

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 7 GREAT HABITS OF INDONESIAN CHILDREN (KAIH) PROGRAM IN SHAPING THE CHARACTER OF SIXTH-GRADE STUDENTS AT UPT SD NEGERI 141 INPRES PARAPPUNGANTA II, POLONGBANGKENG TIMUR DISTRICT, TAKALAR REGENCY**

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**Abstract**

This study explores the implementation of the 7 Great Habits of Indonesian Children (KAIH) Program in shaping the character of sixth-grade students at UPT SD Negeri 141 Inpres Parappunganta II, Takalar Regency. Using a qualitative case study approach, the research was conducted over two months and involved sixth-grade students, teachers, and the school principal. Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification, with trustworthiness ensured through triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing. The findings indicate that the implementation of the KAIH Program significantly improved students' character, as shown by an increase in average behavioral scores from the "Sufficient" category to the "Very Good" category within one month. The program effectively fostered discipline, spirituality, independence, social responsibility, and healthy lifestyle habits. However, habits related to waking up early and sleeping early required continuous reinforcement due to external environmental influences. Key supporting factors included strong school leadership, teacher commitment, parental involvement, and student enthusiasm. The study concludes that the KAIH Program is an effective strategy for character education, provided that sustained collaboration among schools, families, and communities is maintained.

**Keywords:** 7 Habits of Great Indonesian Children, Character Education, Program Implementation, Student Discipline, Independence, School Collaboration, Qualitative Approach

**INTRODUCTION**

Character education is a fundamental foundation for developing high-quality and competitive human resources in the future (Kemdikbudristek, 2025). At the elementary school level, character education holds a highly strategic position because this stage represents a

crucial period in the formation of students' habits, attitudes, and core values (Sutarman et al., 2022). Elementary school-aged children are at a developmental stage in which behaviors that are consistently practiced tend to become internalized and shape long-term character (Duhigg, 2012). Therefore, character education at this level should not be viewed as a supplementary component but rather as the core of the educational process.

Strengthening character education has also become a national priority within Indonesia's educational transformation policies. The government emphasizes that educational success is not measured solely by academic achievement but also by the development of students' character, including faith, independence, critical thinking, collaboration, and moral integrity, as reflected in the framework of the Eight Graduate Profiles (Kemdikbudristek, 2025). This policy direction aligns with the vision of Indonesia Emas 2045, which positions character-driven human resources as the main driver of national development (Wati & Amrullah, 2022).

However, amid rapid globalization and the massive expansion of digital technology, the challenges of character formation among students have become increasingly complex (Tuhuteru et al., 2023). Unlimited access to information, shifts in social interaction patterns, and weakening environmental control have the potential to influence children's behavior and moral values (Wati & Amrullah, 2022). These conditions require schools not only to function as institutions for knowledge transmission but also as spaces for systematic and sustainable habituation of values and character (Sutarman et al., 2022).

From a theoretical perspective, character education cannot be separated from an understanding of children's moral and cognitive development. Kohlberg's theory of moral development places elementary school children in the early stages of moral reasoning, where behavior is largely influenced by rules, role models, and consequences within their environment (Kohlberg, 1984). Nevertheless, contemporary research suggests that children's moral expression is also shaped by the cultural and social contexts in which they grow. Nainggolan and Naibaho (2022) emphasize that character education must be adapted to local contexts to ensure effective internalization of moral values.

In addition to moral development, cognitive development plays a crucial role in character education. Piaget explains that elementary school students are at the concrete operational stage, meaning that the understanding of values and norms is more effectively conveyed through direct experiences and concrete examples. Islamiati's (2023) findings support this view, demonstrating that contextual, problem-based learning can enhance students' understanding of justice and responsibility. This suggests that habituation-based approaches in daily life are more appropriate for sixth-grade students than abstract instructional approaches.

