



Strengthening Children's Disciplined Character through Habitative Activities at Melati Tobungku PAUD, South Totikum District

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ABSTRAK

Strengthening the character of discipline in early childhood is an important step in the formation of orderly and responsible behavior from an early age. Based on the results of observations of students of MPPL Berdampak in PAUD Melati, Tobungku Village, South Totikum District, there are still children who are not consistent in following class rules, such as being less orderly in lining up, not being used to tidying up toys, and not being disciplined in following the daily activity schedule. This study aims to improve the character of children's discipline through habituation activities carried out in the learning process. The method used is classroom action research which is carried out in 2 cycles including the stages of planning, implementation of actions, observation and reflection. The subjects of the study are early childhood PAUD Melati, Tobungku Village, South Totikum District. Data collection techniques are carried out through observation and documentation, then analyzed descriptively. The results of the study indicate an increase in children's discipline in each cycle after the implementation of habituation activities consistently and structured. The conclusion of the study shows that habituation activities through classroom action research are effective in improving the character of early childhood discipline

INTRODUCTION

Instilling a sense of discipline is a crucial aspect of early childhood education, as the ages of 5–6 represent a sensitive period for the formation of behaviors and habits that tend to become ingrained (Zea et al., 2026). Early childhood education plays a strategic role in shaping children’s character, particularly in instilling the value of discipline as the foundation for orderly behavior and responsibility. A child’s disciplined attitude can be observed through their ability to follow rules, arrive on time, tidy up play materials after use, and adhere to the school’s activity schedule (Yuyun Ernawati Samad et al., 2025).

Preliminary observations conducted at the Melati Early Childhood Education Center in Tobungku Village, South Totikum District, indicate that some children are not yet consistent in following classroom rules. Several children still require guidance to participate in activities in an orderly manner. This situation highlights the need for efforts to strengthen disciplinary character through a structured and sustained habit-forming approach.

The development of children’s character is not solely the responsibility of the school but also of the family and the community. Every child has a different upbringing background, which influences their character development. John Locke’s view of the “*tabula rasa*” posits that a child is like a blank slate shaped by the experiences and education they receive. Therefore, parenting styles and the surrounding environment play a crucial role in shaping a child’s character, including their sense of discipline (Nastiti, 2022; Salsabila & Lessy, 2022).

Geographically, Tobungku Village is a hilly area where most residents work as fishermen, farmers, and entrepreneurs. The relatively high volume of economic activities limits the time parents can spend supervising their children at home. This situation makes early childhood education (PAUD) institutions strategic in instilling and reinforcing a disciplined character from an early age.

Based on a needs assessment at PAUD Melati, strengthening children’s disciplined behavior still requires a more systematic and structured approach. Therefore, this community service activity aims to improve children’s discipline through the consistent and sustained implementation of a habit-forming program within the school environment.

Theoretically, the habit-forming method is rooted in behaviorist theory, which emphasizes the importance of repetition in shaping behavior, and is reinforced by Albert Bandura’s social learning theory, which explains that children learn through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. Thus, consistent habit formation accompanied by teachers’ exemplary behavior can strengthen the internalization of disciplinary values in children. National policy also emphasizes that the reinforcement of character education in early childhood education (PAUD) is carried out through routine, spontaneous activities, and exemplary behavior (Ministry of National Education, 2020)

Various studies indicate that routine-building is effective in fostering discipline in young children. A study published in the journal *Obsesi* shows that daily routine activities—such as lining up before entering the classroom, simple duty schedules, and play rules—can significantly improve children’s discipline

indicators (Juanda, 2019). Other classroom action research also indicates that the implementation of habit-forming activities in practical life settings can enhance children's discipline and independence (Seila, 2024).

Based on these findings, the discipline-strengthening program through habit-forming activities at the Melati Early Childhood Education Center in Tobungku Village is expected to have a tangible impact on children's character development and serve as a best practice in the implementation of character education within early childhood education institutions

IMPLEMENTATION AND METHOD

This community service activity was conducted using Kurt Lewin's Classroom Action Research (PTK) approach, aimed at enhancing children's discipline through the application of habit-forming methods in the learning process. The activity was carried out at PAUD Melati in Tobungku Village, Totikum Selatan Subdistrict, Banggai Islands Regency, targeting the students of PAUD Melati.

