

Building the Nation's Character: A Study of 7 Habits of Indonesian Children in the Perspective of Civic Education

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Abstract

Instilling character values through daily habits is an integral part of civic education, especially at the stage of child development. This study aims to examine the relationship between the seven habits of Indonesian children and the strengthening of civic education values through a literature study approach. The method used is a literature review of various scientific journals, research reports, and other relevant sources. The results of the study show that the seven habits have a close relationship with civic values, such as social care, active participation in community life, obedience to norms and laws, and respect for diversity. These findings affirm the importance of strengthening citizenship-based character education through the integration of positive habits in the family, school, and community environment. This study recommends that citizenship education be not only provided cognitively, but also through the internalization of national values that are manifested in children's daily behavior.

Keywords: Civic Education, Children's Habits, The Character of The Nation



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INTRODUCTION

Education is a strategic instrument in shaping the character and identity of the nation. Education also plays a role as a means to form character and leadership spirit, which will be the foundation for Indonesia's progress in the future (Shabur et al., 2024). In the context of globalization full of value challenges, unlimited information flows, and rapid cultural shifts, the formation of Indonesian children's character is a crucial aspect that cannot be ignored. Children as the next generation of the nation are in a developmental phase that is greatly influenced by the environment, habits, and education system they receive. The strengthening of globalization requires Indonesia to be more agile in maintaining the nation's identity in the midst of the rush of information and the entry of foreign cultural influences (Kabanga, 2021). Therefore, education is not enough to emphasize only the cognitive aspect, but it must also include the affective and psychomotor dimensions that make up positive attitudes, values, and behaviors as citizens.

In this context, Citizenship Education has a strategic role in shaping the character of citizens who are intelligent, responsible, and actively participate in the life of society, nation, and state. Civic Education not only focuses on the transfer of knowledge about the rights and obligations of citizens, but also emphasizes the importance of instilling national values, legal awareness, tolerance, and social responsibility through a reflective and contextual learning process. Civic education aims to equip citizens with knowledge, skills, and character that are in line with the values of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, foster the spirit of nationalism and national ethics, as well as instill awareness of defending the country in the younger generation so that they are ready to actively contribute to national development (L. A. Hapsari et al., 2023). By integrating the learning of Civic Education into children's daily experiences, especially through positive habits formed from an early age, students can internalize civic values in a more meaningful way. Citizenship education plays a significant role in shaping the young generation

who think critically, have a sense of responsibility, and understand and carry out their rights and obligations as part of citizens. It is important to form a generation that not only understands the concept of citizenship theoretically, but is also able to manifest it in concrete actions as part of their social and national life. Therefore, strengthening character based on civic education is important in forming individuals who not only know their rights and obligations, but are also able to apply these values in daily life. Citizenship Education plays an important role in overcoming character crises among youth. In this context, Civic Education is the main instrument in national character education, because it contains cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions that are integrated in the learning process.(Alimuddin & Yuzrizal , 2020)(Widiatmaka, 2023)

Through a holistic and contextual approach, Civic Education is able to instill national values such as nationalism, tolerance, discipline, mutual cooperation, and legal awareness in students. Thus, Civic Education not only transmits theoretical knowledge, but also forms the character of citizens who have integrity and social concern. In line with this, Civic Education functions as a strategic vehicle in building a young generation that is aware of the constitution and behaves in accordance with the values of Pancasila, and is ready to contribute positively to the life of society, the nation, and the state. In the context of technological developments and digitalization, digital citizenship education in the university environment also plays a role in equipping students with an understanding of their rights and obligations as citizens in the digital era, while encouraging active and responsible participation in the digital space (Stuttgart et al., 2023)

