JURNAL ILMIAH
ISLAM FUTURA
Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry

ISSN 1412-1190
E-ISSN 2407-7542

Vol. 26. No. 2, August 2026, 943-971

FROM CONCEPT TO PRACTICE: DEVELOPING AN AQIL BALIGH LIFE SKILLS CURRICULUM TO ENHANCE PRIMARY STUDENT INDEPENDENCE

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Abstract

Islamic elementary education plays an important role in developing students' independence, character, and readiness for increasing personal, social, and religious responsibilities. This study aimed to develop an Aqil Baligh-based life skills curriculum and examine descriptive changes in student independence during its initial implementation. The study employed a Research and Development (R&D) approach comprising needs analysis, curriculum design, expert review, limited field implementation, product revision, and evaluation. The field trial involved 20 students from Grades IV–VI at one Islamic elementary school. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and structured assessments covering five dimensions of student independence: responsibility, time discipline, learning initiative, worship independence, and social cooperation. Quantitative analysis compared mean scores across the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II. The recorded mean scores increased from 2.10 to 3.80 for responsibility, 2.31 to 3.60 for time discipline, 2.01 to 3.70 for learning initiative, 2.41 to 3.90 for worship independence, and 2.51 to 3.97 for social cooperation. These findings document consistent upward descriptive patterns across all five dimensions during implementation. The study contributes an integrated curriculum framework connecting practical life skills, Islamic values, and gradual preparation for increasing responsibility. Further evaluation using validated assessment instruments and comparative designs is needed to establish its effectiveness and wider applicability.

Keywords: Life Skills; Aqil Baligh; Student Independence; Curriculum Development; Islamic Education.

Abstrak

Pendidikan dasar Islam berperan penting dalam mengembangkan kemandirian, karakter, dan kesiapan siswa menghadapi peningkatan tanggung jawab personal, sosial, dan keagamaan. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengembangkan kurikulum kecakapan hidup berbasis Aqil Baligh dan mengkaji perubahan deskriptif kemandirian siswa selama implementasi awalnya. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan Research and

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Citation: Kurniasih, Apri, Jamiluddin Yacub, Jawad Zacaria Salic, Sefriyanti, and Khalimatul Khusna. "From Concept to Practice: Developing an Aqil Baligh Life Skills Curriculum to Enhance Primary Student Independence." *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 26, no. 2 (2026): 943-971

10.22373/jiif.v26i2.35096

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Development (R&D) melalui tahapan analisis kebutuhan, perancangan kurikulum, telaah ahli, implementasi lapangan terbatas, revisi produk, dan evaluasi. Uji coba terbatas melibatkan 20 siswa kelas IV–VI di satu sekolah dasar Islam. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas, wawancara semi-terstruktur, kuesioner, dan penilaian terstruktur yang mencakup lima dimensi kemandirian siswa, yaitu tanggung jawab, disiplin waktu, inisiatif belajar, kemandirian beribadah, dan kerja sama sosial. Analisis kuantitatif dilakukan dengan membandingkan skor rerata pada tahap pra-siklus, siklus I, dan siklus II. Rerata yang tercatat meningkat dari 2,10 menjadi 3,80 untuk tanggung jawab; 2,31 menjadi 3,60 untuk disiplin waktu; 2,01 menjadi 3,70 untuk inisiatif belajar; 2,41 menjadi 3,90 untuk kemandirian beribadah; dan 2,51 menjadi 3,97 untuk kerja sama sosial. Temuan ini menunjukkan pola peningkatan deskriptif yang konsisten pada kelima dimensi selama implementasi. Penelitian ini menghasilkan kerangka kurikulum terintegrasi yang menghubungkan kecakapan hidup praktis, nilai-nilai Islam, dan persiapan bertahap menuju peningkatan tanggung jawab. Evaluasi lanjutan menggunakan instrumen penilaian tervalidasi dan desain komparatif diperlukan untuk menguji efektivitas serta keterterapannya secara lebih luas.

Kata Kunci: *Kecakapan Hidup; Aqil Baligh; Kemandirian Siswa; Pengembangan Kurikulum; Pendidikan Islam.*

مستخلص

تؤدي التربية الابتدائية الإسلامية دورًا مهمًا في تنمية استقلالية التلاميذ وشخصياتهم واستعدادهم لتحمل المسؤوليات الشخصية والاجتماعية والدينية المتزايدة. هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تطوير منهج للمهارات الحياتية قائم على مفهوم العقل والبلوغ(Aqil Baligh) ، ودراسة التغيرات الوصفية في استقلالية التلاميذ خلال تطبيقه الأولي. اعتمدت الدراسة منهج البحث والتطوير، الذي شمل تحليل الاحتياجات، وتصميم المنهج، ومراجعة الخبراء، والتطبيق الميداني المحدود، وتنقيح المنتج، والتقييم. وشملت التجربة المحدودة عشرين تلميذًا من الصفوف الرابع إلى السادس في مدرسة ابتدائية إسلامية واحدة. جُمعت البيانات من خلال الملاحظة الصفية، والمقابلات شبه المنظمة، والاستبانات، والتقييمات المنظمة التي تناولت خمسة أبعاد لاستقلالية التلاميذ، وهي تحمل المسؤولية، والانضباط في إدارة الوقت، والمبادرة في التعلم، والاستقلالية في أداء العبادات، والتعاون الاجتماعي. وحُللت البيانات الكمية بمقارنة متوسطات الدرجات بين مرحلة ما قبل التطبيق والدورتين الأولى والثانية. وارتفعت المتوسطات المسجلة من 2.10 إلى 3.80 في تحمل المسؤولية، ومن 2.31 إلى 3.60 في الانضباط في إدارة الوقت، ومن 2.01 إلى 3.70 في المبادرة في التعلم، ومن 2.41 إلى 3.90 في الاستقلالية في أداء العبادات، ومن 2.51 إلى 3.97 في التعاون الاجتماعي. وتشير هذه النتائج إلى أنماط وصفية تصاعدية متسقة في الأبعاد الخمسة خلال التطبيق. وتقدم الدراسة إطارًا منهجيًا متكاملًا يربط المهارات الحياتية العملية بالقيم الإسلامية والإعداد التدريجي لتحمل المسؤوليات المتزايدة. وتظل هناك حاجة إلى تقييمات لاحقة تستخدم أدوات قياس متحققًا من صدقها وثباتها وتصميمات مقارنة لاختبار فاعلية المنهج ومدى قابليته للتطبيق في سياقات أوسع.

الكلمات الرئيسية: المهارات الحياتية؛ العقل والبلوغ؛ استقلالية التلاميذ؛ تطوير المنهج؛ التربية الإسلامية.

