

The Implementation of the Habituation Method at Kisol Public Kindergarten to Develop Polite Character in Six-Year-Old Children

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Abstract. This study identifies and describes habituation practices implemented at TK Negeri Kisol to foster polite character in six-year-old children. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through observations, interviews with three teachers, and document analysis conducted in April 2025. Findings reveal that habituation practices include greeting politely, expressing gratitude, demonstrating courteous mealtime behavior, speaking politely, requesting permission, showing care, and acting honestly. Implementation steps involve determining habituation activities, initiating through teacher modeling, practicing consistently, avoiding demeaning reprimands, providing reminders, and offering appreciation. Challenges encountered include lack of school-home continuity, variations in children's comprehension levels, and demands for teacher patience. The study demonstrates that systematic habituation supported by Standard Operating Procedures effectively develops polite character in early childhood when implemented with commitment and structured guidance.

Keywords: Habituation Method, Polite Character, Early Childhood Education, Six-Year-Old Children.

1 Introduction

Early childhood refers to children aged 0-6 years. This developmental period is often described as a golden age and a sensitive period, during which children experience rapid growth and heightened sensitivity to environmental stimuli. At this stage, children have not yet developed a clear understanding of what is good or bad, nor of what is right or wrong. Information is also more easily absorbed during this period, particularly when conveyed through consistent and intensive actions. Moreover, children at this age readily internalize values that are taught through concrete and observable behaviors. One essential aspect of an individual, including young children, that needs to be instilled and developed is character [1]. Character is defined as an attribute that distinguishes an individual and is reflected in attitudes, behaviors, and speech. Such attributes become inherent and deeply rooted in a person's personality and disposition. Character can be observed through one's attitudes, behaviors, speech, and ways of

responding to various situations. Character is essential to develop from an early age, and character formation can be facilitated through character education [2].

Character education is an effort to instill human character values that contribute to shaping an individual's personality toward a better and more virtuous direction. Character education must be introduced from an early age, beginning within the family environment, which serves as the first and foremost educational setting. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation (Permendikbud, 2014) also emphasizes the importance of character education, which aims to develop students' resilience and dignity [3]. The emphasis on character education is not a recent development in Indonesian educational discourse. Ki Hajar Dewantara, the founding father of Indonesian national education, articulated a holistic vision of education that extends beyond mere cognitive development. He asserted that education must cultivate not only intellectual capacity but also moral integrity and virtuous conduct. In his educational philosophy, Ki Hajar Dewantara emphasized three fundamental principles known as *Tri Pusat Pendidikan* (three centers of education): family, school, and community. These centers must work synergistically to nurture children's character, ensuring that values taught in one environment are reinforced in others. This philosophical foundation remains profoundly relevant to contemporary early childhood education, particularly in the context of character formation through consistent and collaborative efforts across educational settings.

The habituation method aligns closely with Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy, particularly his concept of *among* (caring guidance) and *tut wuri handayani* (leading from behind). These principles advocate for educators to guide children through exemplary modeling rather than authoritarian instruction. The habituation method embodies this philosophy by positioning teachers as living examples who demonstrate desired behaviors repeatedly, allowing children to internalize these values through observation and practice. This approach resonates with Ki Hajar Dewantara's belief that authentic character formation emerges not from didactic teaching alone, but from sustained exposure to virtuous conduct within a nurturing educational environment. By consistently modeling polite behaviors and creating structured opportunities for children to practice these behaviors, educators facilitate the gradual internalization of moral values that shape children's developing personalities. As Ki Hajar Dewantara stated, education is not merely an effort to make learners intelligent, knowledgeable, and broad-minded, but must also be oriented toward the formation of noble character, personality, and moral conduct. Therefore, character education is essential to be implemented across all levels of education, including early childhood education [4].

