

Strategies for Developing Intrapersonal Intelligence in Early Childhood Through Role-Playing at TK Muslimat NU 089 Kepatihan, Ponorogo

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze strategies for developing intrapersonal intelligence in early childhood through role-playing activities at TK Muslimat NU 089 Kepatihan, Ponorogo. The research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation involving the kindergarten principal, classroom teachers, assistant teachers, and the children themselves as subjects of observation. Data analysis utilized the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model, comprising the stages of data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The results indicate that the strategy for developing intrapersonal intelligence is implemented through conditioning and apperception, introducing themes and roles, offering opportunities to choose roles, providing gradual guidance, using positive reinforcement, utilizing concrete media, and conducting post-play reflection. These strategies enable children to recognize their feelings and desires, express themselves, control their emotions, build confidence, and make simple decisions. The success of the strategy depends on the teacher's ability to tailor guidance to the children's individual characteristics. Role-playing serves as a learning experience that fosters the development of self-understanding in a concrete and enjoyable manner.

Keywords

Intrapersonal Intelligence, Early Childhood, Role-Playing, Teacher Strategies, Early Childhood Education



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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education represents a fundamental stage in fostering a child's holistic development. During this period, children undergo dynamic development across cognitive, linguistic, socio-emotional, moral, and physical-motor domains, as well as in their capacity for self-awareness. One crucial aspect to cultivate is intrapersonal intelligence. From the perspective of Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory, intrapersonal intelligence relates to the ability to understand one's internal state such as feelings, desires, motivations,

strengths, and limitations (Akpan, 2025). In young children, this intelligence manifests through self-awareness and emotional recognition, the ability to regulate emotional responses, an understanding of needs and desires, the display of self-confidence, the making of simple decisions, and the capacity to reflect on their experiences and behaviors.

In practice, however, the development of intrapersonal intelligence in children does not always proceed optimally. Some children still struggle to express their feelings, lack confidence in performance situations, experience rapid mood swings, rely heavily on the assistance of others, or fail to grasp their own strengths and limitations. These conditions highlight the need for teaching strategies tailored to the characteristics of young children specifically, approaches that offer concrete, enjoyable, and active learning opportunities, enabling children to learn through direct experience. Play is a natural part of a child's life (Ulfah et al., 2025). Through play, children can explore their environment, express ideas, experiment with various actions, and construct understanding based on experience. Role-playing is a particularly relevant activity in this context. It allows children to enact various characters and situations that mirror their daily lives. Through role-playing, children can express themselves, identify emotions, communicate, choose courses of action, navigate simple situations, and process their past experiences.

This context is evident in the implementation of role-playing activities at TK Muslimat NU 089 Kepatihan Ponorogo. Preliminary observations indicate that role-playing activities offer children the opportunity to choose and enact various roles, express themselves through dialogue and action, and receive teacher guidance tailored to their individual levels of confidence and readiness. Teachers also utilize concrete objects and engage in reflective conversations following the activities to help children articulate their feelings and experiences. These conditions highlight strategic practices that warrant deeper examination.

Numerous studies on role-playing have explored its impact on children's social-emotional development, language, communication, creativity, and interaction skills. However, there is still room for further study regarding strategies specifically aimed at developing intrapersonal intelligence through role-playing, particularly within the context of kindergartens (TK/RA) situated in religious community environments. This gap presents an opportunity to understand not only the benefits of role-playing but also how teachers plan, implement, facilitate, and evaluate these activities to steer the play experience toward the development of the child's self-understanding. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on pedagogical strategies for developing intrapersonal intelligence through role-playing within the specific context of TK Muslimat NU 089 Kepatihan Ponorogo. The study goes beyond merely observing changes in children's behavior; it details the processes and strategies teachers employ to create play experiences that foster self-awareness, emotional expression, independence, simple decision-making, and self-reflection.