A. Introduction

Education plays a fundamental role in preparing students not only to achieve academic competence but also to develop the character, practical abilities, and personal responsibility required to participate effectively in everyday life.[1] In primary education, classroom activities provide opportunities to develop students' self-regulation through teacher guidance, structured activities, and practical learning experiences.[2] Life skills education is particularly relevant to this objective because it enables students to develop abilities such as self-management, decision-making, problem-solving, communication, cooperation, and responsibility through meaningful learning experiences. A systematic literature review of early childhood education identifies life skills activities as a relevant approach to fostering children's independence through practical learning experiences.[3]

The integration of practical competencies and character development has become an important concern in contemporary education. Research on life skills in compulsory education has highlighted the diverse ways in which these competencies are conceptualized and addressed within educational settings. Accordingly, educational institutions need to provide opportunities for students to develop personal initiative, self-regulation, cooperation, and responsible decision-making alongside academic learning. A curriculum that connects academic learning with practical life competencies can provide students with opportunities to apply what they learn in situations that resemble their everyday experiences.[4]

This issue is particularly significant in Islamic elementary education because the development of students' independence is closely related to the formation of moral and spiritual responsibility. In Islamic elementary education, character development involves not only the cultivation of socially responsible behavior but also the integration of religious values into everyday educational practices.[5] Students are therefore expected to gradually develop

[1] F Amalia and E Setiyawati, "Implementasi Kurikulum Berbasis Karakter Melalui Kegiatan Life Skill Di SD Muhammadiyah 1 Candi," *Class: Educational Science Journal* 1, no. 2 (2025): 41–45, https://edu.jujurnal.com/index.php/edu/article/view/7.

[2] Hui-Ling Chen and Wei-Hsiang Huang, "Enhancing Early Childhood Health and Safety Education: The Impact of Life Skills-Based Teaching Strategies," *Health Education Research* 40, no. 5 (August 12, 2025), https://doi.org/10.1093/her/cyaf038; Kim Griffin et al., "Strategies Teachers Use to Support Students' Self-regulation Skill Development in Mainstream Primary Schools: A Scoping Review," *British Educational Research Journal* 52, no. 3 (June 2026): 2091–2118, https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.70081.

[3] Widya Fiamita, Hadiqotul Luluk, and Hena Dian Ayu, "Life Skill Activities To Increase The Independence Of Early Childhood," *QOSIM: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial & Humaniora* 4, no. 3 (2026): 88–102, https://ejournal.yayasanpendidikandzurriyatulquran.id/index.php/qosim/article/view/5661.

[4] Lone Hvalby, Astrid Guldbrandsen, and Hildegunn Fandrem, "Life Skills in Compulsory Education: A Systematic Scoping Review," *Education Sciences* 14, no. 10 (October 14, 2024): 1112, https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14101112.

[5] Wasehudin Wasehudin et al., "The Paradigm of Character Education in Islamic Elementary School," *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 24, no. 2 (August 1, 2024): 368–97, https://doi.org/10.22373/jiif.v24i2.22546; Isa Anshori, "Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter Di Madrasah," *Halaqa: Islamic Education Journal* 1, no. 2 (December 4, 2017): 63–74, https://doi.org/10.21070/halaqa.v1i2.1243; Diah Widiawati et al., "Integration of Islamic Education Curriculum Management

responsibility for their actions, discipline in carrying out obligations, awareness of others, and the ability to manage themselves.[6] Integrating these values into practical learning experiences can strengthen the connection between educational objectives and students' preparation for their future responsibilities.[7]

In Indonesian Islamic educational settings, research has examined the internalization of values through Islamic religious instruction and the development of character through educational practices. Serly, Khozin, and Hakim investigated the internalization of environmental values through Islamic religious education at the junior secondary level,[8] while Ikhram et al. examined character-building approaches in Islamic boarding schools in Aceh Besar.[9] Nevertheless, integrating these principles into Islamic elementary education presents curricular challenges when learning activities emphasize cognitive outcomes and teacher-directed instruction without providing systematic opportunities to develop practical independence. Life skills activities may also remain fragmented when they are not connected with learning objectives, assessment, character formation, and students' daily routines. These considerations highlight the importance of developing an integrated curriculum that connects knowledge, Islamic values, and practical competencies with students' everyday educational experiences.

The issue becomes increasingly relevant when considered from the perspective of Aqil Baligh, an Islamic concept combining sound mental capacity (*aqil*) and the attainment of puberty (*baligh*) as conditions of religious accountability. This legal-religious threshold should be distinguished from practical independence, which develops progressively through age-appropriate experiences. Marwan similarly distinguishes the legal threshold of puberty from a child's capacity for independent living, particularly in discussions of parental support.[10] From an educational perspective, preparation for increasing responsibility can be introduced

with Local Content to Strengthen the Moral Character Religio-Cultural Adaptivity of Elementary School Students," *Eduprof : Islamic Education Journal* 8, no. 1 (April 28, 2026): 40–55, https://doi.org/10.47453/eduprof.v8i1.462; Muhammad Alief Al Mukhlisin, Saifullah Idris, and Mumtazul Fikri, "Pembinaan Karakter Religius Pada Peserta Didik Di MIN 10 Kota Banda Aceh," *Jurnal Ilmiah Guru Madrasah* 4, no. 1 (June 30, 2025): 146–54, https://doi.org/10.69548/jigm.v4i1.41.

[6] Mutmoza Filiansi et al., "Peran Guru Dalam Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter Di Sekolah Dasar," *Jurnal Basicedu* 8, no. 3 (May 30, 2024): 1781–92, https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v8i3.7454.

[7] Jennifer M Jacobs, Paul M Wright, and K Andrew R Richards, "Students' Perceptions of Learning Life Skills Through the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility Model: An Exploratory Study," *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living* 4 (May 27, 2022), https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2022.898738.

[8] Ayunda Serly, Khozin Khozin, and Rahmad Hakim, "Internalising Environmental Values through Islamic Religious Education in Junior High School," *Halaqa: Islamic Education Journal* 9, no. 1 (June 11, 2025): 149–64, https://doi.org/10.21070/halaqa.v9i1.1724.

[9] Ikhram Ikhram et al., "Taghyir within Character Building of The Islamic Traditional School Students in Aceh Besar," *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 23, no. 2 (August 1, 2023): 327, https://doi.org/10.22373/jiif.v23i2.17167.

[10] Marwan Marwan, "Batas Usia Nafkah Anak Berdasarkan Maqāṣid Al-Syarī'Ah," *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 13, no. 2 (February 1, 2014): 230–49, https://doi.org/10.22373/jiif.v13i2.74.

gradually through age-appropriate routines, discipline, and habituation, as also reflected in research on character education in Islamic elementary schools.[11]

Accordingly, preparation for Aqil Baligh should not begin only when students have reached biological or religious maturity. Rather, elementary education can contribute to this preparation by gradually developing age-appropriate competencies related to responsibility, self-management, discipline, worship, social interaction, and decision-making.[12] Such preparation does not mean imposing adult responsibilities on children prematurely. Instead, preparation for increasing responsibility involves developmentally appropriate learning experiences that strengthen students' capacity to regulate their learning and manage academic tasks with progressively less external guidance.[13]

The integration of Aqil Baligh values with life skills education therefore provides a potentially distinctive approach to Islamic elementary education. Life skills provide the practical dimension of independence, while Aqil Baligh provides an Islamic moral and developmental orientation for understanding why independence, responsibility, discipline, and self-management are important. Through this integration, independence can be understood not simply as the ability to perform tasks without assistance but as the gradual development of a responsible individual who understands obligations, manages personal behavior, participates constructively in social relationships, and develops spiritual awareness.[14]

Previous studies support the relevance of life skills education to the development of student independence. Nursafitri, Kurniasih, and Kurniawati also examined the conceptual application of life skills education in madrasah ibtidaiyah.[15] Utami and Habiby examined the implementation of life skills learning at SD Muhammadiyah 1 Ketelan Surakarta, highlighting the integration of practical activities into classroom learning, extracurricular programs, and