Modern character education concepts also draw heavily on Thomas Lickona's framework, which emphasizes the integration of moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral actions. The integration of these three components is believed to produce fully internalized character. Research by Handayani and Rosliyah (2020) shows that character education interventions combining explicit value instruction, empathy reinforcement, and direct practice in school and home settings are more effective than purely cognitive approaches. Similarly, Armini (2024) highlights the importance of developing schools as character-building environments that support value habituation through school culture, interpersonal

relationships, and institutional policies.

Along with developments in recent studies, character education has increasingly shifted toward holistic and integrative approaches. Character education is no longer viewed as a separate subject but is integrated into all learning activities and aspects of school life. The Pancasila Student Profile framework within the Merdeka Curriculum is considered a manifestation of this holistic approach (Sari et al., 2023). In addition, mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning approaches have gained attention for their ability to promote awareness, meaning, and enjoyable learning experiences for students (Mulat et al., 2022).

Within this context, character formation is closely linked to the process of habituation. Habit formation theory explains that behaviors performed repeatedly, consistently, and reinforced by supportive environments will become internalized as part of an individual's character (Duhigg, 2012). Small changes carried out consistently can lead to significant long-term behavioral transformation (Clear, 2019). From a sociological perspective, habits are also influenced by social environments and community values, indicating that children's habit formation cannot be separated from family and school contexts.

The 7 Great Habits of Indonesian Children (KAIH) Program was designed based on principles of positive habit formation relevant to the developmental needs of elementary school students. The program includes habits such as waking up early, engaging in worship, exercising, consuming healthy and nutritious food, enjoying learning, participating in social activities, and sleeping early (Kemdikbudristek, 2025). These seven habits are intended to foster disciplined, religious, independent, responsible, and socially aware character traits (Rosyida & Saputri, 2022).

Despite its strong theoretical foundation, the implementation of character education programs at the elementary school level does not always run optimally. Program success is strongly influenced by school context, principal leadership, teacher commitment, parental involvement, and environmental support (Rosyida & Saputri, 2022). Without synergy among stakeholders, habituation programs risk becoming merely formal activities without producing meaningful behavioral change (Martroatmodjo, 2023).

This phenomenon is also evident at UPT SD Negeri 141 Inpres Parappunganta II in Takalar Regency, which has implemented the KAIH Program as a strategy for shaping the character of sixth-grade students (Basyam, 2025). However, daily practice still reveals challenges such as student tardiness, declining social awareness, and limited parental involvement (Basyam, 2025). These conditions indicate that character formation cannot rely solely on program planning but requires adaptive and contextualized implementation processes (Martroatmodjo, 2023).

Numerous previous studies have examined character education in elementary schools and emphasized the crucial role of teachers as role models and facilitators in the success of character programs (Rosyida & Saputri, 2022). Teacher strategies that link values to concrete activities have been shown to enhance the internalization of positive habits among students (Faturahma et al., 2025). Other studies highlight the importance of holistic and collaborative approaches through synergy among schools, families, and communities to ensure the sustainability of character habituation (Sutarman et al., 2022; Tuhuteru et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, most existing studies remain general and have not specifically examined the implementation of the KAIH Program as a national habituation initiative, particularly

within elementary schools in regional contexts (Basyam, 2025). This limited empirical evidence indicates a research gap that must be addressed through in-depth studies exploring implementation processes, stakeholder perceptions, and supporting and inhibiting factors in local settings (Martoatmodjo, 2023; Tuhuteru et al., 2023).

Based on these considerations, this study focuses on the implementation of the 7 Great Habits of Indonesian Children (KAIH) Program in shaping the character of sixth-grade students at UPT SD Negeri 141 Inpres Parappunganta II. The study aims to provide contextual empirical insights into the dynamics of habituation-based character education in elementary schools and to contribute practical implications for schools and teachers, as well as references for the development of character education policies in Indonesia (Kemdikbudristek, 2025).

## **IMPLEMENTATION METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. The qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation process of the 7 Great Habits of Indonesian Children (KAIH) Program, the experiences of educational stakeholders, and the dynamics of student character formation within the school's natural setting. The case study design allowed for a holistic and contextual exploration of the phenomenon, providing a rich and comprehensive depiction of KAIH implementation practices in the field.