This research focuses on teacher strategies for developing intrapersonal intelligence in early childhood through role-playing activities, encompassing planning, implementation, facilitation, and the evaluation of child development. The study aims to analyze strategies for

developing intrapersonal intelligence in early childhood through role-playing activities at TK Muslimat NU 089 Kepatihan Ponorogo.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. A qualitative approach was selected because the research focuses on gaining an in-depth understanding of strategies for developing intrapersonal intelligence in early childhood through role-playing activities including the implementation process, forms of teacher guidance, children's responses, supporting factors, and obstacles encountered during the activities (Abdussamad & Sik, 2021; Sulistiyo, 2023). A case study design was utilized because the research was conducted in depth within a single institutional context: TK Muslimat NU 089 Kepatihan Ponorogo. Through this design, the researcher could obtain a comprehensive picture of instructional practices and teacher strategies for fostering children's intrapersonal intelligence via role-playing experiences.

The research was conducted at TK Muslimat NU 089 Kepatihan Ponorogo. The site was selected due to the use of role-playing activities as part of the early childhood learning process and its relevance to the research focus. The research subjects included the kindergarten principal, classroom teachers, and assistant teachers, while the children served as the primary subjects of observation during the role-playing activities. Parents were involved as supporting informants to provide information regarding the children's behavioral habits and development outside the school environment. Informants were selected purposively based on their involvement in and knowledge of the role-playing activities and the children's development.

Data collection was carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. Direct observation of role-playing activities was conducted to identify teacher strategies and children's responses. Observed aspects included the confidence to perform, the ability to choose roles, the capacity to express feelings and desires, emotional expression, independence in taking action, and self-control. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principal, classroom teachers, and assistant teachers to gather information on planning, implementation, guidance, and evaluation, as well as the factors supporting or hindering the development of intrapersonal intelligence. Interviews with parents were conducted when necessary to corroborate information regarding the children's development and behavioral habits at home. Documentation is used to supplement data, comprising items such as modules or daily lesson plans (RPPH), child development records, assessment sheets, activity photos, and relevant instructional documents.

Data analysis employs the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model, which encompasses four stages: data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation are first collected, then selected and focused on information relevant to the research scope. Subsequently, the data are presented in a thematic narrative to reveal relationships between

findings. The final stage involves drawing and verifying conclusions iteratively by comparing various data sources.

Data validity is ensured through source triangulation, technique triangulation, time triangulation, and member checking. Source triangulation involves comparing information from the kindergarten principal, teachers, assistant teachers, and parents (where involved). Technique triangulation entails comparing results from observations, interviews, and documentation. Time triangulation is achieved by conducting observations at different times or during different activities. Finally, member checking is performed by confirming results or data interpretations with informants to ensure alignment between research findings and the information provided.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Teacher Strategies in Planning Role-Playing Activities to Develop Intrapersonal Intelligence in Early Childhood Students at TK Muslimat NU 089 Kepatihan Ponorogo

Based on interviews, observations, and documentation, the planning of role-playing activities at TK Muslimat NU 089 Kepatihan Ponorogo begins by considering children's characteristics, needs, abilities, and developmental stages. Teachers first observe children's self-awareness, emotional expression, communication, decision-making, and self-confidence before determining appropriate activities. Themes are selected from children's daily experiences, including family, school, professions, buying and selling, and community life, enabling children to connect play with familiar situations rather than merely memorize dialogue. The teacher then establishes developmental objectives, selects characters, prepares simple supporting materials, and provides opportunities for children to choose roles according to their interests and confidence levels. Before play begins, children are introduced to the theme, characters, and rules through simple explanations and examples. Children who are passive or less confident receive gradual support and roles suited to their abilities. Documentation shows that learning materials and simple props, such as costumes, household toys, tables, and chairs, are integrated into the activities. The teacher also prepares reflective questions about children's feelings, preferences, difficulties, and reasons for choosing particular roles. Thus, planning role-playing activities is intentionally directed toward developing self-awareness, emotional expression, confidence, independence, and children's ability to recognize their own responses.

The research results indicate that the teacher's strategy for planning role-play activities at TK Muslimat NU 089 Kepatihan Ponorogo is formulated with due regard for the children's conditions, characteristics, needs, and developmental stages. Teachers first observe the children's behavior during daily activities to assess their abilities regarding self-awareness, expressing feelings, communication, making simple decisions, and demonstrating self-confidence. These observations inform decisions regarding themes, characters, materials, and the specific format of the role-play activities. The chosen themes tend to relate closely to the children's own experiences such as family, school, professions,

buying and selling, and social life in their immediate environment. This connection to daily life makes it easier for children to grasp the scenarios being enacted and allows them to incorporate personal experiences into the play.