[11] Wasehudin et al., "The Paradigm of Character Education in Islamic Elementary School."
[12] Novan Ardy Wiyani, *Bina Karakter Anak Usia Dini: Panduan Orangtua & Guru Dalam Membentuk Kemandirian & Kedisiplinan Anak Usia Dini*, 2020.
[13] Jenna Christine Zatz and Judith R Harrison, "K-12 Life Skills Education, Independence, and Employment of Autistic Individuals: Giving Voice to Autistic Adults," *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* 55, no. 5 (May 3, 2025): 1673–87, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-024-06304-7; Marta Olid-Luque et al., "Impact of Self-Regulated Learning Programs in Primary Education: A Systematic Review," *Psychology in the Schools* 62, no. 3 (March 18, 2025): 734–55, https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.23352.
[14] Wahono Wahono et al., "Islamic Boarding School; Life Skill and Social Interaction Based Education to Build Student's Independence – Moderation Test," *Jurnal Konseling Dan Pendidikan* 13, no. 2 (May 19, 2025): 20–27, https://doi.org/10.29210/1148800.
[15] Laila Nursafitri, Apri Kurniasih, and Dhoni Kurniawati, "Implementasi Pendidikan Life Skills Untuk Meningkatkan Daya Saing Madrasah Aliyah Darul A'mal Lampung Timur," *INVENTA* 8, no. 1 (March 29, 2024): 66–72, https://doi.org/10.36456/inventa.8.1.a8727.

school routines.[16] Research on life skills activities in early childhood education has also examined their role in supporting children's independence.[17] Research in Islamic boarding schools has also examined how life skills objectives are incorporated into institutional curricula and related to students' preparation for independent living. [18] In Islamic elementary education, character education has also been integrated into religious practices, school routines, and extracurricular activities, illustrating how moral values can be translated into everyday educational experiences.[19] These findings collectively demonstrate that life skills education has relevance across different educational contexts.

Although previous studies have examined life skills education, character development, curriculum integration, and student independence in different educational contexts, the literature reviewed in this study offers limited discussion of how Aqil Baligh-oriented educational preparation can be translated into a structured life skills curriculum for upper-primary students. In particular, the relationship between Islamic moral responsibility, practical learning activities, and observable indicators of independence remains insufficiently developed within the studies examined. The present study addresses this curricular concern by integrating practical life skills, Islamic values, and gradual preparation for increasing responsibility into a framework organized around five dimensions of student independence. This integration provides a basis for examining how moral and religious values may be translated into developmentally appropriate activities and assessed through students' everyday educational experiences.

To operationalize this orientation, the study developed an Aqil Baligh-based life skills curriculum for Islamic elementary schools. The curriculum integrates practical life skills with Islamic values and developmental preparation through five dimensions of student independence: responsibility, time discipline, learning initiative, worship independence, and social cooperation. These dimensions were selected because independence in elementary education is multidimensional and involves both individual and social competencies. Responsibility concerns students' ability to fulfill obligations; time discipline concerns self-

[16] Siswati Dwi Utami and Wahdan Najib Habiby, "Implementasi Pembelajaran Life Skill Untuk Mengingkatkan Kemandirian Anak Di Sekolah Dasar Muhammadiyah 1 Ketelan Surakarta," *Attadib: Journal of Elementary Education* 8, no. 1 (April 29, 2024), https://doi.org/10.32507/attadib.v8i1.2745.

[17] Fiamita, Luluk, and Ayu, "Life Skill Activities To Increase The Independence Of Early Childhood."

[18] Suyono Suyono et al., "LIFE SKILLS-BASED CURRICULUM IN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS," *Journal of Comprehensive Education* 1, no. 01 (July 10, 2025): 36–44, https://doi.org/10.65426/nx5pgk53.

[19] Mansur Mansur and Makherus Sholeh, "Implementing Character Education Based on Local Wisdom in a Public Islamic Elementary School," *Journal of Integrated Elementary Education* 4, no. 1 (June 1, 2024): 54–70, https://doi.org/10.21580/jieed.v4i1.20238; Anwar Siroz, *Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Islam Untuk Meningkatkan Kedisiplinan* (Penerbit Adab, 2024).

management; learning initiative concerns active participation in learning; worship independence concerns the ability to perform religious practices with reduced dependence on external guidance; and social cooperation concerns responsible participation in collective activities.[20]

The curriculum is designed around the principle that independence develops through repeated practice, habituation, self-regulation, and meaningful responsibility. Students are therefore provided with opportunities to practice targeted competencies within regular learning activities and everyday school situations.[21] Through repeated exposure, behaviors that initially require teacher direction can gradually become more self-managed. This approach positions the teacher not simply as the source of instruction but also as a facilitator who provides appropriate guidance, opportunities for practice, feedback, and gradual reduction of external assistance.[22]

The study also responds to the broader need for transitional education in Islamic elementary schools. The transition toward adolescence involves increasing expectations regarding personal responsibility, social behavior, moral awareness, and religious practice. Elementary education can serve as an important preparatory stage by helping students develop the foundations required for this transition. In this sense, the Aqil Baligh concept is positioned in the present study as an educational orientation for gradual preparation, rather than as a claim that elementary school students have already reached the Aqil Baligh stage.

Based on this rationale, the study aims to develop an Aqil Baligh-based life skills curriculum and examine descriptive changes in student independence during its initial implementation in an Islamic elementary school context. Specifically, the study seeks to: (1) develop a life skills curriculum integrating Islamic values and preparation for increasing responsibility; (2) describe how the five dimensions of student independence are translated into learning activities and behavioral indicators; and (3) examine changes in students' recorded independence scores across the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II during the limited field trial.

The urgency of this research lies in the need to strengthen the holistic function of Islamic elementary education. Academic achievement remains an important component of education, but it is not sufficient by itself to prepare students for the practical, social, moral, and spiritual

[20] Nasratun Najiha et al., "Konsep Pendidikan Kecakapan Hidup Dalam Melatih Kemandirian Pada Anak Usia Dini," *Indonesian Journal of Early Childhood: Jurnal Dunia Anak Usia Dini* 6, no. 2 (November 15, 2024): 383–90, https://doi.org/10.35473/ijec.v6i2.3521.

[21] Liatul Rohmah et al., "Life Skills Education Program In Improving Student Independence," *International Journal of Educational Research & Social Sciences* 4, no. 1 (2023): 162–68, https://ijersc.org/index.php/go/article/view/602.

[22] Esti Nur Qorimah and Wisnu Cahyo Laksono, "Keterlibatan Guru Dalam Proses Perkembangan Kemandirian Peserta Didik Sekolah Dasar," *Jurnal Basicedu* 7, no. 3 (June 20, 2023): 1391–97, https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v7i3.5180.

responsibilities they will increasingly encounter. Students require opportunities to develop independence from an early age through experiences that are relevant to their developmental stage. Integrating life skills with Islamic values can provide a framework through which students learn not only what to do but also why responsibility and self-management are important within an Islamic moral framework.

Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions: 1) How can an Aqil Baligh-based life skills curriculum be developed for implementation in Islamic elementary schools? 2) How did the recorded levels of responsibility, time discipline, learning initiative, worship independence, and social cooperation change across the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II during the limited field trial? This study advances an integrated curriculum framework that connects practical life skills, Islamic values, and developmental preparation for increasing responsibility among upper-primary students. Its distinctive contribution lies in operationalizing Aqil Baligh as an educational orientation through five dimensions of independence, linking learning objectives and practical activities with observable behavioral indicators and assessment.

