

## The Role of Teachers in Enhancing Children's Self-Confidence at TK IT Al-Kiswah, Bengkulu City

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### ABSTRACT

Self-confidence is one of the fundamental aspects of social-emotional development in early childhood that significantly influences children's ability to engage in social interaction, academic tasks, and daily life activities. Teachers, as the primary figures in the educational environment, play a pivotal role in nurturing and enhancing children's self-confidence. This study aims to analyze and describe in depth the role of teachers in increasing children's self-confidence at TK IT Al-Kiswah, Bengkulu City. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach with data collection techniques consisting of participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The subjects of this study were three classroom teachers and 20 children aged 5–6 years in Group B. Data analysis was conducted using Miles and Huberman's interactive model encompassing data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The findings of this study reveal that teachers at TK IT Al-Kiswah carry out four main roles in developing children's self-confidence, namely as motivators, guides, facilitators, and evaluators. These roles are implemented through various strategies, including providing verbal and non-verbal praise, applying scaffolding approaches, using innovative and play-based learning methods such as role-playing, storytelling, singing, and demonstrating artwork. The supportive learning environment, combined with active collaboration between teachers and parents, also makes a significant contribution to children's self-confidence development. This research emphasizes the importance of teachers' professional competence and a holistic educational ecosystem in optimizing the growth of self-confidence in early childhood.

**Keywords:** Teacher Role; Self-Confidence; Early Childhood; Islamic Kindergarten; Learning Strategy



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## Introduction

Early childhood education (ECE) is widely recognized as a critical phase in the formation of a child's character and personality. During this period, multiple developmental domains are simultaneously and fundamentally shaped, including cognitive, linguistic, social-emotional, and physical-motor development. Among these domains, social-emotional development—particularly self-confidence—has emerged as a key indicator of a child's

overall readiness for future educational and life challenges (Indarwati, 2023). Self-confidence, defined as an individual's belief in their own abilities to navigate various situations and tasks, constitutes the psychological foundation upon which children build their social competencies, academic engagement, and emotional resilience (Kinanty Jelita, 2024).

Children who possess strong self-confidence tend to demonstrate greater curiosity, social assertiveness, and willingness to take on new challenges without excessive fear of failure (Ginting, 2023). These qualities are indispensable not only for school readiness but also for long-term well-being and success. Conversely, children who lack self-confidence often struggle to express themselves, resist participation in group activities, and show over-dependence on adult guidance. Research consistently underscores that early interventions targeting self-confidence development yield the most lasting and meaningful outcomes throughout a child's developmental trajectory (A'yun, 2025).

In the context of Islamic-integrated early childhood education, self-confidence takes on an additional dimension. TK IT (Taman Kanak-kanak Islam Terpadu, or Integrated Islamic Kindergarten) institutions are characterized by a holistic educational philosophy that seeks to integrate Islamic values—such as *tawakkal* (trust in God), *syukur* (gratitude), and *tawadu* (humility)—into daily learning activities (Purnama et al., 2021). At these institutions, self-confidence is not merely conceived as a secular psychological construct but is deeply rooted in the belief that every child is endowed by God with unique potential and gifts that deserve to be recognized and celebrated. This spiritual dimension enriches the approach to self-confidence development in meaningful ways (Masrukin, 2011).

TK IT Al-Kiswah, located in Bengkulu City, represents one such institution that has committed to an integrated Islamic educational approach. Field observations conducted prior to this study identified a range of behaviors among children in Group B (aged 5–6 years) that suggested varying levels of self-confidence. Some children demonstrated significant reluctance to participate in front-of-class activities, avoided answering the teacher's questions, showed dependency when completing assignments, and frequently sought reassurance from adults before undertaking any task. These behavioral patterns, while not uncommon in early childhood settings, signaled the need for a systematic and structured examination of the pedagogical strategies employed by teachers to address and enhance children's self-confidence.