As a concrete form of the strategy of forming children's character, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education of the Republic of Indonesia initiated the concept of *the Seven Great Indonesian Children's Habits*. The seven habits include: waking up early as a form of discipline and time management; worship that instills spiritual and moral values; exercise to form a healthy lifestyle; eating healthy and nutritious as a form of responsibility for personal health; love to learn to build the spirit of literacy and self-development; a society that reflects the values of social care and mutual cooperation; and fast sleep to maintain a healthy and balanced life rhythm. These habits, if applied consistently, not only support the child's holistic growth and development, but also form a strong civic character. Character education that is integrated in the curriculum through affective and psychomotor values aims to develop students' intellectual skills as well as moral and ethical behaviors (Ridha et al., 2025)

However, the implementation of character values through habituation has not been fully optimal. Various data show that there is still a gap between the expectations of character education and the reality in the field. Students' character values in general have developed well, although there are still some aspects that have not been achieved optimally, such as tolerance, concern for the environment, and social concern. This gap can be caused by a variety of factors, including a lack of consistent support from the student's environment, both at home and in the community. In addition, the lack of parental involvement in educating and instilling character values from an early age also affects the success of character education. Rapidly evolving technology is also a challenge, given the influence of social media and entertainment that can distract students from positive values. Therefore, further efforts are needed to optimize the habituation of character values through collaboration between schools, families, and communities, as well as adjustments to more effective methods in facing the challenges of the times.(Wibowo et al., 2020)

Based on these conditions, it is important to examine the relationship between *the Seven Great Indonesian Children's Habits* and the strengthening of civic education values. The habituation approach is considered to be an effective bridge between character education and

civic practice in children's daily lives. This paper aims to analyze the relationship between the seven habits and civic values through a literature study approach. This study is expected to provide a theoretical foundation and practical input for educators, parents, and policymakers in designing character education that is more applicative, contextual, and integrated with national values.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with *the library research* method which aims to analyze the relationship between *the Seven Great Indonesian Children's Habits* and strengthening the values of civic education in the context of child character formation. The literature study method is carried out by tracing and evaluating various sources of literature or scientific writings that are relevant to the issue or topic being researched (R. D. Hapsari & Düsseldorf, 2023) Data analysis is carried out using content *analysis* techniques, which are methods used to identify, clarify, and interpret the content of the document being studied. Through this approach, the research seeks to build a comprehensive conceptual framework on how Indonesian children's habits can be the foundation for strengthening civic education. The results of the analysis are expected to provide theoretical contributions as well as practical recommendations in the implementation of citizenship-based character education in the family, school, and community environment.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of a review of various literature sources, it was found that the concept of the Seven Great Indonesian Children's Habits which include waking up early, worshiping, exercising, eating healthy and nutritious, fond of learning, socializing, and fast sleep, is closely related to strengthening the values of civic education. Each habit reflects character values that are in line with the goals of Civic Education, which is to form responsible, participatory, and noble citizens. Based on the results of a review of various literature sources, it was found that the habit of waking up early reflects the value of discipline and responsibility, which is an important part of *civic virtue* in the life of the nation. Disciplinary habits, for example, are directly related to the value of obedience to norms and laws. Discipline in daily life, such as arriving on time, obeying school rules, or completing tasks on schedule, is the foundation for the formation of law-abiding citizens. Students' learning abilities are influenced by individual readiness, discipline, exercises carried out, and understanding the benefits of learning, where learning outcomes are highly determined by discipline in obeying school rules. Therefore, instilling discipline from an early age not only has an impact on improving academic achievement, but also forms an attitude of responsibility, independence, and compliance with applicable social norms. These values are an important part of the process of internalizing character, which ultimately encourages students to grow as individuals with integrity and are able to contribute positively to the life of society and the nation.(Lestari, 2019)

Worship consistently instills religious and moral values, while strengthening personal integrity as the basis for the character of ethical and dignified citizens. The formation of a child's character will be more effective if it is based on sincere religious awareness, not solely because it follows the habits or traditions that develop in the Society. Thus, character education based on religious values needs to be instilled from an early age through habituation, example, and a supportive environment, so that children grow up to be individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also spiritually and morally mature in the life of society and the state.(Diana et al., 2023) Meanwhile, exercising fosters awareness of healthy living, sportsmanship, and cooperation, which are in line with participatory values in a democratic

society. Individual character can be formed through a variety of life experiences, including experiences in sports activities, as long as they are supported by a conducive and consciously directed sports environment for the purpose of character development. Sport is not just a physical activity, but also an effective means to instill values such as sportsmanship, cooperation, responsibility, and perseverance, all of which help to support the formation of positive and resilient character in individuals.(Mahdalena et al., 2024)

