

## Implementing Character Education through Habituation Activities in Elementary Schools

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### Abstract:

*Character education must be instilled from an early age in children. the formation of character in children begins while they are still in the womb, until they are born and grow up in their surrounding environment. The roles of those closest to them greatly influence a child's character, including the parenting roles of parents, teachers, and the people in the child's developmental environment. The scope of the study is about the implementation of character program that applied to students, the character values produced, and the character evaluations which was conducted at SD Plus Rahmat Kota Kediri. This research used qualitative method by using data collection techniques of interview, observation, and documents, with the model analysis interactive techniques. The Novelty of this research is the character habituation program implemented during intra-curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities. The values of character that are implemented include religiousness, curiosity, social care, discipline, and creativity. The evaluation is conducted by holding tiered class meetings and teacher training workshop programs. This research is expected to serve as a source of reference and study for the application of practices related to character habituation among students, also becomes an alternative policy applied in schools related to the character building program of students.*

### Abstrak:

Pendidikan karakter harus ditanamkan sejak usia dini pada anak-anak. Pembentukan karakter pada anak dimulai ketika mereka masih dalam kandungan, hingga mereka lahir dan tumbuh di lingkungan sekitarnya. Peran orang-orang terdekat sangat mempengaruhi karakter anak, termasuk peran orang tua, guru, dan orang-orang di lingkungan perkembangan anak. Ruang lingkup penelitian ini adalah tentang pelaksanaan program karakter yang diterapkan kepada siswa, nilai-nilai karakter yang dihasilkan, dan evaluasi karakter yang dilakukan di SD Plus Rahmat Kediri. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data wawancara, observasi, dan dokumen, dengan model analisis teknik interaktif. Novelty pada penelitian ini adalah program pembiasaan karakter yang diterapkan selama kegiatan intrakurikuler, ko-kurikuler, dan ekstrakurikuler. Nilai-nilai karakter yang diterapkan termasuk keagamaan, rasa ingin tahu, kepedulian sosial, disiplin, dan kreativitas. Evaluasi dilakukan dengan mengadakan pertemuan kelas bertingkat dan program pelatihan guru. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat menjadi sumber referensi dan studi untuk penerapan praktik-praktik terkait pembiasaan karakter di kalangan siswa, serta menjadi kebijakan alternatif yang diterapkan di sekolah-sekolah terkait program pembentukan karakter siswa.

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## INTRODUCTION

Character is a trait that must be possessed by every student. Character strengthening in each curriculum undergoes renewal. In the 2013 curriculum, it was known as Character Education Strengthening (PPK), which includes eighteen characters that should be possessed by students. Character strengthening in the Merdeka Curriculum is carried out through the Pancasila Student Profile (Sholikin & Prasetyo, 2023). Character education should be instilled from an early age in children. The formation of character in children begins from when they are still in the womb, continuing until they are born and grow in their surrounding environment (Wahyuni & Putra, 2020). The role of those closest to them significantly influences the child's character, including the parenting role of parents, teachers, and people in the child's growing environment (Feranina & Komala, 2022).

Character education has emerged and become an important issue in the field of education today, stemming from the view that it is necessary to reorganize and reposition character as the soul or deepest dimension of national education alongside intellectuality, which is reflected in competence. With strong and resilient character along with high competence, produced by good education, various needs, challenges, and new demands can be met or overcome. Therefore, besides the development of intellectuality, character development of students is very important in Indonesia's national education system. It is said this way because essentially, education aims to develop the intellectual and character potentials of students so that they become virtuous individuals (Noviansah, 2020).

Issues regarding poor character in children have become more frequent lately. Children are growing into the millennial generation, Generation Z in the era of the fourth industrial revolution. They can easily access anything with the sophistication of today's technology. There are certainly positive and negative sides as a consequence of this era of digitalization. However, recent events have shown that many outcomes tend to be negative. This occurs due to a lack of knowledge and the role of character formation among children with the people around them (Rahman et al., 2023a).

Many cases of low character among children are shown every day on our screens. Starting from drug use, anarchic acts, sexual abuse, and other cases (Hafidz et al., 2025). Character education is the answer to all of this. Producing a generation that is intellectually smart must also be balanced with spiritual intelligence (Solihah et al., 2024). Character education is more directed towards instilling values that are built within the child.

The instillation of these values can be realized starting from the habits practiced by parents at home, as well as the habits practiced by teachers and all parties within the school. The role of the school as a second home for children plays a significant part in instilling these character values (Asih & Sunarso, 2020). Now, all educational institutions are competing to create programs for instilling character education in students (Purnaningtyas & Fauziati, 2022).