The teacher's role in this context extends far beyond that of a mere knowledge transmitter. As the most consistent adult figure with whom children interact outside the family, teachers serve simultaneously as motivators, guides, facilitators, and evaluators of children's developmental progress (Nurhayat, 2025). A teacher's responsiveness, patience, and consistent use of positive reinforcement can profoundly shape the psychological climate of the classroom and directly influence the degree to which children feel safe enough to take risks, express themselves, and engage authentically in the learning process (Muhammad Teguh Samudera, 2025).

Despite the recognized importance of this role, there remains a relative scarcity of empirical studies that examine teacher practices related to self-confidence development specifically within the context of Islamic-integrated kindergartens in Indonesia, particularly in Bengkulu City and the surrounding Bengkulu Province region. Most existing research has focused on secular kindergartens or has not adequately addressed the contextual specificities of Islamic education environments. This study therefore aims to fill this gap by providing a comprehensive, in-depth analysis of how teachers at TK IT Al-Kiswah Bengkulu City enact their roles in building and enhancing the self-confidence of children in their care.

The theoretical framework underpinning this research draws on several established theories and perspectives. Erikson's psychosocial theory highlights the critical importance of the stage of Initiative versus Guilt (ages 3–6 years), during which children either develop a sense of purpose and initiative or experience guilt and self-doubt depending on the quality of

adult responses to their exploratory behaviors (Ansyari & Ramli, 2024). Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, with its central concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), provides a framework for understanding how adult scaffolding enables children to achieve levels of competence they could not reach independently, thereby building confidence through guided mastery experiences (Furoivisha & Muhimmah, 2026). Albert Bandura's self-efficacy theory further contributes to this framework by establishing that children develop beliefs about their capabilities primarily through mastery experiences, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and physiological and emotional states (Rahmad Agung Nugrah, 2017).

This study is driven by the following research questions: (1) What roles do teachers at TK IT Al-Kiswah, Bengkulu City play in enhancing the self-confidence of children aged 5–6 years? (2) What specific strategies and methods do teachers employ within each role? (3) What supporting and inhibiting factors influence the effectiveness of teacher efforts in developing children's self-confidence? By addressing these questions, this research seeks to generate practical insights that can guide teachers, school administrators, and educational policymakers in designing and implementing more effective, contextually sensitive approaches to early childhood self-confidence development.

## Method

This research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. The qualitative approach was selected because it allows the researcher to explore phenomena in depth within their natural context, capture the richness and complexity of human experience, and generate nuanced understandings that quantitative approaches may overlook (Hardani et al., 2020). A descriptive design was specifically chosen to systematically portray and interpret the actual manifestations of teacher roles in the enhancement of children's self-confidence at TK IT Al-Kiswah, Bengkulu City.

The research was conducted at TK IT Al-Kiswah, located in Bengkulu City, Bengkulu Province, Indonesia. The school was selected purposively based on several criteria: (1) its status as an Islamic-integrated kindergarten operating under the JSIT (Jaringan Sekolah Islam Terpadu) curriculum framework; (2) its established reputation as a leading early childhood institution in Bengkulu City; (3) the school's expressed commitment to holistic child development; and (4) the accessibility and willingness of the school management and teachers to participate in the research. The research was conducted over a period of three months, from February to April 2026, during the even semester of the 2025/2026 academic year.

The research subjects were selected using a purposive sampling technique, which involves the deliberate selection of information-rich cases that are directly relevant to the research questions (Subhaktiyasa, 2024). The primary subjects of this study consisted of three classroom teachers in Group B, all of whom held at minimum a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education or Islamic Early Childhood Education, and had more than three years of teaching experience at the institution. The secondary subjects were 20 children in Group B, aged 5 to 6 years, comprising 11 boys and 9 girls. The school principal and two parents were also engaged as additional information sources to provide broader contextual perspectives.