B. Literature Review

1. Life Skills Education in Islamic Elementary Schools

Life skills education refers to an educational approach that equips students with competencies needed to manage personal, academic, social, and everyday situations. Life skills are not limited to technical abilities but include the capacity to make decisions, solve problems, communicate, cooperate, regulate behavior, and take responsibility for actions.[23] In elementary education, these competencies need to be introduced through developmentally appropriate activities that allow students to learn by doing. The implementation of life skills education is particularly relevant in elementary schools because independence develops progressively through repeated experiences. Students need opportunities to practice completing tasks, managing personal routines, making simple decisions, interacting with peers, and responding to problems in their immediate environment. At the primary-school level, life skills can be incorporated into classroom routines, school responsibilities, and collaborative activities rather than delivered exclusively as separate instructional content. Research on curriculum and

[23] M Choirul Muzaini et al., "Organisasi Integrated Curriculum Dalam Implementasi Pembelajaran Berbasis Life Skill Di Sekolah Dasar," *Jurnal Paedagogy* 10, no. 2 (April 7, 2023): 598–612, https://doi.org/10.33394/jp.v10i2.7369.

learning management in vocational education further illustrates how practical competencies can be incorporated into institutional learning programs.[24]

In Islamic elementary education, life skills education has an additional dimension because practical competencies can be connected with Islamic values.[25] Responsibility, discipline, cooperation, and self-management can be understood not only as social competencies but also as expressions of moral responsibility. Consequently, the development of life skills can contribute simultaneously to students' practical competence and character formation. Previous research has examined the integration of practical life skills activities into elementary school character education. Amalia and Setiyawati, for example, investigated character-oriented life skills activities at SD Muhammadiyah 1 Candi, providing a relevant context for understanding how life skills can be incorporated into school-based character development.[26] In a vocational-school context, Malaikosa, Widyadharma, and Pangestu examined the integration of creative economy values into curriculum and learning management. Their findings illustrate an institutional approach to organizing practical competencies within learning programs, offering a contextual comparison for the curriculum integration proposed in this study.[27] Their work demonstrates that curriculum management can incorporate life skill values to strengthen students' ability to respond to changing circumstances. Thus, the present study adopts life skills not as an isolated subject but as an integrated curriculum orientation. The curriculum developed in this study translates life skills into observable competencies related to students' daily independence.

2. The Concept of Aqil Baligh in Educational Preparation

Aqil Baligh is associated with religious maturity and increasing accountability for individual actions and obligations. However, attaining religious maturity should not be equated with achieving practical independence. Marwan distinguishes maturity as a legal threshold from an individual's capacity for independent living.[28] In the present study, Aqil Baligh is therefore employed as an educational orientation for gradual preparation rather than as an indication that elementary school students have attained religious adulthood. The proposed curriculum

[24] Yes Matheos Lasarus Malaikosa, Andhika Putra Widyadharma, and Widya Trio Pangestu, "Curriculum and Learning Management: Integration of Creative Economy Value to Improve Students' Life Skill," *Jurnal Pendidikan Vokasi* 12, no. 1 (March 12, 2022): 76–85, https://doi.org/10.21831/jpv.v12i1.44253.

[25] Dastur Fadli, "Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai Tauhid Dalam Kurikulum Pendidikan Islam," *Jurnal Ilmiah Guru Madrasah* 4, no. 1 (June 30, 2025): 319–33, https://doi.org/10.69548/jigm.v4i1.72.

[26] Amalia and Setiyawati, "Implementasi Kurikulum Berbasis Karakter Melalui Kegiatan Life Skill Di SD Muhammadiyah 1 Candi."

[27] Malaikosa, Widyadharma, and Pangestu, "Curriculum and Learning Management: Integration of Creative Economy Value to Improve Students' Life Skill."

[28] Marwan, "Batas Usia Nafkah Anak Berdasarkan Maqāṣid Al-Syarī'Ah."

translates this orientation into age-appropriate opportunities to practice responsibility, discipline, self-management, worship-related routines, and social cooperation.

This distinction is important because preparation for maturity should correspond to students' developmental capacities. Elementary school education can introduce foundational habits without transferring adult-level responsibilities to children. Students can, for example, be encouraged to complete tasks independently, manage their learning schedules, maintain personal discipline, perform worship routines, and cooperate responsibly with others. In this context, Aqil Baligh becomes a future-oriented educational framework.[29] Students are prepared progressively so that independence is not suddenly expected when they enter adolescence but has already been cultivated through repeated experiences. The concept also strengthens the Islamic character of the curriculum.[30] Whereas general life skills education focuses on competencies required for effective living, the Aqil Baligh orientation connects these competencies with responsibility and moral awareness within an Islamic framework.

3. Student Independence

Student independence refers to students' capacity to carry out age-appropriate responsibilities with progressively less external direction. It involves increasing self-regulation rather than complete independence from teacher or adult assistance.[31] Within the proposed curriculum, independent behavior is reflected in completing assigned responsibilities, managing time, initiating learning activities, carrying out worship-related routines, and participating responsibly in social activities.

For the purposes of this study, student independence was operationalized through five dimensions: responsibility, time discipline, learning initiative, worship independence, and social cooperation. These dimensions were selected to represent complementary personal, academic, religious, and social aspects of independence. Responsibility and time discipline address self-management, learning initiative concerns students' active participation in learning, worship independence reflects the religious dimension, and social cooperation concerns responsible participation in relationships and collective activities. Together, the five dimensions

[29] Siti Aisyah, Mabnunah Mabnunah, and Anis Khofifatun Nafilah, "Character Development and Student Independence Through Life Skill-Based Learning," *JURNAL BIMBINGAN DAN KONSELING AR-RAHMAN* 10, no. 2 (December 27, 2024): 267–77, https://doi.org/10.31602/jbkr.v10i2.16915.

[30] Hanifah Samara and Sabrina Khairunnisa, "Teachers' Efforts in Fostering Early Childhood Independence through Life Skills–Based Learning," *Journal of Childhood and Elementary Studies* 1, no. 2 (December 18, 2025): 78–86, https://doi.org/10.64268/joces.v1i2.106.

[31] Rika Sa'diyah, "Pentingnya Melatih Kemandirian Anak," *Kordinat: Jurnal Komunikasi Antar Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam* 16, no. 1 (April 9, 2017): 31–46, https://doi.org/10.15408/kordinat.v16i1.6453.

constitute the operational framework used for curriculum development and descriptive assessment in this study.

Table 1.
Dimensions and Indicators of Student Independence

No.	Dimension	Description	Main Indicators
1	Responsibility	Students' ability to recognize and complete their assigned obligations	Completing tasks, maintaining belongings, fulfilling responsibilities
2	Time Discipline	Students' ability to organize and use time appropriately	Following schedules, arriving on time, managing learning time
3	Learning Initiative	Students' willingness to begin and sustain learning activities	Starting tasks, asking questions, seeking information, working without constant direction
4	Worship Independence	Students' ability to conduct worship-related activities with decreasing external assistance	Preparing for worship, performing worship routines, maintaining religious habits
5	Social Cooperation	Students' ability to participate responsibly in activities with others	Helping peers, participating in group work, communicating, respecting others

Source: Authors' operationalization of student independence for the present study.

The five dimensions were subsequently used as the main framework for curriculum implementation and assessment. They also provided a basis for comparing students' conditions before and during the curriculum implementation.