Healthy and nutritious eating habits show an attitude of respecting the right to health as part of the basic rights of citizens, as well as developing awareness of the importance of collective well-being. A healthy diet is a form of regulating food intake, both in terms of quantity and type, which aims to maintain optimal nutritional conditions, maintain health, and reduce the risk of infection. By implementing a healthy diet, a person can increase immunity, improve organ function, and support the body's growth and recovery process optimally.(Yugharyanti et al., 2024) Fondness for learning is the foundation for the formation of citizens who are civic *literacy*, think critically, and are able to make decisions based on knowledge. The learning habits, learning atmosphere, and motivation that students have have a great impact on the achievement of their learning outcomes. These factors are interrelated, where good study habits, a supportive environment, and high motivation can encourage students to be more focused and consistent in learning, thus contributing to the improvement of their academic achievement(Amrulloh et al., 2024)

Furthermore, actively fostering the growth of the value of social concern, mutual cooperation, help and tolerance in diversity, which is the core of citizenship education in pluralistic Indonesia. The habit of helping reflects the value of social care, which is the ability of individuals to feel and respond to the needs of others around them. This value is in line with civic education which emphasizes solidarity, empathy, and the spirit of togetherness in community life. The more often children are trained to help others, the stronger the sense of social responsibility that grows in them. Furthermore, the habit of responsibility fosters an independent attitude and awareness of the consequences of each action. The character of responsibility is one of the main values that need to be instilled in the learning process, considering that there are still often behaviors such as neglect of duties, inconsistencies in keeping promises, and the emergence of violent acts such as brawls and bullying in the school environment. Responsibility is not only important in the context of the individual, but also in social life. Children who are used to completing their tasks, taking care of private and public belongings, and keeping promises, will grow up to be trusted and reliable citizens.(Farid, 2023)

Finally, going to bed early as a form of self-management and a balanced lifestyle shows an awareness of broader personal responsibility in social life. Irregularities in sleep patterns can negatively impact a person's mental health, which in turn affects their ability to carry out social responsibilities optimally. This condition can reduce concentration, disrupt emotional stability, and reduce empathy, so that individuals become less sensitive to the needs of others and tend to avoid participating in social activities and cooperation in the surrounding environment.(Daulay, 2024) All of these habits, if instilled and habituated consistently in the family, school, and community, have great potential to strengthen the internalization of civic values such as responsibility, legal awareness, social participation, and respect for diversity and togetherness. Thus, civic education should not only be provided through a cognitive approach, but also through an affective and psychomotor approach through the habituation of positive habits in children's daily lives.

Based on these results, it can be concluded that the seven habits of Indonesian children are not only closely related to civic values, but also become a strategic entrance to internalize the nation's character education. Therefore, civic education is not enough to be provided only

theoretically and cognitively, but must be integrated into daily behavior habits in the family, school, and community environment. Thus, the noble values of nationality can be fully and sustainably embedded in the young generation of Indonesia. Overall, these seven habits do not stand alone, but are interrelated and form a lifestyle that reflects civic values. The results of the study show that strengthening children's character through positive habituation can be an effective means of internalizing national values. Thus, the integration of the Seven Great Indonesian Children's Habits in the practice of civic education, both at school and in the family environment, is a relevant and important strategy in building a competitive and nationalistic national character.