Three primary data collection techniques were employed in this research. First, participatory observation was conducted across 16 learning sessions, during which the researcher observed classroom interactions, teacher behaviors, pedagogical strategies, and children's responses in real time. Observations were recorded using a structured observation guide supplemented by field notes capturing non-verbal cues, contextual details, and emerging patterns. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the three classroom teachers, the school principal, and two selected parents. Interview guides were

developed based on the research questions and theoretical framework, while allowing for flexibility to explore unexpected themes. Interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim. Third, documentation data—including lesson plans, daily learning journals, teacher assessment records, photographs of classroom activities, and school program documentation—were collected and analyzed as supplementary evidence.

Data analysis followed interactive model of qualitative data analysis, which encompasses three concurrent and iterative processes (Rijali, 2018): (1) data reduction, involving the systematic condensation of raw data through coding, categorizing, and selecting relevant information; (2) data display, involving the organized presentation of data in narrative, tabular, or diagrammatic forms to facilitate interpretation; and (3) conclusion drawing and verification, involving the formulation and testing of emerging interpretations against the full body of evidence. The researcher employed an inductive coding approach, generating codes from the data rather than imposing predetermined categories (Agustina, 2022).

The trustworthiness of the findings was established through multiple triangulation strategies. Source triangulation involved comparing data obtained from teachers, the school principal, parents, and children themselves. Technique triangulation involved cross-checking findings from observations, interviews, and documentation (Ilhami et al., 2014). Member checking was also employed, whereby preliminary findings were shared with the teacher participants for review and validation. These measures collectively ensure the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the research findings (Farhan, 2024).

## Results and Discussion

### 1. Teacher as Motivator

The findings from 16 sessions of participatory observation consistently demonstrated that all three teachers at TK IT Al-Kiswah maintained a deliberate and systematic practice of motivating children throughout the learning process. Motivational strategies were embedded within daily routines from the opening activities to the closing circle, indicating a whole-day approach to building children's confidence rather than limiting motivational efforts to specific moments.

Verbal motivation was the most frequently observed form, with teachers employing praise phrases such as 'Masya Allah, bagus sekali!' (How wonderful!), 'Kamu hebat!' (You are great!), 'Berani, ya!' (Be brave!), and 'Ayo kamu pasti bisa!' (Come on, you can do it!) in response to children's efforts. Significantly, teachers directed praise toward the process of effort and participation rather than solely toward the correctness or quality of the final product, a practice aligned with the concept of growth mindset cultivation (Merlinda, 2023). This distinction was important because children who receive process-focused praise tend to develop a stronger intrinsic motivation to persist through challenges.

Non-verbal motivational strategies were equally prominent. Teachers were observed providing enthusiastic applause, thumbs-up gestures, warm smiles, gentle shoulder pats, and the award of 'bintang' (star) stickers on children's work cards. These tangible tokens of recognition served as powerful motivators, particularly for children who were initially reluctant to participate. Interview data confirmed that teachers deliberately varied their motivational approaches to respond to individual children's temperaments and needs, recognizing that some children responded more strongly to public praise while others benefited from quiet, personal encouragement.

Particularly noteworthy was the practice of inviting children to share personal experiences in front of the class during morning circle time. Teachers consistently modeled enthusiastic listening and appreciation when children spoke, thereby creating a classroom norm in which every contribution was valued. When children made mistakes or encountered difficulties, teachers responded with phrases that normalized errors as part of the learning process: 'Tidak apa-apa, coba lagi ya!' (It's okay, try again!). This approach aligns with Djamarah's (2017) argument that teacher motivation is one of the most powerful predictors of self-confidence development in early childhood, and is further supported by the extensive body of research on emotional safety and psychological security in educational environments (Berlensa, 2024).

The integration of Islamic values within motivational practices at TK IT Al-Kiswah also distinguished this institution from secular kindergartens. Teachers frequently connected praise and encouragement to Islamic concepts, reminding children that their abilities are gifts from Allah and that effort (*ikhtiar*) is valued in Islam. This spiritual dimension appeared to resonate deeply with the children and their families, lending an additional layer of meaning to self-confidence development within this context.

