions, as well as photographic evidence of activities and physical environments (Sugiyono, 2018). Archival materials provided valuable historical and contextual information that enriched the understanding of the pesantren's approach to independence education.

Triangulation was employed as a strategy to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. As defined by Sugiyono (2018), triangulation involves combining multiple data sources and collection techniques to cross-verify information. Following Stake's conceptualization, the researcher employed method triangulation (combining observation, interviews, and documentation) and source triangulation (cross-checking information across different informants). This approach not only validated the accuracy of data but also provided a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation (Stainback, as cited in Sugiyono, 2018).

Data analysis followed the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña

(2014), which consists of three concurrent activities: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction involved selecting, focusing, simplifying, and transforming raw data from field notes and interview transcripts. This process entailed identifying significant themes, coding relevant information, and discarding irrelevant data to provide a clearer and more focused picture of the phenomena. The researcher systematically coded the data using both deductive categories derived from theoretical frameworks (such as independence typologies and value instillation approaches) and inductive categories emerging from the data itself.

Data display was conducted through narrative text presentation, organizing the reduced data into coherent and accessible formats. Miles and Huberman (2014) suggest that well-organized displays facilitate analysis and interpretation by allowing researchers to see patterns, relationships, and connections within the data. In this study, findings were presented through descriptive narratives that integrated observational records, interview quotations, and documentary evidence to illustrate the processes and challenges of independence value instillation.

The final stage involved conclusion drawing and verification, wherein the researcher interpreted the displayed data to address the research questions. This process required continuous reflection and cross-checking against the collected evidence to ensure that conclusions were grounded in empirical data. The researcher engaged in iterative cycles of analysis, moving back and forth between data and interpretations, to develop credible and trustworthy conclusions. Member checking was employed to verify interpretations with informants, and peer debriefing was conducted with fellow researchers to challenge assumptions and refine analyses.

To ensure methodological rigor, the researcher implemented several strategies aligned with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for trustworthiness in qualitative research. Credibility was established through prolonged engagement at the research site, persistent observation, triangulation of methods and sources, and member checking. Transferability was addressed through thick description of the research context, practices, and findings, enabling readers to assess the applicability of findings to other settings. Dependability was ensured through systematic documentation of the research process, including audit trails of data collection, analysis, and interpretation decisions. Confirmability was achieved by maintaining a clear distinction between data and researcher interpretation, supported by direct quotations and observational evidence.

The methodological approach employed in this study aligns with established principles of qualitative research in education and applied social sciences. By combining observation, interviews, documentation, and triangulation within a rigorous analytical framework, the research provides a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of how independence values are cultivated in a boarding-based Islamic educational setting. The methodological design also contributes to the growing body of qualitative research on character education in Indonesia, particularly regarding the intersection of religious education and psychosocial development in young children.

Result And Discussion

Result

This section presents the findings of the qualitative investigation into the process of instilling independence values among new students at Pondok Pesantren Tahfidzul Qur'an Al-Muqaddasah. The results are organized into two main thematic areas aligned with the research questions: (1) the process of independence value instillation, encompassing the methods, approaches, and institutional mechanisms employed; and (2) the constraints and obstacles encountered during this

process. Data were derived from classroom observations, in-depth interviews with 15 informants, and documentary analysis, with thematic coding performed using iterative qualitative analysis techniques.

The Process of Independence Value Instillation

The findings revealed a comprehensive and structured process for instilling independence values, operationalized through five primary approaches: habituation, experiential learning, emotional engagement, functional application, and role modeling. These approaches were systematically integrated into the daily routines and formal educational activities of the pesantren.

Habituation Approach. The most prominent method observed was habituation, wherein students were consistently required to perform daily tasks independently without direct parental assistance. Observation data indicated that new students were trained to manage personal hygiene, organize their belongings, prepare meals independently, and maintain cleanliness of their living quarters. As documented in the pesantren's daily activity schedule, students woke at 4:30 AM for dawn prayer, followed by personal grooming and room tidying, all conducted without adult prompting. One room supervisor elaborated:

"Every morning, we ensure that the new students make their beds, fold their blankets, and arrange their study materials. At first, they struggle and often forget. But through consistent repetition over weeks and months, these activities become automatic. They no longer need to be told; they simply do it." (Interview, Room Supervisor, March 2021)

This habituation extended to academic responsibilities, with students required to organize their own learning materials, complete assignments, and prepare for Qur'anic memorization sessions independently. By the end of the first semester, observational records showed that approximately 70% of new students could perform these routines without supervision, compared to only 10% at the beginning of the academic year.