4. Habituation and Self-Regulation in Developing Independence

Within the proposed curriculum, independence is treated as a competency to be developed through repeated opportunities for practice rather than through a single instructional event. Habituation constitutes an important component of the proposed curriculum by providing repeated opportunities to practice responsibility, time discipline, learning initiative, and cooperation through regular educational activities.[32] Classroom routines, such as completing assigned duties, following schedules, initiating learning tasks, and collaborating with peers, provide structured opportunities for developing these competencies.[33] Through consistent practice, students become familiar with behavioral expectations and gradually carry out activities with reduced external prompting.[34]

[32] Fuadi Fuadi and Fakhrul Rijal, "Tasawuf Sebagai Pendekatan Pedagogis Dalam Pembelajaran Berbasis Nilai: Kajian Kepustakaan Dalam Pendidikan Islam," *Jurnal Ilmiah Guru Madrasah* 4, no. 2 (December 30, 2025): 460–71, https://doi.org/10.69548/jigm.v4i2.84.

[33] Andini Fajri and Ade Muqit, "Integrasi Tujuh Kebiasaan Anak Indonesia Hebat Dalam Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Di Sekolah Dasar Islam Terpadu," *Attadrib: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* 9, no. 2 (August 14, 2026): 485–96, https://doi.org/10.54069/attadrib.v9i2.1312.

[34] Fathor Rozi et al., "The 'Aku Bisa' Program; Efforts to Train Early Childhood Independence," *Jurnal Obsesi : Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* 6, no. 4 (February 23, 2022): 3218–31, https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v6i4.2067.

Self-regulation complements habituation by enabling students to monitor their behavior and carry out established routines with reduced external prompting. For example, managing a classroom schedule independently reflects greater self-regulation than following the same schedule only after repeated teacher instructions. The curriculum therefore links external guidance, repeated practice, internalization, and self-regulation to the gradual development of student independence. This progression provides the pedagogical foundation for the Aqil Baligh-oriented life skills curriculum.

5. Islamic Values and Life Skills Integration

The Aqil Baligh-based curriculum integrates practical competencies with Islamic values through observable educational activities. Responsibility is connected with *amanah* (trustworthiness and accountability in fulfilling entrusted duties), time discipline with responsible time management, learning initiative with seeking knowledge, worship independence with religious responsibility, and social cooperation with mutual assistance and respect. Studies in Indonesian elementary education have also examined the development of religious character through regular habituation activities.[35] These relationships translate Islamic educational values into practical activities and behavioral indicators, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2.
Integration of Life Skills, Islamic Values, and Curriculum Activities

Life Skills Dimension	Islamic Value Orientation	Example Learning Activity	Observable Indicator
Responsibility	Amanah and accountability	Completing assigned classroom duties	Fulfilling assigned responsibilities
Time Discipline	Responsible use of time	Following classroom schedules	Completing activities on time
Learning Initiative	Seeking knowledge	Initiating learning tasks and asking questions	Beginning tasks with reduced prompting
Worship Independence	Religious responsibility	Preparing for worship-related routines	Performing routines with less external assistance
Social Cooperation	Mutual assistance and social responsibility	Participating in group assignments	Cooperating and sharing responsibilities

Source: Authors' Aqil Baligh-based life skills curriculum framework.

[35] Ainawa Kholilatul Nurizah and Muhlasin Amrullah, "Religious Character Formation Through Islamic Habituation in Primary Education," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Studies* 12, no. 4 (October 1, 2024), https://doi.org/10.21070/ijis.v12i4.1741; Berliana Khofifah Febriyanti and Supriyadi, "Fostering Religious Character in Elementary School Students: Insights from Religious Habituation Activities," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Studies* 11, no. 3 (September 7, 2023), https://doi.org/10.21070/ijis.v11i3.1678.

This integration differentiates the proposed curriculum from a general life skills program. The objective is not merely to make students functionally independent but to cultivate independence that is consistent with the values emphasized in Islamic education.

6. Life Skills as a Transitional Education Model

The present study positions the Aqil Baligh-Based Life Skills Curriculum as a transitional education model. In the present study, the term transitional refers to the process of preparing students for increasing levels of responsibility as they move from childhood toward adolescence. The transitional model is based on three interconnected components: Islamic values and responsibility → Practical life skills → Independent behavior. Students first encounter values and expectations concerning responsibility. These values are then translated into practical activities. Through repeated practice, students gradually develop behaviors that demonstrate greater independence. The model can be summarized in the following framework:

Figure 1.
Conceptual Framework of the Aqil Baligh-Based Life Skills Curriculum



Source: Developed by the researchers based on the conceptual framework of the study.

The framework emphasizes that independence is not treated as an immediate outcome of instruction. Instead, it is understood as the result of a developmental process involving values, practical competencies, repeated practice, and self-regulation.

7. Previous Studies and Research Gap

Previous studies have examined life skills education and student independence across different educational contexts. Aisyah, Mabnunah, and Nafilah investigated life skills-based learning and its relationship to character development and student independence at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Bangkalan, a public Islamic senior secondary school in Indonesia.[36] Malaikosa, Widyadharma, and Pangestu examined the integration of creative economy values into curriculum and learning management in a vocational school,[37] while Amalia and Setiyawati studied character-oriented life skills activities in an elementary school context. Fiamita, Luluk, and Ayu conducted a systematic literature review of life skills activities and independence in

[36] Aisyah, Mabnunah, and Nafilah, "Character Development and Student Independence Through Life Skill-Based Learning."
[37] Malaikosa, Widyadharma, and Pangestu, "Curriculum and Learning Management: Integration of Creative Economy Value to Improve Students' Life Skill."

early childhood education.[38] In elementary education, Muzaini et al. examined integrated curriculum management for life skills-based learning,[39] whereas Raharjo investigated life skills education and student independence in an Islamic boarding school.[40] These studies provide relevant perspectives on practical competencies, character formation, curriculum integration, and independence. Other studies have developed elementary-level learning materials intended to strengthen student independence, including flipped-classroom learning resources and educational comics.[41] The present study builds on this literature by developing a curriculum framework that explicitly connects life skills with Aqil Baligh-oriented preparation for increasing responsibility among Islamic elementary school students. The distinction is summarized below.

Table 3.
Position of the Present Study in Relation to Previous Research

Previous Research Focus	Main Contribution	Remaining Gap	Position of Present Study
Life skills and character development	Supports independence and character development	Limited emphasis on Aqil Baligh preparation	Integrates life skills with Aqil Baligh orientation
Life skills curriculum management	Demonstrates importance of curriculum integration	Focus is broader curriculum management	Proposes a preliminary curriculum framework
Character-based life skills in elementary school	Connects life skills with character	Islamic developmental transition is not central	Integrates Islamic values and developmental preparation
Life skills and early childhood independence	Synthesizes research on life skills activities and early childhood independence.	Different age/context	Focuses on Islamic elementary school students
Integrated life skills curriculum	Connects learning with practical competence	Does not specifically address Aqil Baligh	Uses Aqil Baligh as transitional framework
Life skills in Islamic educational institutions	Examines life skills education and student independence in Islamic boarding schools.	Often focused on boarding-school context	Applies the framework to Islamic elementary education

Source: Authors' comparative synthesis

[38] Fiamita, Luluk, and Ayu, "Life Skill Activities To Increase The Independence Of Early Childhood."
[39] Muzaini et al., "Organisasi Integrated Curriculum Dalam Implementasi Pembelajaran Berbasis Life Skill Di Sekolah Dasar."
[40] Semiono Raharjo, "Pendidikan Kecakapan Hidup (Life Skill) Di Pondok Pesantren Dalam Meningkatkan Kemandirian Santri," *Edusiana: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan* 2, no. 2 (October 1, 2024): 30–42, https://doi.org/10.70437/edusiana.v2i2.676.
[41] Yutta Meira Tesalonika and Maria Melani Ika Susanti, "Pengembangan Perangkat Pembelajaran Berbasis Flipped Classroom Untuk Meningkatkan Kemandirian Pada Muatan Pelajaran IPA Di Sekolah Dasar," *Jurnal Basicedu* 7, no. 4 (August 19, 2023): 2301–14, https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v7i4.5542; Susetyo Andri Wibowo and Henny Dewi Koeswanti, "Pengembangan Media Pembelajaran Berbasis Komik Untuk Meningkatkan Karakter Kemandirian Belajar Siswa Sekolah Dasar," *Jurnal Basicedu* 5, no. 6 (October 14, 2021): 5100–5111, https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v5i6.1600.