## 2. Teacher as Guide

In their role as guides, teachers at TK IT Al-Kiswah were observed to employ a patient, individualized, and responsive approach to supporting children who experienced difficulties during learning activities. Rather than immediately providing answers or completing tasks on behalf of struggling children, teachers consistently utilized scaffolding strategies—a practice consistent with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Ayu, 2025).

Scaffolding at TK IT Al-Kiswah was operationalized in several observable forms. Teachers asked guiding questions to prompt children's own thinking ('Coba ingat, kemarin kita pernah belajar apa?' / 'Try to remember, what did we learn yesterday?'), broke complex tasks into smaller sequential steps, used pointing gestures to direct children's attention to relevant features of materials, and provided encouraging commentary during the process. Each of these approaches was calibrated to the individual child's current level of competence and zone of proximal development, reflecting a sophisticated understanding of developmentally appropriate practice.

Interview data revealed that teachers consciously distinguished between children who needed more intensive scaffolding and those who required only minimal support. Teachers described maintaining mental notes about each child's confidence trajectory, allowing them to gradually reduce support over time as children demonstrated growing independence—a practice that embodies the concept of 'fading' in instructional scaffolding theory (Utami et al., 2013). This graduated release of responsibility was described by one teacher as 'mengajari anak untuk percaya pada diri sendiri' (teaching children to trust themselves), a formulation that elegantly captures the pedagogical intent of the guiding role.

The emotional quality of the guidance relationship was also a salient theme in the data. Children appeared visibly more willing to attempt challenging tasks when they perceived their teacher as a safe, responsive, and non-judgmental presence. Observations recorded numerous instances of children who had initially refused to engage with a task eventually attempting it following a brief, quiet exchange with the teacher. This finding reinforces the importance of the teacher-child attachment

relationship as a foundation for risk-taking and confidence development in early childhood settings (Zahra, 2020).

### 3. Teacher as Facilitator

As facilitators, teachers at TK IT Al-Kiswah created and maintained a rich, accessible, and stimulating learning environment that supported children's autonomous exploration and self-expression. The physical environment of the classrooms was organized into learning centers (*sudut-sudut belajar*), each equipped with age-appropriate materials that invited children to engage at their own pace and in ways that matched their individual interests and abilities.

Teachers were observed implementing a diverse repertoire of innovative learning methods to encourage active participation and self-expression. *Bermain peran* (role-playing) was particularly prominent, with teachers designing scenarios that allowed children to take on leadership roles, practice verbal communication, and develop agency within structured social situations. *Bercerita* (storytelling) activities engaged children in listening, responding, and eventually creating their own narratives in front of peers. *Bernyanyi bersama* (group singing), especially with Islamic nasheed and children's songs that had positive affirmations embedded in their lyrics, provided a joyful and low-pressure context for collective self-expression. *Demonstrasi hasil karya* (demonstrating artwork and projects) gave each child the opportunity to present their creative work to peers, narrate their creative process, and receive recognition.

The use of role-playing deserves particular emphasis, as observational data suggested it was the method most powerfully associated with visible increases in children's confidence over the study period. Through role-playing, children who were initially too shy to speak in front of the class were able to adopt a character and speak from behind the 'mask' of that role, reducing the psychological stakes of public performance. Over successive sessions, many of these children were observed gradually transferring their role-play confidence to non-role-play contexts. This finding corroborates Hasnida's (2015) argument that creative media and methods can significantly increase children's engagement and self-confidence, and aligns with the broader literature on drama and play as tools for self-confidence development (Ilma, 2024).