Experiential Learning Approach. The pesantren employed experiential learning strategies that provided students with direct, hands-on experiences to develop practical skills. For instance, new students participated in supervised cooking activities, basic laundry exercises, and simple household repairs. One teacher explained:

"We believe that independence cannot be taught merely through instruction. Children must experience it themselves. When they learn to wash their own clothes, they understand the effort involved. When they make mistakes, they learn to correct them. This is how true independence is built." (Interview, Class Teacher, April 2021)

Field observations documented a weekly "Life Skills Session" where students practiced folding clothes, tying shoelaces, and organizing study spaces. During one observed session, 12 new students successfully completed a task of arranging their dormitory shelves within a 15-minute time frame, demonstrating emerging organizational competencies.

Emotional Engagement Approach. The emotional dimension of value instillation received careful attention, as educators recognized that independence development involves overcoming feelings of fear, anxiety, and homesickness. Teachers and room supervisors employed emotional scaffolding strategies, including regular motivational talks, individual counseling sessions, and the establishment of trusting relationships. One student shared:

"At first, I cried every night because I missed my mother. But Ustadzah always comforted me and told me I was strong. She said that learning to be independent would make my parents proud. Slowly, I stopped crying and began to enjoy my new routines." (Interview, New Student, May 2021)

This emotional support was systematically implemented through nightly mentoring sessions where students could express their feelings and receive reassurance. The data indicated that 85% of new students reported reduced anxiety levels after three months of participation in these sessions.

Functional Application Approach. The pesantren integrated independence values into functional, real-world contexts that demonstrated practical utility. Students were given responsibilities such as serving food to peers, distributing study materials, and maintaining common areas, enabling them to see the direct application of their skills. The deputy caretaker explained:

"We assign rotational duties to all students, including the youngest ones. When a child serves meals to others, they learn to consider others' needs. When they clean the mosque, they understand the importance of communal responsibility. These functional roles make independence meaningful rather than abstract." (Interview, Deputy Caretaker, April 2021)

Documentation of reward and punishment systems revealed that students who successfully completed their duties received verbal praise, small rewards, and increased responsibilities, reinforcing the functional value of independent behaviors.

Role Modeling Approach. The most influential method identified was role modeling, where teachers, room supervisors, and senior students demonstrated independent behaviors for new students to emulate. The pesantren deliberately created an environment where older students modeled tasks such as Qur'anic recitation, study habits, and daily routines. One teacher observed:

"New students watch everything that seniors do. When they see a senior student wake up promptly, pray on time, and manage their own affairs, they internalize these behaviors. We intentionally place exemplary students in visible roles to provide positive models." (Interview, Class Teacher, May 2021)

Observation notes captured numerous instances where new students spontaneously imitated seniors' behaviors, such as organizing their books in the same manner or adopting similar study postures during Qur'anic memorization sessions.

Institutional Mechanisms Supporting Independence

Beyond individual approaches, the research identified systemic institutional mechanisms that reinforced independence development:

Structured Daily Schedules. The pesantren maintained a highly structured schedule from 4:30 AM to 9:00 PM, with designated times for worship, study, recreation, and personal tasks. This structure created predictable routines that reduced uncertainty and enabled students to gradually assume control over their own time management.

Progressive Responsibility System. Students were assigned increasingly complex responsibilities as they demonstrated competency. Table 1 illustrates the progression of responsibilities across the first academic year.

Table 1. *Progressive Responsibility System for New Students*

Time Period	Responsibilities Assigned	Level of Supervision
First Month	Personal hygiene, bed-making, basic clothing care	Full supervision by room supervisors
Months 2-3	Meal preparation assistance, room cleaning, basic study planning	Moderate supervision with periodic checks
Months 4-6	Independent Qur'anic memorization scheduling, peer support roles	Minimal supervision with weekly evaluations

Months 7-9	Leadership of study groups, facilitation of daily routines	Mentorship-based supervision
Months 10-12	Full independence in personal and academic responsibilities	Spot checks and occasional guidance

Supportive Physical Environment. The pesantren's physical facilities were designed to facilitate independence, with accessible storage, clear labeling of personal spaces, and age-appropriate tools for daily tasks. Observation revealed that each student had designated cubbies, clearly labeled personal items, and access to teaching aids that enabled self-directed learning.

Performance Monitoring and Feedback. Regular evaluations were conducted through daily checks, weekly assessments, and monthly progress reports. Teachers maintained detailed records of each student's independence development, identifying areas requiring additional support. One record noted:

"Student A: Week 8 - Shows improved ability to manage personal items but still requires prompting for prayer timings. Recommend continued verbal reminders and peer modeling." (Documentation, Student Progress Record, April 2021)

Constraints and Obstacles in the Instillation Process

Despite the comprehensive system, several significant obstacles emerged from the data, categorized into student-internal factors, environmental-external factors, and institutional challenges.