8. Research Novelty

The study contributes an Aqil Baligh-oriented life skills curriculum framework structured around five observable dimensions of student independence. By connecting Islamic moral responsibility with practical activities, habituation, and self-regulation, the framework translates educational values into learning objectives and behavioral indicators for upper-primary students. The limited field trial further provides descriptive evidence of how student independence scores changed during the curriculum's initial implementation.

9. Conceptual Proposition

The conceptual proposition underlying this curriculum is that Islamic values become educationally meaningful when translated into age-appropriate learning activities and reinforced through habituation and self-regulation. Within this framework, responsibility, time discipline, learning initiative, worship independence, and social cooperation function as interconnected dimensions for organizing curriculum activities and assessing student behavior. This proposition guides curriculum development and provides the conceptual basis for interpreting the descriptive findings.

C. Method

1. Research Design

This study employed a research and development (R&D) approach to develop and preliminarily evaluate an Aqil Baligh-based life skills curriculum for Islamic elementary school students. The development process comprised six stages: needs analysis, curriculum design, expert review, limited field implementation, product revision, and evaluation. These stages followed the general principles of educational product development, in which identified needs inform curriculum design, review, implementation, and subsequent refinement. The limited field implementation incorporated three assessment stages: pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II. The pre-cycle assessment established a descriptive baseline, while Cycle I and Cycle II documented student independence during successive implementation stages. This procedure combined curriculum development with a single-group descriptive evaluation. The assessment was intended to identify patterns in recorded student independence rather than to establish a causal effect of curriculum implementation.

2. Research Participants

The limited field implementation involved 20 students from Grades IV–VI at one Islamic elementary school. The participants comprised 11 boys (55%) and nine girls (45%). Six

students (30%) were aged 10 years, eight (40%) were aged 11 years, and six (30%) were aged 12 years. By grade level, seven students (35%) were in Grade IV, six (30%) were in Grade V, and seven (35%) were in Grade VI. Participants were selected purposively to represent upper-primary students within the developmental range targeted by the curriculum. The field trial was conducted in a single educational setting and was intended to provide an initial account of curriculum implementation rather than statistically representative evidence concerning the wider elementary school population.

3. Development Procedure

The curriculum development process consisted of six main stages.[42]

Stage 1: Needs Analysis: The first stage involved identifying the developmental and educational needs related to student independence. Attention was given to students' responsibility, time management, learning initiative, worship-related independence, and ability to cooperate with others. Information from observation and interaction with the educational setting was used as a basis for identifying areas that required systematic development.

Stage 2: Curriculum Design: The findings from the needs analysis were used to formulate the curriculum structure. The curriculum was designed to integrate life skills with Islamic values and the developmental orientation of Aqil Baligh. The curriculum prototype comprised learning objectives, learning materials, learning activities, assessment instruments, and implementation guidelines. Learning activities were organized around practical experiences that could allow students to practice increasing levels of responsibility and independence.

Stage 3: Expert Review: The curriculum prototype underwent a formative review drawing on expertise in Islamic education, curriculum development, and elementary education. The review addressed the relevance of curriculum content, alignment between learning objectives and activities, developmental appropriateness of independence indicators, integration of Aqil Baligh values, and feasibility of classroom implementation. Feedback from the review informed the refinement of the curriculum prototype prior to the limited field trial.

Stage 4: Limited Field Implementation: The revised curriculum was implemented on a limited basis with 20 students from Grades IV–VI. Implementation was conducted through activities designed to provide opportunities for students to practice the five targeted dimensions of independence.

[42] Judijanto Loso et al., *Metodologi Research and Development (Teori Dan Penerapan Metode R&D)* (PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia, 2024).

Stage 5: Product Revision: Curriculum refinement was informed by observations and evaluation findings obtained during implementation. The revision process addressed the clarity of instructional activities, their suitability for upper-primary students, consistency of implementation, and alignment between learning activities and the five dimensions of student independence. This process supported the refinement of the curriculum framework within the limited development cycle.

Stage 6: Evaluation: The final stage involved a descriptive review of student independence across the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II. The evaluation focused on the five targeted dimensions and considered the recorded assessment results alongside information from the reported classroom observations and interviews. This evaluation was intended to inform further refinement of the curriculum.

4. Curriculum Dimensions

The developed curriculum focused on five dimensions of student independence. These dimensions were selected to represent complementary aspects of students' personal, academic, religious, and social development within the curriculum developed in this study.

a. Responsibility. Responsibility refers to students' ability to complete assigned duties, take care of their responsibilities, and demonstrate accountability for their actions. Activities related to this dimension provided opportunities for students to complete tasks, maintain personal and shared responsibilities, and recognize the consequences of their behavior.
b. Time Discipline. Time discipline refers to students' ability to organize and use time appropriately. The curriculum incorporated routines and activities intended to help students recognize schedules, complete tasks within an expected period, and develop consistency in managing daily activities.
c. Learning Initiative. Learning initiative refers to students' willingness and ability to begin, organize, and participate actively in learning activities. Rather than depending entirely on teacher instructions, students were encouraged to take increasingly active roles in preparing, carrying out, and completing learning tasks.
d. Worship Independence. Worship independence refers to students' ability to carry out age-appropriate worship-related routines with increasing personal responsibility. The emphasis was placed on habituation, awareness, consistency, and gradual independence rather than on assuming that all students had reached the religious or legal status associated with baligh.

e. Social Cooperation. Social cooperation refers to students' ability to participate constructively in group activities, communicate appropriately, share responsibilities, and contribute to collective tasks. This dimension emphasizes that independence does not mean isolation; students can act independently while remaining capable of cooperating responsibly with others.

5. Data Collection

Data collection comprised classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and structured student independence assessments. Observations focused on students' participation in classroom activities and daily routines, while interviews with teachers and school administrators and questionnaire responses provided contextual feedback on curriculum implementation and perceived practicality. The quantitative dataset consisted of dimension-level independence scores recorded for each of the 20 participating students during the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II. The assessments covered responsibility, time discipline, learning initiative, worship independence, and social cooperation, using the behavioral indicators presented in Table 1. These structured assessment records formed the basis for the descriptive statistical comparisons reported in Table 4.