**Table 1.** Teacher Roles and Forms of Activity in Enhancing Children's Self-Confidence at TK IT Al-Kiswah.

No	Teacher Role	Form of Activity
1	Motivator	Providing verbal praise ("Great job!", "You can do it!"), applause, star stickers, and enthusiastic encouragement to children before and during activities
2	Guide	Assisting children in completing tasks step-by-step using a patient and empathetic scaffolding approach; redirecting with guiding questions rather than giving direct answers
3	Facilitator	Providing age-appropriate learning media and a safe, stimulating, and child-friendly classroom environment that encourages exploration and self-expression
4	Evaluator	Delivering formative, positive, and constructive feedback that values the learning process over final results; focusing on effort and progress

Source: Research Observation Data (2026)

#### 4. Teacher as Evaluator

The evaluative role of teachers at TK IT Al-Kiswah was characterized by a distinctive approach that prioritized formative, process-oriented, and affirming feedback over summative, product-oriented, or corrective assessment. Teachers in Group B utilized daily anecdotal records, portfolios of children's work, and informal behavioral checklists to track each child's developmental progress across multiple domains, including self-confidence indicators such as willingness to participate, eye contact, voice volume, and independent task initiation.

Crucially, teachers' evaluative feedback was consistently framed in ways that acknowledged and celebrated children's efforts and improvements rather than comparing individual performance to a fixed standard or to peers' performance. When a child who had previously refused to speak in front of the class managed to say even a single sentence, teachers responded with visible celebration and encouragement that communicated the significance of this developmental milestone. This approach reflects the principles of authentic assessment and developmental appropriateness that are foundational to quality early childhood education (Ma'mun et al., 2019).

Interview data revealed that teachers regularly shared their observational findings with parents through weekly communication books and monthly parent meetings, enabling families to understand, appreciate, and reinforce their children's confidence-building progress at home. This bi-directional flow of evaluative information between school and home was described by one teacher as essential to creating consistency in the messages children receive about their abilities and worth.

Beyond the direct pedagogical actions of individual teachers, this research identified a constellation of contextual and systemic factors that contributed to or inhibited children's self-confidence development at TK IT Al-Kiswah. Understanding these factors is essential for designing comprehensive institutional strategies that support teacher effectiveness.

The physical and social learning environment emerged as a critical supporting factor. Classrooms at TK IT Al-Kiswah were characterized by warm, colorful, and child-friendly décor; the display of children's artwork throughout the room; clearly organized and accessible learning materials; and a consistent daily schedule that provided children with a sense of security and predictability. These environmental features collectively communicated to children that their presence, contributions, and creations were valued and respected. Research consistently confirms that the quality of the learning environment is a significant predictor of children's social-emotional development and self-confidence (Putri et al., 2025).

Active parental involvement constituted a second major supporting factor. Parents of children at TK IT Al-Kiswah demonstrated relatively high levels of engagement with school programs, participating in regular parent-teacher meetings, Islamic parenting workshops (parenting Islami), and informal consultations with teachers about their children's developmental progress. This parental engagement provided teachers with valuable contextual information about individual children's home environments and personalities, enabling more responsive and personalized pedagogical approaches. Moreover, parents who received guidance from teachers about how to support self-confidence development at home were able to create consistent reinforcement across the two most important environments in children's lives.

Positive peer relationships constituted a third key supporting factor. Teachers at TK IT Al-Kiswah deliberately cultivated a classroom culture of mutual respect, cooperation, and peer appreciation through structured cooperative learning activities, explicit teaching of social skills, and consistent modeling of positive social interactions. Children were taught to celebrate each other's achievements ('Ayo kita beri tepuk tangan untuk teman kita!' / 'Let's

applaud our friend!') and to respond to peers' mistakes with encouragement rather than ridicule. This peer culture of support and appreciation significantly reduced the social risk associated with self-expression and public performance, enabling children to take greater confidence risks than they might in a more competitive or critical peer environment.

Finally, the integration of Islamic values into the daily curriculum of TK IT Al-Kiswah represented a distinctive supporting factor that merits specific attention. Teachers regularly wove Islamic teachings about individual worth, human dignity, and the value of effort into daily learning activities, prayers, and discussions. Children were taught that they are khalifah (stewards) with unique gifts from Allah, that mistakes are part of the learning journey (the story of the Prophet's perseverance being a recurring reference), and that gratitude (syukur) for one's abilities—however small—is itself an act of worship. This spiritual framing appeared to provide children with a robust internal resource for self-confidence that transcended situational performance successes or failures.