The findings also reveal that the teacher's planning process extends beyond merely selecting themes and assigning roles. Teachers prepare materials, allow children to choose roles based on their interests and confidence levels, and design reflection activities to follow the play session (Killen & O'Toole, 2023; Sheldon, 2022; Young, 2022). Children who are initially passive or lack confidence receive extra attention through a gradual approach to role assignment. Teachers do not force children to perform immediately but instead provide opportunities for them to join the activity when they feel ready (Abbott, 2021; Bess & Dee, 2023). Observations show that this planning approach fosters a more open play environment. Children have the space to voice their wishes, make choices, express their feelings, and practice making simple decisions. Documentation of the learning process also demonstrates continuity between preparation, implementation, and reflection. These findings indicate that role-play planning at TK Muslimat NU 089 Kepatihan Ponorogo aims not merely to make learning activities more engaging, but to create experiences that help children understand themselves.

The primary significance of these findings lies in how teachers transform role-play activities into experiences centered on self-discovery. Children are not cast merely as passive recipients of instructions who simply follow teacher-prescribed characters or dialogue. Children are given the opportunity to make choices, experiment, express their feelings, and respond based on their understanding of the play situation (Musthofiyyah et al., 2025; Utami et al., 2022). This active role played by the child establishes a strong link between role-playing activities and the development of intrapersonal intelligence. Planning that takes into account each child's unique characteristics demonstrates that fostering intrapersonal intelligence cannot be achieved through a one-size-fits-all approach. Children who are highly confident require space to explore more complex roles, whereas those who are shy need gradual support. Teachers identify these differences through observation and subsequently translate them into appropriate instructional strategies. The pedagogical implication is that role-playing strategies become more meaningful when teachers tailor the play experience to the individual child's readiness.

Another significant finding is the role of reflection within activity planning. Questions regarding feelings, experiences, challenges, and the reasons behind a child's choice of role provide an opportunity for the child to focus on their internal experiences. While the play activity itself constitutes an external experience, reflective conversation helps the child connect that experience to their own inner state. This pattern reveals that the development of intrapersonal intelligence unfolds through a holistic sequence of experiences: the child experiences, expresses, recognizes, and subsequently discusses the experience.

The research findings are strongly linked to Howard Gardner's concept of intrapersonal intelligence within his Theory of Multiple Intelligences. Gardner defines

intrapersonal intelligence as the ability to understand one's internal aspects, including feelings, desires, motivations, strengths, and limitations (Akpan, 2025; Garavito, 2024; Morgan, 2021). In the context of early childhood, this ability does not yet manifest as complex reflection; rather, self-understanding is primarily observed through simple actions such as selecting activities, expressing desires, recognizing feelings, demonstrating courage, and responding to experiences (Armesto Arias et al., 2025; Ng & Sun, 2022).

The strategies employed by teachers at TK Muslimat NU 089 Kepatihan Ponorogo demonstrate how this concept is applied in the classroom. When teachers allow children to choose roles that interest them, the children gain experience in recognizing their own preferences. When teachers provide space for children to express their feelings after play, the children learn to attend to their internal states. When children are given the opportunity to try out roles incrementally, they gain insight into their own capabilities and limitations. These findings indicate that Gardner's concept of intrapersonal intelligence can be translated into concrete learning experiences that resonate with a child's world. This connection is further evidenced by the selection of themes closely related to the children's own experiences. Themes such as family, school, professions, and buying and selling create familiar scenarios, allowing children to link play with their personal lives. Children do not merely enact characters; they also bring their own understandings, emotions, and experiences into the play. This process creates space for children to recognize how they respond to various situations.

Gardner's concept is further reinforced by Erik Erikson's perspective on psychosocial development, particularly regarding the development of autonomy and initiative. Opportunities to choose roles, make simple decisions, perform, and engage in activities without constant reliance on the teacher serve as experiences that foster the development of autonomy in children (de Carvalho & Veiga, 2022; Rai, 2022; Tettey et al., 2023). The opportunity to assume a role and initiate action during play also fosters the development of initiative. Field observations indicate that teachers do not take over the entire play process; instead, they provide assistance when necessary while allowing children to experience the process of making choices and experimenting. This pattern reinforces the understanding that the development of intrapersonal intelligence in early childhood requires a learning environment that offers a sense of security while simultaneously providing children with the space to act.