East Manggarai Regency, located in the eastern region of Nusa Tenggara Timur Province, Indonesia, presents unique sociodemographic characteristics that influence early childhood education practices. The region is characterized by a predominantly agricultural economy, with most families engaged in subsistence farming and traditional livelihoods. Educational infrastructure in rural areas of East Manggarai faces challenges including limited access to quality educational resources, geographic isolation of communities, and economic constraints that affect family investment in early childhood education. Despite these challenges, communities in East Manggarai maintain strong cultural traditions that emphasize respect for elders, communal cooperation, and social harmony. However, rapid social changes, including increased exposure to media and shifting family structures, have begun to influence traditional behavioral norms among young children. These contextual factors make the implementation of structured character education programs, such as habituation methods in kindergartens,

particularly crucial for preserving cultural values while preparing children for broader societal participation.

Observations conducted in the Kisol community revealed specific behavioral patterns among young children that necessitate targeted character education interventions. Teachers and parents reported instances of children failing to greet elders when entering homes or public spaces, a behavior traditionally considered essential in Manggarai culture. Additionally, children were observed using direct and sometimes abrupt language when making requests, omitting courteous expressions such as "please" or "thank you" that are culturally valued. During communal meals, some children displayed behaviors such as talking loudly while eating, beginning meals without waiting for others, or showing reluctance to share food with peers. Furthermore, teachers noted that some children demonstrated difficulty in asking permission before taking items belonging to others or before engaging in activities, reflecting a need for stronger understanding of social boundaries and respect for communal property. These specific behavioral observations at the local level provided the practical impetus for examining how TK Negeri Kisol implements habituation methods to address these character development needs within the community context.

In contemporary society, individuals who fail to demonstrate polite and respectful behavior toward others are still frequently encountered. Such behaviors include showing a lack of appreciation for others, using harsh or impolite language, and neglecting to express basic courtesies such as "excuse me," "thank you," "sorry," and "please," among many other forms of discourteous conduct. The absence or declining presence of polite character among people today indicates that character education implemented in schools, families, and the broader community has not yet been fully successful. One of the essential character traits that should be cultivated from an early age is politeness. According to Pertiwi, politeness refers to an individual's attitude, behavior, or actions that demonstrate respect and appreciation toward others. Teaching politeness to young children is crucial, as it helps them understand which behaviors are appropriate and which should be avoided in various situations [5,6].

Politeness does not emerge spontaneously in children, but must be taught through consistent practice and guidance. Without being taught, children will not understand what constitutes polite behavior. Politeness, when cultivated in early childhood education settings, can be developed through various learning activities, such as encouraging children to greet others, fostering habits of exchanging greetings, and teaching them to use courteous expressions such as "sorry," "please," and "thank you," among others. In schools, teachers play a crucial role in introducing values and social norms that influence children's everyday behavior [7]. One of the approaches to implementing character education in schools is through the habituation method. The application of this method is believed to influence and modify children's behavior. Through habituation, positive values can be instilled in children, enabling them to consistently engage in desirable actions. The implementation of habituation must be carried out continuously on a daily basis. When habituation is introduced from an early age, these routines eventually become established habits that become ingrained in the child and shape their personality.

The habituation method is considered one of the oldest educational approaches, involving the repeated performance of certain activities with the aim of turning them into established habits. This method is highly suitable for early childhood education, as children at this developmental stage tend to easily absorb and imitate the behaviors demonstrated by adults

[8]. While various pedagogical approaches exist for character development in early childhood education, the habituation method presents distinct characteristics that differentiate it from alternative strategies. Unlike the lecture-based approach, which relies primarily on verbal instruction and cognitive understanding, the habituation method emphasizes experiential learning through repeated behavioral practice. This contrasts sharply with modeling approaches that focus predominantly on observation without structured repetition, and differs from reward-based behavioral modification techniques that employ external incentives to shape conduct. The habituation method synthesizes elements from multiple theoretical frameworks: it incorporates social learning theory by utilizing teacher modeling, draws from behaviorist principles through consistent repetition, and aligns with constructivist approaches by allowing children to internalize values through direct experience. What distinguishes habituation is its systematic integration of modeling, repetition, and gradual internalization without heavy reliance on external rewards or punishments. This approach proves particularly effective for early childhood settings where children's moral reasoning is still developing and behavioral patterns are most malleable through consistent environmental structuring.

Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development provides crucial theoretical grounding for understanding how six-year-old children internalize polite expressions through habituation. Children at age six typically occupy the late preoperational stage or early concrete operational stage of cognitive development, characterized by developing symbolic thinking and emerging capacity for logical reasoning about concrete experiences. At this developmental juncture, children begin to understand that words carry social meanings beyond their literal definitions and that specific linguistic formulas serve important interpersonal functions. The internalization of "magic words" such as "sorry," "please," "thank you," and "excuse me" occurs through a gradual process whereby children initially imitate these expressions through rote repetition, then begin associating them with specific social contexts, and eventually comprehend their underlying social significance. During the preoperational stage, children's moral understanding remains largely heteronomous, meaning they perceive rules and social conventions as fixed external requirements rather than internally constructed principles. Consequently, the habituation method proves developmentally appropriate because it provides the repeated contextual exposure necessary for children at this cognitive stage to form mental schemas linking specific expressions to social situations. Through consistent practice embedded in authentic daily interactions such as saying "thank you" after receiving food or "please" when making requests children construct cognitive frameworks that associate courteous language with positive social outcomes, gradually transitioning from external compliance to internalized understanding of politeness norms.

The habituation method is highly effective for fostering character development in early childhood. This is consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Firrizky et al. at TK Al Amanah, which showed that routine habituation practices such as encouraging children to say "please" and "thank you" as well as teacher modeling, positively contribute to the development of polite behavior in young children. Another study conducted by Aini et al. at KB Azzahroh Serang revealed that routine activities, spontaneous activities, and teacher modeling are essential components in the implementation of the habituation method, which effectively fosters independence in early childhood [9,10]. TK Negeri Kisol, as one of the formal early childhood education institutions, has implemented the habituation method in its daily activities to instill polite character in children. Based on observations conducted on 12 November 2024, TK Negeri

Kisol had applied several habituation activities, including: lining up when washing hands, disposing of trash properly, greeting others politely, using courteous expressions such as "sorry," "please," "excuse me," and "thank you" after receiving help, saying "excuse me, may I speak" before talking, and refraining from using harsh language toward peers. These habituation practices have been consistently implemented by the teachers at TK Negeri Kisol.

The observations also showed that although some children occasionally forgot to perform the habituation practices taught by the teachers, the teachers consistently reminded them to carry out these behaviors as instructed. Furthermore, during a parent-teacher meeting held in December, one parent stated that "because of the habituation activities at school, the child has become more polite at home and even greets people on the street." This testimony indicates that the habituation practices implemented by the teachers at TK Negeri Kisol have begun to demonstrate positive effects in shaping children's polite character. Based on these findings, the researcher is interested in conducting a more in-depth investigation into the implementation of the habituation method at TK Negeri Kisol as an effort to develop polite character in six-year-old children.

2 Research Methods

This study employs a qualitative descriptive methodology aimed at analyzing and providing an in-depth depiction of the implementation of habituation methods as a strategy for fostering polite character in six-year-old children at TK Negeri Kisol, East Manggarai Regency. The research was conducted in April 2025. The study involved a total of 28 children aged six years who were enrolled in the kindergarten's final year program (Group B). These 28 children served as the subjects of direct classroom observations throughout the data collection period. In addition to the children, three classroom teachers designated as Mrs. A, Mrs. I, and Mrs. S served as the primary informants for this study.

These three teachers were purposively selected based on specific criteria established to ensure comprehensive and credible data collection. The selection criteria included: (1) each teacher possessed a minimum of five years of teaching experience in early childhood education, ensuring adequate expertise in understanding child development and character formation; (2) each teacher demonstrated consistent and exemplary implementation of habituation practices as evidenced through preliminary observations conducted prior to the formal research period; (3) each teacher held direct responsibility for managing daily character development activities within their respective classrooms, including planning, implementing, and evaluating habituation practices; and (4) each teacher showed willingness to participate actively in in-depth interviews and provide access to classroom observations. The purposive selection of these three teachers aimed to capture comprehensive perspectives from educators who were actively and successfully engaged in implementing habituation methods across different classroom contexts within the same institutional setting, thereby ensuring richness and depth of qualitative data.