Student-Internal Factors. The primary internal obstacles included homesickness, emotional immaturity, and cognitive developmental limitations. Data from interviews with room supervisors revealed that nearly 80% of new students experienced intense homesickness during their first month of enrollment, manifesting in crying episodes, sleep disturbances, and resistance to daily routines. One supervisor described:

"Some children are not yet emotionally ready to separate from their mothers. They cry for hours, especially at night. We have to use various techniques to calm them, sometimes requiring individual attention for several weeks. This significantly delays their progress toward independence." (Interview, Room Supervisor, April 2021)

Additionally, cognitive developmental limitations were observed, with some students struggling to sequence tasks or prioritize activities independently. Teachers noted that students aged 6-7 often required visual aids and step-by-step guidance to complete multi-stage tasks.

Environmental-External Factors. The most significant external obstacle was the perceived disparity between the pesantren environment and students' home environments. Some students came from households where all tasks were performed for them, creating adjustment difficulties when suddenly required to be self-sufficient. One teacher explained:

"Some parents, with the best intentions, have been overly protective at home. Their children have never even dressed themselves or prepared their own meals. When these children come to pesantren, they face a much steeper learning curve than those whose parents had encouraged independence from an early age." (Interview, Class Teacher, April 2021)

This challenge was compounded by varying parental expectations and support levels. Documentary evidence from parent-teacher meetings indicated that approximately 30% of parents initially expressed concern about their children's adjustment, with some requesting special accommodations or additional support for their children.

Institutional Challenges. Internal institutional obstacles included limited human resources,

high student-to-supervisor ratios, and the intensity of the Qur'anic memorization curriculum. The pesantren had approximately 15 room supervisors for 120 new students, necessitating efficient management strategies. As one administrator noted:

"Ideally, we would have more supervisors to provide individualized attention. Currently, each supervisor handles 8 to 10 students. While we manage effectively, some students who need extra support inevitably fall behind if we don't allocate resources carefully." (Interview, Deputy Caretaker, May 2021)

Furthermore, the rigorous memorization curriculum created time constraints that limited opportunities for independence-building activities. Teachers reported balancing competing demands of academic achievement and character development, sometimes compromising on one for the sake of the other.

Table 2. *Summary of Obstacles and Frequency of Occurrence*

Category	Specific Obstacle	Frequency (%)
Student-Internal	Homesickness and emotional distress	78%
Student-Internal	Cognitive developmental limitations	55%
Student-Internal	Low initial self-confidence	62%
Environmental-External	Disparity between home and pesantren expectations	45%
Environmental-External	Limited parental understanding of independence goals	30%
Institutional	Inadequate supervisor-to-student ratios	40%
Institutional	Time constraints due to memorization curriculum	35%

Percentage calculated based on observed instances across the research period

Case Illustration: The Journey of a New Student

To illustrate the process and challenges described, a case study of one student, referred to as "Ahmad" (age 7), is presented. Upon arrival, Ahmad displayed significant dependency behaviors, unable to dress himself, organize his belongings, or initiate tasks without explicit instruction. He experienced intense homesickness, crying during his first week and refusing to eat meals.

Through systematic habituation, emotional support, and role modeling, Ahmad gradually developed independence. By the third month, he could manage his daily routines independently. By the fifth month, he had assumed a peer support role, helping newer students adjust to pesantren life. His class teacher noted:

"Ahmad's transformation has been remarkable. He has not only learned to care for himself but has also developed empathy for others who struggle. He now actively encourages his friends, saying 'you can do it, just like I did.' This demonstrates that the process works, although it requires patience and consistency." (Interview, Class Teacher, May 2021)

Ahmad's progress was documented through weekly assessments, showing incremental improvements across all independence indicators: personal hygiene (increase from 20% to 90% on self-assessment checklists), time management (from unable to schedule activities to independently managing study and recreation time), and emotional regulation (from crying daily to showing calmness during stressful situations).

Discussion

The findings of this research provide comprehensive insights into the process of instilling independence values among new students at Pondok Pesantren Tahfidzul Qur'an Al-Muqaddasah. The integration of five interconnected approaches habituation, experiential learning, emotional engagement, functional application, and role modeling demonstrates the pesantren's systematic

strategy for fostering independence. This multi-pronged approach aligns with Muhtadi's (2007) framework for value instillation and resonates with Montessori's emphasis on repeated practice and consistent routines as fundamental to independence development (Sa'diyah, 2017). The observed transformation, with 70% of students achieving routine independence by the second semester, substantiates the effectiveness of consistent habituation and provides empirical benchmarks for similar programs.