The findings of this study align with Zahra et al. (2024), demonstrating that micro-role-play facilitated through teacher planning, implementation, and evaluation can stimulate children's intrapersonal intelligence, particularly regarding self-awareness, emotional expression, and the understanding of personal capabilities (Zahra et al., 2024). Findings from TK Muslimat NU 089 Kepatihan Ponorogo reinforce this through theme planning, role selection, adjustments based on children's confidence levels, and reflection. Consistency is also observed with the work of Krisyanti et al. (2024) regarding the development of emotional recognition and management skills through role-play (Krisyanti et al., 2024). This

study further notes that the process requires preparation during the planning stage, involving the observation of children's characteristics and the design of appropriate play experiences. The findings of Fitri et al. (2025) concerning the importance of teacher sensitivity to individual child characteristics are also reflected in the gradual assignment of roles and performance opportunities. This study distinguishes itself by emphasizing role-play planning strategies as a means to foster children's intrapersonal experiences (Fitri et al., 2025).

Theoretically, the findings reinforce the perspectives of Gardner and Erikson, suggesting that self-understanding, autonomy, and initiative can develop through direct experience. Practically, teachers need to select contextual themes, offer role choices, tailor challenges to children's readiness, and incorporate reflection into the activities. Schools can provide support by creating flexible play environments and utilizing simple materials. Role-play serves as a space for children to discover themselves through experience, while teachers guide these experiences to ensure they yield developmental value.

Implementation of Role-Playing Activities to Develop Intrapersonal Intelligence in Early Childhood at TK Muslimat NU 089 Kepatihan Ponorogo

Based on interviews, observations, and documentation, role-playing activities at TK Muslimat NU 089 Kepatihan Ponorogo are conducted in stages according to children's conditions and characteristics. The activity begins with classroom preparation and an introductory discussion about the selected theme. The teacher then introduces the situation, characters, and rules using simple language before allowing children to choose or accept roles such as family members, teachers, doctors, merchants, customers, and police officers. During the activity, children are not required to follow rigid scripts. Instead, they are encouraged to express characters through their own words, facial expressions, and body movements. Shy or passive children receive gradual encouragement through praise, simple questions, and verbal support. When conflicts occur over roles or play equipment, the teacher guides children to express their wishes and find solutions together rather than immediately resolving the problem. The activities use concrete materials such as costumes, toy household equipment, tables, chairs, and other props. The teacher observes children's confidence, role selection, emotional expression, rule adherence, and self-regulation. After playing, reflection is conducted through questions about feelings, preferences, difficulties, and experiences. The findings indicate increased confidence, emotional expression, independence, and simple decision-making. Thus, role-playing functions as a meaningful learning experience for developing children's intrapersonal intelligence.

Research findings indicate that role-playing activities at TK Muslimat NU 089 Kepatihan Ponorogo are conducted in stages tailored to the children's characteristics. Teachers first build readiness through preparatory conditioning and activating prior knowledge, then introduce the theme, characters, situation, and game rules using simple language. Children are given the opportunity to choose or accept roles such as family members, teachers, doctors, merchants, police officers, and various other professions. During

play, teachers allow children the space to express their roles based on their own understanding. Dialogue is not rigidly scripted, enabling children to use words, expressions, gestures, and actions naturally. Children who are still shy are not immediately forced to perform but are encouraged through praise, simple questions, and verbal support. Teachers also observe the children's confidence in performing, their ability to choose roles, express feelings, follow rules, and manage emotions. When conflicts arise regarding role choices or the use of props, children are guided to articulate their wishes and seek a mutually agreeable solution.

The use of concrete objects such as professional attire, toy household items, tables, and chairs helps create a play environment that mirrors the children's real-life experiences. Following the activity, teachers facilitate reflection through conversations about feelings, experiences, challenges, and the aspects of the game the children enjoyed most. Some children are able to articulate their feelings, their reasons for choosing specific roles, and their experiences. These findings demonstrate that role-playing serves not merely as a recreational activity but as a learning experience that provides children with the opportunity to discover and express themselves.