The research procedure encompassed several stages, including data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The document study component involved systematic examination of institutional Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) related to habituation practices, weekly and daily lesson plans (RPPM and RPPH), teacher observation logs, and photographic documentation of classroom activities. Document analysis followed a

structured protocol: first, all relevant documents were catalogued chronologically; second, content was coded according to predetermined themes aligned with research objectives (types of habituation, implementation procedures, and reported challenges); third, coded segments were cross-referenced with observational and interview data to identify patterns of convergence or divergence; and fourth, triangulated findings were synthesized to construct comprehensive understanding of habituation implementation. This systematic approach to document analysis ensured transparency in how written institutional materials informed research findings and enabled verification of consistency between documented policies and actual classroom practices.

The instruments utilized consisted of observation sheets, interview guidelines, and document study formats, while the data collection techniques included direct observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The collected data were analyzed through systematic processes of reduction, presentation, and verification to produce valid and comprehensive findings regarding the implementation of habituation methods in the development of children's polite behavior.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Habituation Practices Implemented at TK Negeri Kisol as an Effort to Develop Polite Character in Six-Year-Old Children

3.1.1 Greeting Politely

Greeting others politely is an essential attitude to be taught to children from an early age. TK Negeri Kisol, as one of the early childhood education institutions, also implements the habituation of polite greetings. Based on interviews with three teachers Ms. A, Ms. I, and Ms. S along with observational findings, it was revealed that the practice of greeting politely has been implemented consistently across various daily activities within the school environment. Teachers actively model courteous communication by greeting children with phrases such as "good morning" or "good afternoon" and by asking about their well-being each day. Children are also habituated to greet teachers politely when arriving at school, before entering the classroom, and when going home. The greeting routine is carried out using polite expressions accompanied by respectful actions, such as kissing the teacher's hand or offering a formal greeting while lining up. Teachers consistently guide and remind children who forget to greet, as this forms an integral part of the habituation process. This habituation aligns with the smile, greeting, salutation, politeness, and courtesy (5S) practice discussed in Syifa. The study explains that the development of courteous and friendly character in early childhood can be fostered through consistent implementation of the 5S habituation, one of which is the practice of greeting (sapa). The application of this habituation contributes significantly to the formation of polite character in children [11].

3.1.2 Expressing Gratitude

In addition to habituating children to greet others politely, teachers at TK Negeri Kisol also consistently teach and encourage children to express gratitude whenever they receive help or assistance from others. Based on interviews with three teachers Mrs. A, Mrs. S, and Mrs. I it was found that the practice of saying "thank you" has been implemented consistently across

various daily activities. The teachers actively model and reinforce the behavior of expressing gratitude, particularly after receiving help or being given something. Mrs. A explained that this habituation is carried out every day, such as when children are assisted or lent an item. Mrs. S added that in concrete situations, for example when a teacher helps a child open the cap of a water bottle, the child is immediately taught to say "thank you." Meanwhile, Mrs. I noted that this habituation is also strengthened through songs or chants, storytelling activities, and the use of positive reinforcement in the form of praise for children who express gratitude spontaneously.

The observations conducted support the interview findings. For instance, during communal mealtime, children who received food from their peers spontaneously expressed gratitude by saying "thank you." Similarly, when a child borrowed a broom from the teacher, the child immediately said "thank you" upon returning it. During a birthday celebration held by the teachers and children, the teacher reminded the children to say "thank you" after receiving candy. The children then spontaneously expressed gratitude after receiving the candy. If any child forgot to say "thank you," the teacher promptly provided a reminder. This habituation aligns with the findings of the study conducted by Wiranti and Nisa. Their research highlights the use of four "magic words," one of which is the expression of gratitude through saying "thank you." In their study, the use of the phrase "thank you" is emphasized when a child or an individual receives assistance or obtains something from another person [11].

3.1.3 Polite Behavior During Mealtime

Based on interviews with the three teachers (Mrs. A, Mrs. S, and Mrs. I) and the observations conducted, it was found that the habituation of eating in an orderly and polite manner has been consistently implemented at TK Negeri Kisol as part of early character development. The teachers actively provide guidance, model proper eating behavior, and repeatedly remind the children of appropriate mealtime rules. Mrs. A emphasized the importance of reminding children not to talk while eating and to avoid spilling their food. Mrs. S added that before eating, the children are taught to pray together, sit properly, and are encouraged to share their food with peers. Mrs. I further explained that the teachers establish clear mealtime rules and invite the children to pray before beginning their meal.