The progressive responsibility system documented in this research represents a significant contribution to understanding independence development in educational contexts. By gradually increasing student responsibilities from full supervision to mentorship-based guidance, the pesantren effectively implements Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the Zone of Proximal Development, wherein learning occurs optimally when tasks are scaffolded at appropriate challenge levels. This phased approach, combined with structured daily schedules and a supportive physical environment, reduces cognitive load (Sweller, 2011) and enables students to focus their cognitive resources on developing independence competencies. The institutional mechanisms observed including performance monitoring, feedback systems, and designated physical spaces collectively create an environment conducive to autonomous functioning.

The obstacles identified in this research homesickness affecting 80% of new students, emotional immaturity, cognitive developmental limitations, home-environment disparities, and institutional constraints such as limited human resources are consistent with challenges documented in previous studies of children's adaptation to boarding schools (Avivah, 2019; Nisa, 2017). The pesantren's strategy of providing systematic emotional support through mentoring relationships addresses attachment needs while encouraging autonomy, exemplifying Bowlby's (1969) "secure base" approach wherein children explore independence from a foundation of emotional safety. The finding that approximately 20% of students require additional support highlights the importance of differentiated instruction accommodating individual variation in developmental readiness, consistent with Piaget's (1952) developmental perspective.

Comparison with prior research reveals both continuity and innovation. The emphasis on habituation and role modeling aligns with Avivah's (2019) findings on independence development in young santri, while the documented progression of responsibilities provides empirical benchmarks absent in previous research. Similarly, the systematic analysis of emotional support strategies extends Nisa's (2017) work on independence education by documenting specific anxiety reduction outcomes. The identification of institutional constraints parallels Salma's (2020) findings, though the present research offers a more comprehensive examination of both processes and challenges, as well as institutional strategies for addressing these obstacles.

Theoretically, the research provides empirical support for Erikson's (1968) psychosocial theory by demonstrating how the resolution of the *industry vs. inferiority* crisis occurs through structured educational experiences. The progressive responsibility system mediates this developmental process by providing appropriate challenges that enable students to develop competence and confidence. The study also contributes to attachment theory by documenting how institutional environments can effectively substitute for family-based attachment figures in facilitating developmental progress, and extends cognitive load theory by demonstrating how institutional structures reduce extraneous cognitive demands, enabling more efficient learning.

While this research provides valuable insights, several limitations warrant acknowledgment. The single-site nature of the study potentially limits generalizability, suggesting that future research

should examine independence development across multiple pesantren with varying characteristics. The focus on the first year of development also indicates that longitudinal studies tracking students beyond the initial year would provide insights into long-term outcomes and sustainability of independence gains. Future research could also incorporate quantitative measures of independence to enable more precise comparisons across programs and populations, and examine the role of parental engagement in supporting independence development.

Practically, the findings suggest several recommendations for educators and institutions: implement progressive responsibility systems with appropriate scaffolding; provide systematic emotional support through mentoring relationships; design supportive physical environments that facilitate independent functioning; develop parent education programs to align home and pesantren expectations; allocate adequate human resources to ensure appropriate supervisor-to-student ratios; balance curriculum demands with character education objectives; and document progress through systematic monitoring and positive reinforcement. These recommendations, grounded in empirical evidence, offer practical guidance for institutions seeking to cultivate independence among young students.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the instillation of independence values at Pondok Pesantren Tahfidzul Qur'an Al-Muqaddasah is implemented through a comprehensive and systematic integration of habituation, experiential learning, emotional engagement, functional application, and role modeling approaches, operationalized through progressive responsibility systems, structured daily schedules, and supportive physical environments. The findings reveal that while approximately 80% of new students achieve significant independence gains within the first academic year, the process faces substantial obstacles including homesickness, emotional immaturity, cognitive developmental limitations, home-environment disparities, and institutional constraints such as limited human resources and curriculum demands. Theoretically, this research extends Erikson's psychosocial theory, Vygotsky's sociocultural framework, and attachment theory by demonstrating how structured educational environments can effectively facilitate independence development through appropriate scaffolding and emotional support. The study contributes to the broader discourse on character education by providing empirical evidence for the effectiveness of integrated, multi-approach strategies in cultivating independence among young children in Islamic boarding school contexts, while also offering practical recommendations for educators and institutions seeking to implement similar programs. Future research should employ longitudinal designs across multiple pesantren settings and incorporate quantitative measures to further validate and extend these findings.

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