The primary significance of the research findings lies in the capacity of role-play to provide children with concrete experiences for understanding themselves through action. Young children find it easier to express their feelings, desires, and thoughts through direct experience rather than abstract explanations (Killen & O'Toole, 2023; Sheldon, 2022; Young, 2022). When children choose a role, perform confidently, experience joy, or signal discomfort, they are building an initial understanding of their own internal states (Abbott, 2021; Bess & Dee, 2023). This development unfolds through the experiences of making choices, navigating simple situations, managing responses, and discussing the experience afterward. The teacher's role is crucial; rather than taking over the entire activity, the teacher provides support tailored to the child's needs. Post-play reflection further reinforces this process by directing the child's attention to the feelings, choices, and experiences they have just undergone. Thus, intrapersonal intelligence develops through a process of experiencing, expressing, recognizing, controlling, and reflecting on the self.

These research findings align with Howard Gardner's concept of intrapersonal intelligence within his Theory of Multiple Intelligences. Intrapersonal intelligence relates to the ability to understand one's internal world, including feelings, desires, motivations, strengths, and limitations. A child's ability to choose a role, communicate desires, express joy or discomfort, and recount experiences after playing demonstrates early forms of insight into this internal world (Armesto Arias et al., 2025; Ng & Sun, 2022). Erik Erikson's perspective offers additional insight through the developmental stages of autonomy versus shame and doubt and initiative versus guilt. Opportunities to choose roles and act independently foster a sense of autonomy, while chances to experiment, perform, and make decisions support the development of initiative. When teachers appreciate a child's efforts, they create a safe environment for trying new things without the fear of making mistakes (de Carvalho &

Veiga, 2022; Rai, 2022). Consequently, Gardner and Erikson provide complementary perspectives: Gardner elucidates the development of internal capabilities, whereas Erikson highlights the importance of opportunities to choose, experiment, and take initiative. Role-playing serves as a pedagogical space that enables children to discover themselves while developing courage and independence through concrete experiences suited to their world.

The findings of this study align with Azizah and Eliza (2021), demonstrating that role-playing can serve as an enjoyable learning approach when supported by teachers and parents (Azizah & Eliza, 2021). At TK Muslimat NU 089 Kepatihan Ponorogo, teacher support is evident through the introduction of themes, the provision of examples, encouragement for children who are still shy, and appreciation of the children's efforts. These findings also concur with Ismaiyah (2022), indicating that role-playing provides hands-on experience for developing socio-emotional skills. Children learn to articulate their wishes, follow rules, manage their feelings, and navigate differences with their peers (Ismaiyah, 2022).

A further connection is found in the work of Zahra et al. (2024) regarding micro role-playing as a means to stimulate intrapersonal intelligence. Teacher involvement spanning from preparation to reflection is also a shared feature of the current study. Its distinctiveness lies in the opportunities afforded to children to select characters, freely display expressions, and recount their experiences after the play session (Zahra et al., 2024). These findings align with Krisyanti et al. (2024), confirming that role-playing assists children in recognizing and managing emotions. Fitri et al. (2025) also emphasize the importance of teacher sensitivity to children's individual characteristics, demonstrated through the use of themes relevant to the children's lives, concrete media, and guidance tailored to each child's readiness (Fitri et al., 2025). This study clarifies that role-playing is not merely about social or communication skills; it also creates a space for children to gain self-awareness, make choices, express feelings, control responses, build courage, and reflect on their experiences.

Theoretically, these findings reinforce the perspectives of Gardner and Erikson, suggesting that self-understanding, choice, initiative, and independence can develop through concrete experiences. Practically, teachers need to design role-playing activities purposefully by offering role choices, utilizing simple media, providing opportunities in a gradual manner, and facilitating reflection after the activity. Schools need to provide an environment that is safe and fosters teacher creativity, while parents can reinforce the practice of recognizing feelings, expressing desires, making choices, and acting independently at home. Future research could examine child development on an individual and longitudinal basis to gain a deeper understanding of changes in self-awareness, emotional regulation, self-confidence, independence, and self-reflection.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for the Development of Children's Intrapersonal Intelligence Through Role Playing Activities at Muslimat NU 089 Kepatihan Ponorogo Kindergarten