Habit is part of behavioristic learning theory. Learning is a change in behavior as a result of the interaction between stimulus and response. A person is considered learning if he can show changes in his behavior. Habituation activities in programmed learning can be carried out with special planning within a certain time, to develop personal learners individually, in groups, and or classically. The habituation activities of students that are carried out without being programmed, they can be carried out with routine activities, activities that are carried out spontaneously, and activities by exemplary (Fitriyani &

Meilina, 2021).

The research results on the Life Based Learning model in Islamic primary education institutions in Kediri show that the implementation of transformative Islamic education plays an important role in shaping students' character through various habituation activities integrated into intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities. This learning model places real life at the center of the learning experience, so that students not only acquire academic knowledge but also become accustomed to implementing Islamic values in their daily behavior. Through routine religious activities such as congregational prayer, Qur'an recitation, Islamic character mentoring, charity programs, and social service activities, students are trained to develop discipline, responsibility, honesty, empathy, and cooperation (Marita Lailia Rahman et al., 2025).

In intracurricular learning activities, teachers integrate Islamic values into every subject and encourage contextual learning that connects knowledge with students' real-life experiences. Co-curricular programs strengthen students' understanding through projects, collaborative assignments, and reflective activities that foster critical thinking and social awareness. Meanwhile, extracurricular activities such as scouting, Islamic arts, sports, and student organizations become strategic media for developing leadership, independence, and communication skills. The implementation of Life Based Learning also creates a learning environment that emphasizes exemplary behavior, positive school culture, and close collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community in supporting students' moral development. As a result, transformative Islamic education not only contributes to cognitive achievement but also forms students who possess noble character, spiritual awareness, social sensitivity, and the ability to adapt positively to the challenges of contemporary life.

Previous research has extensively discussed character education through lecture methods, curriculum integration, or conceptual value reinforcement. The evaluation of character habituation practices in elementary schools has not been studied in depth and contextually. This study reinforces previous research by providing a concrete model of character habituation practices at SD Plus Rahmat Kota Kediri that is measurable and can be replicated in other schools.

SD Plus Rahmat is one of the educational institutions in the city of Kediri. SD Plus Rahmat has many programs for character building. The habits that are implemented start from the beginning when they arrive until the end of learning. The values instilled are very diverse, ranging from discipline, cleanliness, care, religiousness, and many more character values that are instilled in the students.

These characters are instilled while they are at school both during learning activities and outside of learning activities. The school also collaborates with parents to monitor the character of students while at home. The instillation of character values at SD Plus Rahmat has a positive impact on the daily lives of students both at home and at school.

With this description, the researcher is interested in investigating further regarding the instillation of character education through habituation activities among students at SD Plus Rahmat in Kediri City. This research is expected to contribute to the field of education in instilling character values through habituation programs as an effort by educational institutions to guide students' characters to become better.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The researchers used a qualitative research approach with a case study type of research. The goal of this qualitative research is to describe the empirical reality behind the phenomenon in depth, detail, and thoroughly. Therefore, the use of a qualitative approach in this research is to match the empirical reality with the applicable theory using a descriptive method (Moleong, 2004). The researchers want to describe in depth the instilling of character values through habituation activities for students by matching existing realities with applicable theories.

The data collection techniques in this research used participant observation, in-depth interviews, and the utilization of documents. The researcher observed and participated in the activities being studied. The researcher saw and listened to what the teachers did in guiding the students, the learning activities in the classroom as well as outside the classroom related to instilling character education through habituation activities. The researcher conducted interviews with informants based on the focus of the study and utilized documents related to habitual activities in instilling character education for students at SD Plus Rahmat in Kediri City.

Researchers used the interactive model analysis technique from Miles and Huberman, which divides the analysis activities into four parts: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or data verification (A Michael Huberman, 1984). Researchers collected data related to the research focus using previously mentioned techniques. All results of interviews, observations, and documentation at SD Plus Rahmat Kota Kediri were gathered for further processing in the data reduction process. Researchers performed data reduction by sharpening, classifying, categorizing, and discarding unnecessary data, or organizing data according to the research focus so that final conclusions could be formulated, summarizing and compiling. Researchers carried out this activity continuously until the research concluded.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Implementation of Character Education through Habituation at SD Plus Rahmat Kota Kediri**

#### **Intracurricular Activities**

The habituation of character with habituation activities implemented at SD Plus Rahmat in Kediri City is carried out through main activities in the teaching and learning process at the school. These activities are conducted in the classroom according to the applicable curriculum. The aim is to achieve the learning objectives that have been set.