Observational data indicate that during mealtime activities, the children ate in an orderly manner, sat properly, and followed the teachers' instructions. The teachers actively reinforced appropriate dining behavior by consistently reminding the children of proper mealtime etiquette, such as avoiding noise, not wasting food, and finishing their meals calmly. The repeated reinforcement of rules and the modeling of appropriate behavior by the teachers played a crucial role in shaping positive habits among the children. Children gradually develop understanding of social values and ethics through cognitive development processes, including habits related to eating behavior. In the context of dining etiquette, teachers alongside parents play an important role in teaching children the significance of sharing food, appreciating what they have, and developing a sense of gratitude [12].

3.1.4 Speaking Politely

Teachers at TK Negeri Kisol also cultivate the habit of speaking politely among children in their daily interactions by encouraging the use of expressions such as "please," "sorry," and "excuse me." Based on interviews with the three teachers and classroom observations, it was found that the habituation of polite speech has been implemented consistently as an integral part of

character development at the school. The teachers actively guide children to use polite expressions in their everyday communication, including "please," "sorry," "thank you," and "excuse me." According to Mrs. I, teachers not only model polite language through daily interactions but also incorporate it into activities such as reading storybooks that contain moral lessons. Mrs. S further explained that the children are encouraged to greet teachers and peers politely and are trained to raise their hands before speaking as a sign of respect and adherence to appropriate classroom communication etiquette.

The observational findings also support the teacher's statement. For instance, during mealtime, a child was seen politely requesting assistance from the teacher by using the word 'please', and after receiving help, the child expressed gratitude by saying 'thank you'. In addition, the children are accustomed to speaking courteously and refraining from using inappropriate or harsh language, both inside and outside the classroom. If any child uses improper words, the teacher immediately provides a corrective reminder in an educational and constructive manner. The habituation method enables children to repeatedly practice behaviors until they become part of their daily routines, embodying the principle that education through habitual activities shapes children to perform behaviors independently without explicit instruction [13].

3.1.5 Requesting Permission Before Engaging in an Activity

Based on the results of interviews and observations, it was found that Kisol Public Kindergarten has consistently implemented the habituation of requesting permission before engaging in any activity as part of the children's daily routines. The children are accustomed to asking for permission in various situations, such as before going to the toilet, before using play materials such as blocks, or when they wish to borrow items belonging to their peers or from another class. The teachers actively model and guide the children to ensure that requesting permission becomes an established habit prior to taking any action. If a child forgets, the teacher immediately provides a gentle and educational reminder. This habituation aims to develop children's character by fostering a sense of responsibility, respect for the rights of others, and adherence to social norms from an early age. The habituation of requesting permission aligns with the findings of Hasanah et al. Their study indicates that one of the habituation practices implemented to cultivate polite character in children is encouraging them to request permission and ask appropriately when borrowing belongings from their peers [14].

3.1.6 Showing Care and Concern

Care and concern for others and the environment constitute an essential component of character formation implemented by the teachers at Kisol Public Kindergarten. Based on interviews with three teachers Mrs. A, Mrs. S, and Mrs. I as well as observations conducted, it was found that the teachers cultivate children's caring character through daily habituation practices at school. These practices include caring for the environment by disposing of waste properly, sweeping the classroom, and cleaning play materials. In addition to environmental care, children are also habituated to care for their personal hygiene, such as washing their hands and brushing their teeth. Caring behaviors toward peers are likewise encouraged, including sharing food and helping friends who experience difficulty, such as distributing drinking water. In implementing these habituation practices, the teachers consistently instill these values through daily routines and exemplary conduct. The habituation of caring behavior is also reflected in the findings of Rukiyati, who reported that teachers foster children's sense of care through the implementation of daily routines such as sharing food, disposing of waste properly, organizing play materials

by returning them neatly to their designated places, and training children to collaborate with one another [15].