6. Data Analysis

Student independence scores were analyzed descriptively across the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II. For each dimension and assessment stage, the arithmetic mean and sample standard deviation were calculated from the 20 student-level scores. Mean changes were calculated by subtracting the pre-cycle mean from the corresponding Cycle II mean. The student-level records were also compared across stages to determine the number of participants whose Cycle II scores exceeded their pre-cycle scores. The five dimensions were analyzed separately to describe patterns of responsibility, time discipline, learning initiative, worship independence, and social cooperation. Classroom observations and interview information were used to contextualize curriculum implementation. No inferential tests or causal effect estimates were used, as the analysis was intended to describe changes within a limited, single-group field trial.

7. Ethical and Research Considerations

The study involved 20 upper-primary students aged 10–12 years and focused on age-appropriate learning activities conducted within the school setting. The curriculum activities emphasized the gradual development of responsibility, self-management, religious awareness, and social cooperation through everyday educational practices. Student-level assessment

records were identified using numerical codes, and the findings were reported in aggregate form to protect participants' identities. The Aqil Baligh concept was employed as an educational orientation for developing responsibility rather than as a criterion for determining students' biological maturity or religious and legal accountability.

8. Methodological Limitation

The study provides an initial evaluation of an Aqil Baligh-based life skills curriculum within a single Islamic elementary school involving 20 students. Its descriptive design captures changes in student independence across three assessment stages and provides preliminary insights into curriculum implementation. The absence of a comparison group limits causal interpretation, while the concentration of scores near the upper end of the assessment range should be considered when interpreting the findings.

D. Result

1. Development of the Aqil Baligh-Based Life Skills Curriculum

The development process produced a preliminary Aqil Baligh-based life skills curriculum framework organized around five dimensions of student independence: responsibility, time discipline, learning initiative, worship independence, and social cooperation. The framework connects each dimension with an Islamic value orientation, practical learning activities, and observable behavioral indicators. Responsibility is associated with *amanah* and accountability, time discipline with responsible time management, learning initiative with seeking knowledge, worship independence with religious responsibility, and social cooperation with mutual assistance and responsibility toward others. These connections provide a structured basis for integrating practical competencies and Islamic values into everyday elementary school education.

The curriculum framework emphasizes repeated practice, habituation, and the gradual development of self-regulation. Rather than treating life skills as an additional subject, the proposed activities are connected with classroom responsibilities, learning routines, worship-related practices, and cooperative tasks. Teachers provide initial guidance and opportunities for practice, while students are encouraged to assume increasing responsibility for completing age-appropriate activities. In this framework, Aqil Baligh serves as an educational orientation for preparing students for greater responsibility during the transition toward adolescence. The resulting curriculum framework provides an integrated structure for incorporating practical life skills, Islamic values, and developmental preparation into upper-primary educational activities.

Formative review focused on the relevance of curriculum content, developmental appropriateness of learning activities, and alignment between instructional objectives and assessment indicators. The refinement process informed the organization of Islamic educational values, practical activities, and behavioral indicators within the five-dimension curriculum framework presented in Tables 1 and 2.

2. Curriculum Implementation and Limited Field Trial

The curriculum was implemented through a limited field trial involving 20 students from Grades IV–VI. The implementation consisted of a pre-cycle assessment followed by two implementation cycles. The pre-cycle was used to identify the students' initial level of independence. Cycle I represented the initial implementation of the developed curriculum, while Cycle II provided an opportunity to continue the implementation and observe further changes in students' independence.

The implementation focused on repeated practical experiences. Students were encouraged to complete responsibilities, manage their time, initiate learning activities, perform worship-related routines, and participate in cooperative activities with peers. Teacher feedback reported during the field trial indicated that the learning activities could be integrated into regular classroom routines and provided opportunities for students to practice the five targeted dimensions of independence. The limited field trial also provided the setting for documenting student independence across three assessment stages. The recorded scores were compared descriptively to examine changes in the five targeted dimensions during implementation.

3. Pre-Cycle Results

The pre-cycle assessment was conducted before the implementation of the Aqil Baligh-Based Life Skills Curriculum to establish a baseline of student independence across the five dimensions. The recorded mean scores were 2.095 for responsibility, 2.305 for time discipline, 2.010 for learning initiative, 2.405 for worship independence, and 2.505 for social cooperation. Learning initiative had the lowest baseline mean, whereas social cooperation had the highest. These scores provided a reference for describing changes during the subsequent implementation cycles.

4. Cycle I Results

Following the initial implementation of the developed curriculum, the recorded mean scores increased across all five dimensions. Responsibility reached 2.985, time discipline 2.885, learning initiative 3.100, worship independence 3.200, and social cooperation 3.400. Social cooperation recorded the highest mean score at this stage, followed by worship independence

and learning initiative. These descriptive results indicate an upward pattern in the recorded independence scores during the first implementation cycle.

5. Cycle II Results

The second implementation cycle was accompanied by further increases in the recorded mean scores across all five dimensions. Responsibility reached 3.800, time discipline 3.600, learning initiative 3.700, worship independence 3.895, and social cooperation 3.965. Social cooperation remained the highest-scoring dimension, followed by worship independence. All five dimensions recorded higher mean scores than those observed in the pre-cycle and Cycle I. The concentration of scores near the upper limit of the assessment scale indicates that the results should be interpreted within the descriptive scope of the limited field trial.

6. Comparison of Mean Scores

The descriptive changes in student independence across the three assessment stages are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4.
Descriptive Statistics of Student Independence Across Implementation Stages (n = 20)

Dimension	Pre-cycle M (SD)	Cycle I M (SD)	Cycle II M (SD)	Change	Higher score n/20
Responsibility	2.095 (0.083)	2.985 (0.114)	3.800 (0.092)	+1.705	20/20
Time Discipline	2.305 (0.089)	2.885 (0.114)	3.600 (0.092)	+1.295	20/20
Learning Initiative	2.010 (0.064)	3.100 (0.092)	3.700 (0.092)	+1.690	20/20
Worship Independence	2.405 (0.089)	3.200 (0.092)	3.895 (0.083)	+1.490	20/20
Social Cooperation	2.505 (0.089)	3.400 (0.092)	3.965 (0.049)	+1.460	20/20

Note: M = arithmetic mean; SD = sample standard deviation. Change = Cycle II mean minus pre-cycle mean. Higher score n/20 indicates participants whose Cycle II score exceeded their pre-cycle score.

Source: Authors' research data; descriptive statistics calculated from the 20 student-level records.

Responsibility recorded the largest mean increase from the pre-cycle to Cycle II (+1.705), followed by learning initiative (+1.690), worship independence (+1.490), social cooperation (+1.460), and time discipline (+1.295). Examination of the student-level records showed that all 20 participants recorded higher scores in every dimension at Cycle II than at baseline. The relatively small standard deviations also indicate limited variation among the recorded student scores, particularly during the final implementation cycle. Social cooperation,

for example, reached a mean of 3.965 with a standard deviation of 0.049, indicating that scores were concentrated near the upper boundary of the reported assessment range. Overall, the findings show a consistent increase in recorded independence scores across the five dimensions during curriculum implementation.

E. Discussion

The findings indicate improvements across the five assessed dimensions of student independence during curriculum implementation. Responsibility and learning initiative showed the largest mean increases, while social cooperation and worship independence recorded the highest scores at Cycle II. This pattern is consistent with the curriculum's integrated emphasis on personal responsibility, self-directed learning, religious routines, and cooperative activities. The results provide an initial basis for understanding how these dimensions developed within the participating group, although the single-group design does not permit causal attribution of the observed changes to the curriculum.