Based on interviews, observations, and documentation, several factors support the development of children's intrapersonal intelligence through role-playing activities at TK Muslimat NU 089 Kepatihan Ponorogo. The main supporting factor is the teacher's ability to design and facilitate activities according to children's characteristics and developmental needs. Teachers provide opportunities for children to choose roles, express opinions and feelings, and make simple decisions while offering flexible assistance to those who remain hesitant. A supportive learning environment and concrete play media also help create realistic and engaging situations. Peer interaction encourages less confident children to participate, while reflection activities allow children to discuss their feelings and experiences. Parental support further strengthens these practices through independence and emotional-expression habits at home. However, several obstacles remain, particularly differences in children's characteristics and developmental levels. Some children are confident, while others are shy, passive, or reluctant to perform certain roles. Limited time may prevent all children from receiving equal opportunities to perform, while limited media require children to share play equipment. Some children are also easily distracted or struggle to regulate emotions. Teachers address these challenges through gradual participation, role rotation, appropriate role selection, prompting questions, positive reinforcement, and continued observation. Thus, successful development depends on adaptive teacher support that responds to individual needs.

Research findings indicate that the development of children's intrapersonal intelligence through role-playing activities at TK Muslimat NU 089 Kepatihan Ponorogo is influenced by the interplay between teacher competence, the learning environment, peer interactions, reflection activities, and parental support. The most prominent factor is the teacher's ability to design, manage, and facilitate activities in alignment with the children's characteristics and readiness. Teachers do not apply a uniform approach; children who are already confident are given the opportunity to assume roles and decide on actions, while those who are still hesitant receive gradual assistance. This guidance creates space for children to act independently without feeling abandoned when facing difficulties.

The learning environment also supports the development of intrapersonal intelligence (Albar & Mardiana, 2024). The classroom and available objects are utilized to create a play atmosphere that mirrors daily life. Professional props, toy household items, tables, chairs, and simple materials help children understand the scenarios being enacted. The use of concrete objects fosters greater enthusiasm, as children can touch, select, and use them directly. These findings demonstrate that developing intrapersonal intelligence does not always require complex materials; a safe environment that allows children to move, experiment, make choices, and express themselves can constitute a meaningful learning experience.

Peer interaction serves as another supporting factor. Confident children can indirectly set an example for peers who remain passive. Through these situations, children have the opportunity to recognize their own emotional responses during interactions such as

confidence, shyness, happiness, disappointment, or discomfort. Post-play reflection activities reinforce this process. Teachers invite children to discuss their feelings, experiences, challenges, and the aspects of the game they enjoyed. These simple conversations help children begin to connect their play experiences with their own internal states. Parental support, through the cultivation of habits at home, further strengthens children's ability to recognize emotions, express desires politely, and perform simple tasks independently. On the other hand, the study identified several obstacles, particularly differences in children's personalities and developmental stages, time constraints, limited resources, and behaviors such as easy distractibility or emotional reactions when desires were not met. Not all children possess the same level of confidence or ability to express themselves. Consequently, teachers employed strategies such as rotating roles, selecting roles based on a child's readiness, asking prompting questions, providing opportunities incrementally, and using positive reinforcement. Post-activity observations served as the basis for identifying children who required further stimulation.

In summary, supporting and inhibiting factors do not exist in isolation; rather, they shape the dynamics involving the teacher, the child, the environment, and the play activities. The teacher acts as a bridge, enabling simple resources to be utilized meaningfully. Children who lack confidence do not necessarily require more instructions; instead, they need a sense of security, opportunities to observe their peers, appropriate role choices, and non-coercive encouragement. Thus, flexibility in guidance is a crucial principle, ensuring that every child finds the developmental space suited to their specific needs.

The research findings align with Howard Gardner's concept of intrapersonal intelligence. Intrapersonal intelligence relates to an individual's ability to understand their internal state, including their feelings, desires, strengths, and limitations. Through role-playing activities, children gain concrete experiences in recognizing these aspects. When a child chooses to play the role of a doctor, teacher, merchant, or family member, that choice reflects their personal preferences and comfort levels. Conversely, when a child selects a simpler role due to a lack of confidence in performing, it demonstrates their ability to recognize their own comfort boundaries (Akpan, 2025; Garavito, 2024; Morgan, 2021). Providing flexible support further fosters this development. Children who are hesitant are given opportunities to observe, try things out in small groups, take on simple roles, and gradually become more active participants. These experiences help children understand that perceived limitations need not be hidden; rather, they can be acknowledged and addressed through repeated experience.