3.1.7 Acting Honestly

To cultivate honesty in children, the teachers at Kisol Public Kindergarten consistently teach and habituate them to express things truthfully and as they are. Based on the interviews and observations conducted, it was found that the teachers have implemented systematic habituation practices to foster honest behavior among the children. Honesty is instilled through routine activities such as collecting savings money and conducting direct honesty checks. Teachers also read stories that emphasize honesty and continuously reinforce the importance of not lying. Observational findings indicate that the children have begun to demonstrate honest behavior, such as admitting when they did not attend church or spontaneously returning borrowed items. Positive habituation practices contribute to the development of honest character in children [16].

3.2 Procedural Steps in Implementing the Habituation Method at Kisol Public Kindergarten as an Effort to Cultivate Polite Character in Six-Year-Old Children

Based on interviews with three teachers Mrs. A, Mrs. S, and Mrs. I as well as the observations conducted, it was found that the procedural steps for implementing habituation are largely consistent across the various types of habituation activities applied. The observations also revealed that Kisol Public Kindergarten possesses several Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) documents that guide the implementation of these habituation practices. The use of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in the implementation of habituation practices is also consistent with the findings of Siregar in the study entitled 'Building Discipline Through Standard Operating Procedures'. The findings of the study indicate that the implementation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) aims to continuously instill habituated behaviors in children, with the expectation that they will eventually develop disciplined and independent character traits. Thus, as the children grow older, they are expected to develop positive character traits that will guide them throughout their lives. Another study was conducted by Haniza entitled 'The Development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to Foster Early Childhood Character Development at Islamic Kindergarten Mataram City in 2021'. The findings of this study indicate that the presence of SOPs for developing early childhood character facilitates teachers in implementing character education. With SOPs in place, the procedural steps for character-building activities become more directed and structured. Therefore, the use of SOP in each type of habituation activity supports the successful implementation of these practices and ensures that their execution remains well-organized and goal-oriented [17,18].

The procedural steps implemented by the teachers at Kisol Public Kindergarten in carrying out habituation practices, as identified through interviews and observations, include the following:

3.2.1 Identifying and Agreeing Upon the Types of Habituation Activities to Be Implemented

Based on the interviews and observations conducted, it was found that Kisol Public Kindergarten carries out a planning process prior to implementing any type of habituation activity. This planning is conducted at the end of the school day, during which the teachers hold a meeting in the school office. This practice aligns with the findings of Antika and Karlina, who reported that planning the habituation method to enhance children's independence involves preparing a Weekly Learning Implementation Plan (RPPM), which is then further elaborated into a Daily Learning Implementation Plan (RPPH) [19].

3.2.2 Habituation Begins with the Teacher

Based on the findings obtained through interviews and observations, it was identified that in the process of implementing the predetermined habituation practices, teachers consistently remind children to carry out these routines properly. Teachers not only explain and teach the habituation activities but also act as continual reminders whenever a child forgets to perform them. At Kisol Public Kindergarten, habituation begins with the teachers themselves. They serve as the primary models and are always the first to provide explanations while demonstrating directly how each habituation activity should be carried out. Teachers play an important role as role models whose behavior significantly influences children's character development. Children tend to imitate the behaviors of teachers whom they perceive as figures of authority and guidance [20].

3.2.3 Implementing the Practices Consistently and Continuously

Based on the interviews and observations conducted, it was found that the teachers at Kisol Public Kindergarten implement the habituation practices consistently and continuously. The predetermined habituation activities are carried out daily at school. The purpose of maintaining this consistency is to ensure that children do not forget the routines and are able to internalize and understand the practices taught by their teachers. Continuous habituation can shape children's behavior into stable and consistent habits, which can foster children's preferences and behaviors until these become ingrained as customary actions that are inseparable from their developing personality [21].

3.2.4 Refraining from Criticizing or Condemning Children When They Make Mistakes

Based on the interviews and observations conducted, it was found that in implementing habituation practices, teachers do not criticize or reprimand children when they make mistakes. Instead, the teachers remind them of the correct way to carry out the expected behaviors. Teachers function as facilitators who guide children and provide meaningful learning experiences, which means teachers hold specific roles, including serving as guides who direct children toward learning centers and having the responsibility to prepare various resources that enable learners to gain meaningful experiences. This theory emphasizes that teachers, as facilitators and mentors, are obliged to guide children when they make mistakes and to prepare them to continually remain on positive developmental paths that support better outcomes in their future lives [22].