The educators at this school have the responsibility to set learning goals, design materials, select appropriate methods and media, and conduct ongoing evaluations during the learning process. The habituation implemented to shape character begins with the consistent implementation of values. Activities such as 5S 1J are included. Learning at this school is also presented in a learning and playing environment based on Islamic values while still paying attention to aspects of activity, creativity, innovation, effectiveness, and enjoyment in the learning process.

#### **Co-curricular Activities**

Character habituation through habituation activities at SD Plus Rahmat Kota Kediri is carried out through co-curricular activities that support intracurricular activities. The aim

is to deepen students' understanding of the material being studied. The forms of these activities include additional assignments, projects, or other activities relevant to the subjects.

The educators at this school use various techniques in teaching. The teacher invites students to engage in learning activities outside the classroom and utilizes the surrounding environment as a source of material. In addition, the teacher also teaches students' creativity in completing assignments in the form of projects such as making batik, painting on glasses or plates, and various other projects. Activities that have taken place outside the classroom include inviting students to visit a sugar factory, Bank Indonesia, museums, and others.

### **Extracurricular Activities**

Character habituation through habituation activities at SD Plus Rahmat in Kediri City is carried out through activities conducted outside of lesson hours. The main goal is to develop students' interests, talents, and personality. In addition, it also provides opportunities for students to explore their potential beyond academic fields.

The extracurricular activities available at this school support students in enhancing their talents and interests. There are many extracurricular activities such as science activities, vocal arts, dance, scouting, theater, English club, band, soccer, martial arts, chess, painting, playing rebana, journalism, robotics, tilawah arts, and many other activities. Teachers encourage students to choose extracurricular activities that interest them and align with the characteristics of the talents they wish to develop.

These three types of activities are interrelated and important for achieving educational goals comprehensively. Intracurricular activities provide an academic foundation, cocurricular activities deepen understanding, and extracurricular activities develop students' self-potential holistically (Ninik Hidayati et al., 2021).

### **The Character Values that Implemented at SD Plus Rahmat Kota Kediri**

#### **Religiosity**

Religious character can be recognized when religious values are embedded within students, so that they possess faith and piety towards Allah SWT and have a good personality towards fellow humans as well as other creatures created by Allah SWT (Mubin & Moh. Arif Furqon, 2023). Some activities that support the formation of religious values in students include prayer before lessons start, memorizing short verses, and other habituation activities such as proper etiquette while eating. Students are asked to pray before eating, use their right hand to eat, eat without rushing, and avoid making loud noises while chewing. Students are also taught to share food with their friends. They are also accustomed to practicing ablution and performing the Duha prayer and congregational Dhuhr prayer together with all the teachers. Religious activities involve carrying out religious program activities in accordance with specific normative references to achieve the goals of the activities in a measurable and controlled manner (Safitri et al., 2023). Educators familiarize these religious activities according to the references of religious norms and the design implemented in the school.

#### **Curiosity**

Curiosity is a way of thinking, an attitude, and behavior that reflects inquisitiveness and a desire to learn more about everything that is seen, heard, and studied in depth. Curiosity is the initial capital for students in the learning process. With a high level of

curiosity, students will study more to satisfy their thirst for knowledge they want to acquire. Through their curiosity, students will start learning and discovering (Fauzi et al., 2017).

Some activities that support the formation of curiosity character include teachers stimulating students to always actively ask questions and express opinions in class during the learning process. Teachers also design the classroom to have a reading corner so that students can read books they enjoy or need both during the learning process and during breaks. In certain subjects like natural science, teachers also invite students to conduct a scientific experiment. Through these activities, students will develop a strong sense of curiosity about knowledge.

### **Social Care**

Social concern, as one of the core aspects in the implementation of character education, is the act of consistently wanting to help others who are in need. This social concern is an expression of human awareness as social beings who cannot live alone. Humans need others to fulfill their needs, creating a sense of interdependence between individuals. As social beings, humans naturally empathize with the suffering and difficulties of others, leading to a desire to provide assistance and support to those in trouble (Barsihanor & Hafiz, 2018).

Some habituation activities that support the formation of social caring character include the blessings Friday program at school, where students distribute food to those in need around the school every Friday. Students also collect donations and channel them to disaster victims in Indonesia (Nisa & Utami, 2024) . There is also a program to visit orphanages to share with the orphans. Activities include Zakat, Infaq, and Shodaqah. During the month of Ramadan, students are also invited to share iftar snacks with the community around.

### **Disciplin**

Some habituation activities that support the formation of disciplined character include familiarizing the culture of queuing, whether when arriving at school or when greeting teachers, as well as during lunchtime at school. There is a kindness harvest book where children record acts of kindness and kindness projects made when the children do not perform acts of kindness. An example of an entry in the kindness harvest book is a thank you note written by a friend and pasted in the kindness harvest book when a friend helps them at school, or a reward from the teacher when a child does a good deed. Meanwhile, an example of an entry in the kindness project book occurs when a child arrives late to school and then writes istigfar (a prayer of forgiveness) ten times in that book, or memorizes a verse, or cleans the classroom.