**Table 2.** Supporting Factors for Self-Confidence Development at TK IT Al-Kiswah.

No	Supporting Factor	Description
1	Conducive Learning Environment	Safe, comfortable, clean, and stimulating classroom with learning corners that allow children to explore freely
2	Parental Involvement	Active parent participation in school programs, parent-teacher communication through weekly meetings and Islamic parenting workshops
3	Positive Peer Relationships	Cooperative group activities that foster a culture of mutual support and appreciation among children
4	Islamic Values Integration	Embedding tawadu (humility), tawakkal (trust in God), and syukur (gratitude) values into daily routines to build spiritual self-assurance

Source: Research Data Analysis (2026)

Despite the predominantly positive pedagogical practices observed at TK IT Al-Kiswah, this study also identified several factors that presented challenges to the full realization of teachers' self-confidence development efforts. First, the high student-to-teacher ratio during specific activities (particularly whole-class activities involving 20 children and one lead teacher) occasionally limited teachers' capacity to provide adequate individualized attention to all children, especially those with pronounced confidence deficits. Second, inconsistencies in home environments—with some children experiencing highly controlling or critical parenting styles at home—created a tension between the confidence-affirming messages received at school and the confidence-undermining messages received at home. Teachers reported that these children required more intensive and sustained support to show meaningful progress.

Third, some teachers expressed a need for more formal professional development specifically focused on psychological and social-emotional aspects of early childhood development. While their teaching practices demonstrated a strong intuitive understanding of self-confidence support, teachers indicated that more systematic training in areas such as growth mindset theory, trauma-informed teaching practices, and social-emotional learning frameworks would further strengthen their capacity to support the most vulnerable children.

These findings have important implications for early childhood education policy and practice in Indonesia. At the institutional level, schools may benefit from reviewing their

student-to-teacher ratios for high-stakes activities, developing structured parent education programs focused on self-confidence support at home, and investing in regular professional development opportunities for teachers in the domain of social-emotional learning. At the policy level, the findings support calls for the explicit inclusion of self-confidence development indicators within the national early childhood education curriculum framework (Permendikbud) and for the provision of training and resources to support Islamic-integrated early childhood educators in addressing the spiritual dimensions of children's self-confidence development.

## Conclusion

This research has demonstrated that teachers at TK IT Al-Kiswah, Bengkulu City, play a critically important and multidimensional role in enhancing the self-confidence of children aged 5–6 years. This role is enacted through four interconnected functions: as motivator, guide, facilitator, and evaluator. Each function is implemented through specific, evidence-informed strategies that are responsive to individual children's needs and sensitive to the Islamic educational values that characterize the institution's pedagogical philosophy. The study's findings affirm that self-confidence development in early childhood is not an incidental outcome of schooling but a deliberate achievement that requires systematic pedagogical intention, a supportive physical and social learning environment, strong school-family partnerships, and the integration of spiritual values that give children a sense of inherent worth and capability. Teachers who approach their work with this holistic understanding—who see themselves not merely as instructors but as architects of children's psychological and spiritual well-being—are uniquely positioned to make lasting contributions to the development of confident, capable, and spiritually grounded young learners. For future research, it is recommended that longitudinal studies be conducted to examine the long-term effects of the pedagogical strategies identified in this research on children's self-confidence trajectories from early childhood through primary school. Comparative studies examining self-confidence development in Islamic-integrated versus secular kindergartens would also generate valuable insights for educational policy and practice. Furthermore, action research designs that involve teachers as co-researchers in developing and evaluating self-confidence enhancement programs would contribute to a more participatory and empowering approach to educational improvement in early childhood settings across Indonesia.

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