3.2.5 Reminding Children Who Forget to Perform the Expected Habituation

Based on the interviews and observations conducted, it was found that teachers at TK Negeri Kisol consistently reminded children whenever they forgot to carry out the habituation practices that had been taught and implemented at school. This action was taken to ensure that children immediately corrected inappropriate behaviors and replaced them with appropriate actions that aligned with the expectations and guidance provided by the teachers. This is also supported by Ulya, who states that reminding children when they forget to carry out habituation practices is one of the essential steps implemented in the execution of habituation activities in schools [23].

3.2.6 Providing Appreciation to Each Child

Based on the findings obtained through interviews and observations, it was identified that the teachers at TK Negeri Kisol implemented the following steps in applying the habituation method: determining and agreeing upon the types of habituation activities to be carried out,

initiating the habituation process through teacher modeling, practicing the activities consistently and continuously, refraining from criticizing children for mistakes, reminding children when they forget to perform the expected behaviors, and providing appreciation to each child. Providing appreciation increases children's motivation and reinforces positive behavior, which is one of the key steps in implementing habituation is giving individual appreciation to each child. Such appreciation helps children feel happy and motivated, thereby reinforcing the desired behaviors and supporting the habituation process [24].

3.3 Challenges Experienced by Teachers in Implementing the Habituation Method as an Effort to Develop Polite Character in Six-Year-Old Children at TK Negeri Kisol

Based on interviews with three teachers and observations conducted at TK Negeri Kisol, it was found that teachers encountered several challenges in their efforts to cultivate polite character in children. First, there was a discrepancy or lack of continuity between habituation practices implemented at school and behavioral expectations reinforced at home, which hindered the consistency of children's character development. This finding is consistent with previous studies indicating that misalignment between school-based practices and parenting approaches constitutes a major obstacle in the implementation of habituation methods. Second, variations in children's levels of understanding of the material taught by teachers present an additional challenge. Not all children are able to respond to habituation practices at the same pace, thereby requiring increased attention and individualized guidance from teachers. Differences in cognitive abilities and learning readiness among children are known to influence their capacity to follow instructions and achieve learning outcomes effectively. Third, irregular attendance or infrequent participation in school activities also poses a significant challenge, as children who do not attend regularly tend to forget or fail to internalize the habituation practices that have been introduced, such as performing prayers correctly. In this context, the school environment plays a crucial role in shaping children's behavior through structured learning activities, social interactions, and continuous teacher guidance. Fourth, teachers are required to possess a high level of patience and consistency in implementing the habituation method to ensure that values of politeness are internalized meaningfully and sustainably within the child. Thus, the implementation of the habituation method necessitates comprehensive support from both the school and the family, as well as strong commitment and persistence from teachers as the primary facilitators in the school setting. The findings of this study are consistent with those of Anggraeni et al., who assert that maintaining consistency in habituation practices is one of the primary challenges in implementing such methods. They explain that habituation activities are repetitive in nature; therefore, teachers must remain consistently patient and persistent in teaching and reinforcing these habituation practices to young children [25–28].

4 Conclusion

The implementation of the habituation method at TK Negeri Kisol as an effort to foster polite character in early childhood has been carried out effectively by both teachers and young learners. The students are considered to have demonstrated polite character, as reflected in the behavioral indicators expected of six-year-old children. Based on the findings of the study, various forms of habituation practiced at TK Negeri Kisol include greeting politely, expressing gratitude, displaying proper manners during meals, speaking courteously, asking for permission before engaging in an activity, showing concern for others, and demonstrating honesty.

The steps implemented in the habituation process include determining the types of habituation activities, initiating the habituation through teacher modeling, practicing the behaviors consistently, refraining from criticizing children for mistakes, reminding children when they forget to perform the expected behavior, and providing positive reinforcement to each child. These procedural steps are guided by Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that ensure systematic and structured implementation of character-building activities. The use of SOPs facilitates teachers in maintaining consistency and direction in their daily habituation practices, thereby supporting the successful internalization of polite behaviors among children.

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