The research was conducted at UPT SD Negeri 141 Inpres Parappunganta II, located in Polongbangkeng Timur District, Takalar Regency, South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. This site was selected because the school has actively implemented the KAIH Program for sixth-grade students. The study was carried out over a period of approximately two months, enabling the researcher to observe the implementation of the program within the school's regular activity cycle.

Research participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in the implementation of the KAIH Program. The primary participants consisted of sixth-grade students, teachers, and the school principal. Sixth-grade students were chosen as the main participants because they were the direct beneficiaries of the program and had participated in KAIH habituation activities for a certain period. The teachers involved included the sixth-grade classroom teacher, the Islamic Education teacher, and the Physical Education, Sports, and Health teacher, each of whom played a strategic role in implementing the KAIH habits. The school principal was included to provide insights into school policies, institutional support, and the school's vision for student character development.

Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Limited participant observation was conducted to directly examine KAIH implementation practices in learning activities and daily school routines, including teacher-student interactions, classroom atmosphere, and supporting facilities. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with students, teachers, and the school principal to explore their experiences, perceptions, and perspectives regarding KAIH implementation and its impact on student character formation. Document analysis involved reviewing relevant school documents, such as KAIH guidelines, instructional materials, school regulations, activity schedules, and other supporting documents, to strengthen and verify data obtained from

observations and interviews.

Data analysis was conducted continuously from the data collection stage through the completion of the research report. The analysis followed the interactive data analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Data reduction involved selecting and focusing on information relevant to the research objectives. Data were then displayed through descriptive narratives and thematic grouping to facilitate the identification of patterns and relationships among themes. Conclusions were drawn gradually and continuously verified against field data.

To ensure data trustworthiness, this study applied source and method triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing. Triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from multiple sources and data collection techniques. Member checking was carried out by confirming preliminary findings with participants to ensure that the researcher's interpretations accurately reflected their experiences. Through these procedures, the findings were expected to achieve a high level of credibility and reliability.

## **RESULTS**

This study revealed significant changes in students' character-related behaviors following the implementation of the 7 Great Habits of Indonesian Children (KAIH) Program at UPT SD Negeri 141 Inpres Parappunganta II. Observational data collected in two stages demonstrated a consistent improvement in students' habitual behaviors across all indicators measured.

The results of behavioral observation showed that the average student score increased from 2.73 (moderate category) in the first observation stage to 3.89 (very good category) in the second stage. This improvement indicates a substantial positive shift in students' daily habits after the consistent implementation of the KAIH Program. Most students who were initially categorized as "moderate" moved to the "very good" category, while students already categorized as "good" showed further reinforcement of positive habits.

Qualitative data from in-depth interviews supported the observational findings. Students reported improvements in discipline, particularly in waking up earlier, arriving at school on time, and managing sleep routines. They also described increased consistency in religious practices, healthier eating habits, higher motivation to study, stronger social awareness, and greater responsibility in daily activities. Teachers and the school principal confirmed these changes, noting improved classroom readiness, student engagement, physical fitness, and social cooperation.

Overall, the results indicate that the KAIH Program contributed positively to the formation of students' character by fostering consistent positive habits in daily school and home routines.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide strong empirical evidence that the implementation of the 7 Great Habits of Indonesian Children (KAIH) Program plays a significant role in shaping students' character through structured and consistent habituation. The substantial increase in students' observational scores from the moderate category to the very good category indicates that character formation can be effectively strengthened when positive behaviors are practiced repeatedly within a supportive school environment.

The improvement in students' discipline, particularly in waking up early and arriving at school on time, reflects the effectiveness of habituation-based character education. Consistent routines related to waking up early and sleeping earlier were shown to enhance students' physical readiness and learning focus. This finding supports the theory of habit formation proposed by Duhigg (2012), which emphasizes that repeated behaviors reinforced by environmental cues gradually become automatic actions. In this study, daily school routines functioned as external cues that helped students internalize time discipline as part of their character.