Discussion

Character through Children's Daily Habits

The results of the literature review show that the concept of *the Seven Great Indonesian Children's Habits* which include waking up early, worshiping, exercising, eating healthy and nutritious, loving learning, socializing, and sleeping quickly is closely related to strengthening values in civic education. This movement, launched by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education on December 27, 2024, aims to form a healthy, intelligent, and characterful generation, as part of efforts to realize a Golden Indonesia 2045. Children's daily habits can be an effective medium in instilling civic education values. Waking up early, for example, fosters discipline and responsibility towards time, which reflects respect for social rules and norms in the life of the nation. The Ministry of Education emphasizes that this habit forms a life balance and increases productivity. This habit, if habituated from an early age, not only trains the order of life but also forms the character of a citizen who obeys the rules and is able to manage time responsibly. Thus, simple daily activities can be interpreted as a means of learning civic values that are applicable and relevant to real life.

Discipline that is trained from an early age is closely related to obedience to the law. Ethics Children who are used to obeying rules in daily life such as study schedules, home responsibilities, and school discipline will find it easier to understand the importance of norms and laws in social life. This habituation is the foundation in forming citizens who are aware of the law, obey the rules, and uphold justice. In the context of civic education, the formation of discipline is not just a habituation of behavior, but a process of internalizing legal values and public ethics that will be carried over into adulthood. The habit of regular worship instills religious and moral values that are the basis for the integrity of citizens. On the other hand, regular sports not only support physical and mental health, but also teach sportsmanship, cooperation, and justice, which are in line with democratic principles. The habituation of discipline from an early age has a strong relationship with the formation of obedience to the law. Through an orderly routine and obedience to rules, a person is gradually guided to understand the importance of social norms and the legal system that applies in the life of the nation and society. In the perspective of civic education, discipline is not only seen as individual behavior, but also as an important basis for the growth of citizens' awareness of their rights and responsibilities. Simple examples such as being present on time, completing academic responsibilities, and complying with school regulations are concrete manifestations of the process of learning broader legal values in society.

A healthy diet reflects concern for quality of life and the right to health, while the spirit of learning strengthens critical thinking skills and active participation in democratic life. Children who are used to society will also be more tolerant and appreciate diversity, supporting the formation of an inclusive attitude in a pluralistic society. This habit not only shapes the character of the individual, but also strengthens the social integration and cohesion of society

as a whole. In the context of civic education, these values are at the core of *civic competence* the ability of citizens to think reflectively, coexist peacefully, and take an active role in the process of national and state life. Meanwhile, mutual cooperation reflects a collective spirit and active participation in public life. This value is directly related to *civic engagement* and *civic participation*. Effective civic education not only teaches the theory of democracy, but also encourages learners to engage in real social practices. Gotong royong reflects active involvement in social life, which is very important in building *civic engagement*. Regular sleep, in addition to maintaining health, also forms good time management, part of the responsibility as a citizen. Love for the environment reflects awareness of sustainability, in line with the concept of *ecological citizenship*.

Early bedtime habits as a form of maintaining a healthy lifestyle show awareness of the importance of balance in life. In a broader context, it fosters awareness of time management, life planning, and self-control, which are the foundations of responsible behavior as a citizen. Personal responsibility that is developed from an early age will develop into an awareness of social and political responsibility. Tolerance and honesty are also important foundations in forming ethical, fair, and anti-corruption citizens. Thus, the habituation of these values in children's lives supports the formation of a complete civic character, being aware of rights and obligations, and caring for others and the environment. Thus, these seven habits not only have moral value, but also become an integral part of the formation of a complete civic identity. Civic education should not only be taught through a cognitive approach, but also through an affective and psychomotor approach that is manifested in the practice of children's daily habits. By integrating these positive habits into the learning process and social life of children, it is hoped that young citizens will be formed who have awareness, care, and responsibility for their nation.

CONCLUSION

Seven habits of Indonesian children play an important role in shaping the character of citizens from an early age. Habits such as waking up early, worshiping, exercising, eating healthy, learning, socializing, and sleeping on time, have been shown to support the cultivation of civic values such as discipline, responsibility, tolerance, and social participation. Civic education needs to be integrated with the habituation of positive behavior of children in daily life. Through synergy between family, school, and environment, national values can be instilled comprehensively and sustainably to form a generation that is intelligent, characterful, and ready to face the challenges of the times.

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