This aims to train the students' discipline. In accordance with Presidential Instruction number 87 of 2017, the Ministry of Education and Culture emphasizes that there are five main character values derived from Pancasila, which are prioritized for the development of the Character Education Strengthening movement, including religion, nationalism, integrity, independence, and mutual cooperation. These values cannot stand and develop on their own, but are interrelated with each other (Yusnan, 2022).

### **Creativity**

Creative character is an individual's capacity to create new and innovative things, whether in the form of ideas or tangible works that have more value compared to what already exists (Nessa Mezhila Akrima & Hendra Budiono Hendra, 2025). Some habituation

activities that support the development of creative character in students include teachers asking and accompanying students to complete assignment projects such as creating pictures of birds decorated with previously collected seeds. In addition, students are also taught to create crafts from clay, such as making cups or plates. Accompanying students practice batik. Students are also assigned to collect dry leaves to paste on the pictures provided by the teacher. The activities designed by the teacher hone and enhance the creativity of the students' works. There is a board provided to display the students' creations.

The five character values applied to the students are part of the eighteen character values that are also implemented for students in that school. The application of the eighteen character values is very much in line with the Merdeka Curriculum because the Merdeka Curriculum focuses on the character development of students as part of the Pancasila Student Profile. This curriculum encourages the integration of character values in learning, both through intracurricular, extracurricular, and co-curricular activities (Utami & Wafi, 2020).

### **Evaluation of Character Education at SD Plus Rahmat Kota Kediri Holding Tiered Class Meeting**

The evaluation activities carried out include holding regular monthly meetings to ensure that the evaluations conducted run optimally. These activities include general meetings, level coordinator meetings, field coordinator meetings, meetings of all level members, administrative meetings, library meetings, security meetings, cleaning staff meetings, and kitchen staff meetings. These activities are scheduled and attended by all educational staff based on the planned meetings (Rahman, 2024).

### **Teacher's Training Workshop Programs**

In order to follow up on the evaluation results, which aim to improve and enhance the character development of students, the school also facilitates teachers to attend training or workshops or to hold workshops and training at the school. The training activities that have been conducted include curriculum workshops, classroom management, teacher competencies, and others. These activities aim to improve teachers' skills and knowledge in teaching. The importance of improving teacher quality is not only related to students' academic outcomes but also to character development, creativity, and social skills. With continuous training and mentoring programs, it is expected to create a conducive learning environment, motivate teachers to enhance their abilities, and ultimately improve the quality of education in schools (Kurniawan, 2022).

Personality competence of teachers plays an important role in shaping students' character through exemplary behavior, moral values, discipline, responsibility, honesty, and ethical attitudes implemented in daily school activities. In relation to the *teacher workshop training program*, this study highlights that teachers' personality competence can be strengthened through continuous professional development activities such as workshops, training programs, seminars, and reflective learning sessions (Rahman et al., 2023b). These programs provide opportunities for teachers to improve their interpersonal, emotional, spiritual, and pedagogical skills, while also enhancing their understanding of effective character education strategies and the implementation of positive habituation in both curricular and extracurricular activities. Furthermore, teacher workshop training programs help teachers become more professional, adaptive, and inspirational role models for

students, thereby contributing significantly to the formation of students' religious character, moral behavior, discipline, and positive attitudes in everyday life.

Character education evaluation in schools aims to measure whether students already possess one or a group of characters established by the school within a certain period. Thus, the substance of evaluation in the context of character education is an effort to compare student behavior with the character standards (indicators) set by teachers and/or the school. The process of comparing student behavior with character indicators is carried out through an evaluation process. The purpose of character education evaluation in schools is to understand students' learning progress in terms of the possession of certain character indicators within a certain period; the strengths and weaknesses of learning designs created by teachers; and the level of effectiveness of the learning process experienced by students, whether in the classroom, school, or at home (Salirawati, 2021).

## CONCLUSION

The character habituation program implemented at SD Plus Rahmat Kota Kediri includes intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities. These three activities support the development of knowledge, skills, and the character of the students. The character values implemented include religiousness, curiosity, social concern, discipline, and creativity. These five character values are some of the values applied from the eighteen characters that are also implemented for the students. Evaluation is carried out by holding continuous meetings such as tiered class meetings and teacher training programs. All of these activities support the instillation of character values in students through habituation activities at school. This research is expected to contribute knowledge and serve as a reference for policy-making in improving students' character in educational institutions.

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