Findings regarding emotional recognition and control also reinforce the connection to Gardner's theory. When a child feels disappointed about not getting a desired role, struggles with using materials, or feels uncomfortable performing, an opportunity arises to recognize their emotional responses. Teachers then assist the child in expressing their wishes and finding solutions. Thus, self-regulation develops through real-life experiences within play activities. Erik Erikson's perspective offers further support through the concepts of

autonomy versus shame and doubt, and initiative versus guilt. Opportunities to make choices and perform simple actions teach children that they are capable of making decisions and acting independently. Meanwhile, opportunities to experiment, perform, and participate in play activities foster the development of initiative. Teacher appreciation for a child's efforts creates a safe environment for trying new things, even when the outcome is not yet perfect (de Carvalho & Veiga, 2022; Rai, 2022; Tettey et al., 2023).

In this way, Gardner and Erikson provide complementary perspectives. Gardner explains what develops within the child specifically, the ability to recognize their own feelings, desires, capabilities, and responses. Erikson highlights the importance of opportunities to make choices, experiment, and take initiative in child development. Research findings indicate that role-playing provides a tangible space for these processes through learning experiences that align with children's characteristics and their world.

These findings align with Agustiani (2022), who emphasizes the significance of the learning environment, interaction, communication, cooperation, and conflict management in developing children's abilities (Agustiani, 2022). Similar conditions were observed at TK Muslimat NU 089 Kepatihan Ponorogo, where children interacted with peers, navigated differing preferences, and learned to manage their responses during role-play activities. These findings also relate to Kholishoh et al. (2026), showing that role-playing supports the development of interpersonal intelligence through interaction and understanding others. In this study, social interaction also served as a space for children to recognize internal experiences such as shyness, happiness, disappointment, courage, and desires (Kholishoh et al., 2026).

Further connections are evident in the work of Zahra et al. (2024) and Krisyanti et al. (2024), who identify role-playing as an activity that stimulates intrapersonal intelligence specifically self-awareness and emotional management (Krisyanti et al., 2024; Zahra et al., 2024). Field findings reinforce this through the provision of role choices, flexible guidance, positive reinforcement, individual observation, and post-play reflection. Fitri et al. (2025) also underscore the importance of teacher sensitivity to each child's unique characteristics (Fitri et al., 2025). This study expands upon previous findings by demonstrating that the success of such stimulation depends on a combination of factors: teacher competence, the learning environment, educational media, peer interaction, reflection, and family support. Challenges such as differing personality traits, limitations regarding time and media, and difficulties with emotional regulation require attention during the implementation of these activities. Theoretically, these findings reinforce Gardner's view that intrapersonal intelligence develops through the experience of recognizing one's own feelings, desires, and abilities. Erikson's perspective is also evident in opportunities for children to choose roles, make simple decisions, and build independence. Practically, teachers need to tailor their guidance to the child's readiness, utilize simple materials, provide opportunities in a gradual manner, and facilitate reflection. Schools and parents need to ensure continuity in stimulation by fostering habits of recognizing feelings, expressing desires, making choices,

and acting independently. Future research could examine the development of intrapersonal intelligence on an individual and longitudinal basis.

CONCLUSION

Based on research regarding the implementation of role-playing activities to develop intrapersonal intelligence in early childhood students at TK Muslimat NU 089 Kepatihan Ponorogo, it can be concluded that these activities were conducted in stages, tailored to the children's characteristics and readiness. The process began with setting the stage, apperception, introducing themes and characters, role selection, the actual role-play, teacher guidance, and reflection. Children were given the opportunity to choose roles, express feelings, make simple decisions, and directly engage with the scenarios. Factors supporting the development of intrapersonal intelligence included the teacher's ability to provide flexible guidance, a supportive learning environment, the availability of concrete materials, peer support, reflection activities, and parental involvement. Challenges encountered included differences in children's personalities and developmental levels, time constraints, limited materials, and difficulties some children faced in emotional regulation and maintaining attention. Teachers addressed these issues through role rotation, providing opportunities in stages, using prompting questions, offering positive reinforcement, and conducting individual observations. Role-playing activities provided a space for children to develop self-awareness, recognize and express emotions, build self-confidence, foster independence, manage their responses, and reflect on their experiences. These role-playing activities served as a learning experience that naturally supported the development of intrapersonal intelligence in a manner suited to the world of children.

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