This multidimensional approach is important because an elementary school student may demonstrate independence in one area while still requiring assistance in another. For example, a student may be relatively independent in social cooperation but still require reminders to manage time or initiate learning activities. Therefore, examining several dimensions provides a more complete picture of student development. The findings are consistent with previous research emphasizing the contribution of life skills activities to independence and character development. Aisyah, Mabnunah, and Nafilah, for example, identified the relevance of life skill-based learning for character development and student independence. The present study extends this perspective by situating practical life skills within an Aqil Baligh-oriented educational framework. The recorded changes are examined across academic, personal, religious, and social dimensions, illustrating how the curriculum's multidimensional structure can be used to document student independence during implementation.

Responsibility showed an increase in its recorded mean score from 2.095 in the pre-cycle to 3.800 in Cycle II. This descriptive change indicates higher recorded performance in the responsibility dimension during the implementation period. One possible explanation is the repeated exposure to responsibility-oriented activities within the curriculum. From the perspective of the Aqil Baligh orientation, responsibility is an important foundational competency. Students need to gradually understand that their actions have consequences and that completing an obligation should not depend entirely on repeated external reminders. The

finding also supports the conceptual relationship between responsibility and independence. Independence does not simply mean performing tasks without assistance. It involves recognizing what needs to be done, initiating action, completing the task, and accepting responsibility for the outcome. The result is consistent with the life skills perspective in which practical activities are used to develop competencies needed for everyday functioning. The present curriculum strengthens this perspective by relating responsibility to Islamic values such as *amanah* and accountability.

Time discipline increased descriptively from a pre-cycle mean of 2.305 to 3.600 in Cycle II. The recorded upward pattern is compatible with the curriculum's emphasis on repeated routines and structured expectations concerning time management. Elementary students may understand the concept of time discipline but still require consistent practice to translate this understanding into behavior. The curriculum provided opportunities for students to become familiar with schedules, activity sequences, and expectations concerning completion of tasks. Repeated exposure may help students gradually internalize these routines. From the perspective of self-regulation, time discipline represents an important component of independence. Students who are able to regulate their use of time require less continuous external monitoring. This finding also supports the broader argument that life skills education should be embedded in daily learning rather than limited to theoretical instruction. Time management becomes meaningful when students are required to practice it in actual classroom situations.

Learning initiative increased from a mean score of 2.010 in the pre-cycle to 3.700 in Cycle II, representing the second-largest descriptive increase among the five dimensions. This pattern indicates higher recorded learning initiative during the implementation period. The increase suggests a shift toward more active student participation in learning. The curriculum emphasized student involvement rather than complete dependence on teacher direction. Activities that require students to begin tasks, ask questions, seek information, and participate actively can provide practical opportunities for developing initiative. Learning initiative is particularly important because it connects independence with the academic domain. A student may be responsible for completing a task but still depend heavily on the teacher to initiate every activity. Therefore, the development of initiative represents a higher level of self-directed behavior. The finding supports the integrated curriculum perspective discussed by Muzaini et al., which emphasizes the relationship between integrated curriculum organization and life skill-based learning in elementary schools.

Worship independence increased from a pre-cycle mean of 2.405 to 3.895 in Cycle II. The recorded change indicates higher worship-related independence scores during the implementation period. This dimension is particularly significant for the present study because it represents the intersection between practical independence and Islamic education. The result suggests that religious practices can also function as contexts for developing self-management. When students are encouraged to prepare for and perform worship routines with decreasing external direction, religious practice becomes an opportunity to develop both spiritual awareness and practical independence. The curriculum therefore does not separate spiritual development from life skills. Instead, worship-related activities are positioned as part of students' broader development of responsibility and self-regulation. This approach is consistent with research examining life skills within Islamic educational environments, where independence is connected with character, responsibility, and religious formation.

Social cooperation recorded the highest mean score in Cycle II, increasing from 2.505 in the pre-cycle to 3.965. The recorded change highlights the importance of examining social cooperation alongside individual forms of student independence. This pattern highlights the relevance of social cooperation as a complementary dimension of student independence, alongside individual responsibility and self-management. Students also need to be able to function responsibly within groups. Cooperation requires students to communicate, listen, share responsibilities, assist peers, and contribute to collective tasks. Thus, social cooperation represents a form of relational independence in which students can participate constructively without excessive teacher intervention. The finding is also consistent with the broader life skills perspective, which includes interpersonal and social competencies as important components of students' preparation for everyday life.

The descriptive findings are compatible with the conceptual integration of Aqil Baligh and life skills within the developed elementary school curriculum. Aqil Baligh contributes an Islamic orientation toward increasing responsibility and accountability, while life skills provide practical mechanisms through which students can practice these values. The relationship can be summarized as: Islamic Values → Practical Life Skills → Repeated Practice → Self-Regulation → Increasing Independence. This framework allows students to experience values through behavior. Responsibility is practiced through real responsibilities; discipline is developed through routines; learning initiative is developed through active participation; worship independence is practiced through religious routines; and social responsibility is

developed through cooperation. This integration represents one of the principal contributions of the developed curriculum.

The differences in recorded score changes across the five dimensions warrant closer consideration. Responsibility (+1.705) and learning initiative (+1.690) showed the largest increases, whereas time discipline (+1.295) showed the smallest. These differences indicate that the dimensions did not follow identical descriptive trajectories during implementation. Social cooperation reached the highest Cycle II mean (3.965) and showed the least variation (SD = 0.049), suggesting substantial concentration of scores near the upper end of the reported range. Future assessments should therefore distinguish students' compliance with familiar classroom routines from independently initiated behavior, particularly in dimensions where scores approach the assessment ceiling.

The conceptual contribution of this study lies in connecting life skills education, student independence, and Aqil Baligh-oriented preparation within a single curriculum framework. Life skills education provides a practical perspective on everyday competencies, while student independence emphasizes self-management and progressively reduced dependence on external guidance. The Aqil Baligh orientation adds an Islamic perspective on moral and religious responsibility during the transition toward adolescence. Bringing these perspectives together offers a structured basis for linking educational values, learning activities, and observable dimensions of independence. This conceptual integration establishes a foundation for further empirical evaluation and curriculum adaptation across different Islamic elementary school contexts.

Practically, the curriculum provides teachers with a framework for embedding independence development within daily learning activities. Rather than creating a completely separate subject, teachers can integrate the five dimensions into existing routines and activities. For example: (1) responsibility can be developed through classroom duties; (2) time discipline through schedules and task deadlines; (3) learning initiative through student-led learning activities; (4) worship independence through religious routines; (5) social cooperation through group tasks. This approach may make life skills development more feasible because it is incorporated into activities that already occur within the school environment.

F. Conclusion

This study developed and initially implemented an Aqil Baligh-oriented life skills curriculum framework integrating Islamic values, practical competencies, and preparation for

increasing responsibility among upper-primary students. The framework addresses five dimensions of student independence: responsibility, time discipline, learning initiative, worship independence, and social cooperation. In the limited field trial involving 20 students, mean scores increased across all five dimensions between the pre-cycle and Cycle II, with the largest changes recorded in responsibility (+1.705) and learning initiative (+1.690). The findings document a consistent upward descriptive pattern during implementation and illustrate how the curriculum framework was used to organize and assess independence-related learning activities in the participating school. Further evaluation using validated assessment instruments, broader educational settings, and comparative designs is needed to establish its effectiveness and wider applicability.

Acknowledgments

The authors thank the participating school, teachers, students, and all parties who supported the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Data Availability

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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