Religious habituation emerged as another key aspect of character development in this study. The increased consistency in worship activities and collective prayers demonstrates that repeated spiritual practices can foster not only compliance but also intrinsic religious awareness. Teachers reported that students gradually developed self-initiative in leading prayers and participating in religious activities without reminders. This aligns with Lickona's framework, which states that moral action develops when moral knowing and moral feeling are supported by continuous practice. The shift from externally driven behavior to internal motivation observed in this study indicates successful character internalization.

Healthy living habits, including balanced nutrition and regular physical activity, also showed marked improvement following the implementation of the KAIH Program. Students became more selective in food choices and more enthusiastic about participating in physical activities. These findings suggest that character education extends beyond moral and social dimensions to include self-regulation and responsibility for personal well-being. Previous studies have emphasized that physical health habits are closely linked to discipline, perseverance, and emotional stability, all of which contribute to holistic character development. The integration of physical education teachers and parental support strengthened this process.

The habit of enjoying learning was reinforced through structured literacy activities and classroom-based learning routines. Teachers observed increased motivation, independence in completing assignments, and improved academic engagement. These results support Piaget's view that elementary school students learn values more effectively through concrete experiences rather than abstract instruction. By embedding learning habits into daily routines, the KAIH Program helped students associate learning with responsibility and self-improvement rather than external pressure.

Social character development was evident in students' increased willingness to help peers, participate in collaborative activities, and engage in community-based programs. The habit of social participation fostered empathy, cooperation, and a sense of collective responsibility. This finding is consistent with sociocultural perspectives on character education, which emphasize that values are internalized through social interaction and

communal practices. The role of group activities, such as class clean-ups and social service initiatives, was particularly influential in strengthening students' social awareness.

A critical factor contributing to the success of the KAIH Program was the strong collaboration between the school, teachers, parents, and the wider community. Consistent communication and shared responsibility ensured that habituation practices continued beyond the classroom. Although challenges such as excessive gadget use and inconsistent parental supervision were initially identified, these obstacles gradually diminished as parents became more actively involved. This finding supports previous research highlighting that character education is most effective when reinforced across multiple environments.

Despite the overall success of the program, this study also highlights the importance of sustainability. Maintaining students' motivation and consistency requires continuous innovation, monitoring, and reinforcement. Without ongoing support, there is a risk that habituated behaviors may weaken over time. Therefore, schools implementing habituation-based character programs should prioritize long-term strategies, periodic evaluation, and adaptive approaches that respond to students' developmental needs.

Overall, the findings confirm that the KAIH Program is an effective model of habituation-based character education. By integrating moral, spiritual, physical, cognitive, and social dimensions into daily routines, the program contributes to holistic character formation. This study enriches the literature on character education by providing contextual evidence from an Indonesian elementary school setting and demonstrates how national character programs can be effectively implemented at the local level.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that the implementation of the 7 Great Habits of Indonesian Children (KAIH) Program at UPT SD Negeri 141 Inpres Parappunganta II has significantly contributed to the character development of sixth-grade students. The results demonstrate a clear improvement in students' character, as reflected by an increase in average behavioral scores from the "Sufficient" category to the "Very Good" category within a one-month period. The KAIH Program proved effective in fostering key character values, including discipline, spirituality, independence, social responsibility, and healthy lifestyle habits, as confirmed through observations and in-depth interviews with students, teachers, and the school principal. While several habits, such as religious practices and social engagement, were relatively easy to integrate into students' daily routines, habits related to waking up early and sleeping early required continuous reinforcement due to external environmental influences. The success of the program was strongly supported by effective school leadership, strong teacher commitment, parental involvement, and high levels of student enthusiasm. Overall, these findings indicate that the KAIH Program represents a viable and effective approach to character education when implemented consistently and supported by collaboration among schools, families, and communities.

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