The activity was carried out in two cycles, with each cycle comprising the stages of planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection. These stages were carried out systematically and continuously to ensure improvements in each cycle. The flow of the activity is presented in Figure 1.

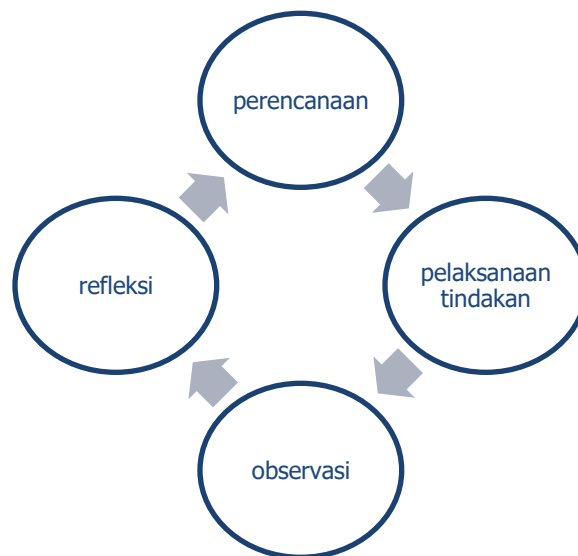


Figure 1. Activity Implementation Flow

Planning Phase

Documentation of initial observations was used as the basis for needs analysis in developing a community service program aimed at improving discipline among young children. The program focused on establishing habits such as lining up before entering the classroom, tidying up play materials, following classroom rules, and completing tasks on time. Data was collected through disciplinary behavior observation sheets and activity documentation, then analyzed descriptively by comparing changes in children's behavior across each cycle. The program's success was marked by an increase in the number of

children demonstrating disciplined behavior in accordance with the established indicators.



Figure 2. Planning Observation Personal Doc.

Implementation Stage Pre-Cycle



Figure 3. Pre-Cycle Morning Roll Call Activity



Figure 4. Pre-cycle Teaching Activities



Figure 5. Pre-cycle Toy Return Activity

Cycle 1



Figure 6. Morning assembly activities in cycle I



Figure 7. teaching activities in cycle I

Cycle 2



Figure 8. Morning assembly activities, cycle II



Figure 9 teaching activities in cycle II



Figure 10. Cycle II toy return activity

Observation Phase

At this stage, observations focus on the actions taken by the teacher. Observations simultaneously monitor classroom activities to assess changes in student behavior resulting from the services provided. Data collection tools, such as observation sheets, are used to record students' (children's) performance during the activities.

Reflection Stage

During the reflection stage, teachers conduct a collaborative evaluation to assess the results of the program activities that have been implemented. The evaluation includes an analysis of events during the activities as well as any issues that arose. The results of the reflection serve as the basis for improving future interventions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This community service activity was conducted at PAUD Melati, Totikum Selatan Subdistrict, with the aim of strengthening children's discipline through habit-forming methods. The program was motivated by the still-low levels of disciplined behavior among children, such as arriving late, failing to tidy up toys, and being disorderly during learning activities. The activity was implemented through the stages of planning, daily habit formation (arriving on time, returning toys, following the teacher's instructions, and completing tasks), observation of children's behavioral development over two cycles, and reflection as a program evaluation. The consistent and repeated application of habit formation showed an improvement in children's disciplinary behavior after several weeks of activity implementation.

Pre-Cycle Phase Analysis

During the pre-cycle phase, initial observations indicated that the level of discipline among the children at the Melati Early Childhood Education Center in Tobungku Village, South Totikum Subdistrict, was still relatively low. The observed indicators of discipline included arriving on time, the habit of putting toys back in their proper places, following the teacher's instructions, and completing tasks on time.

Table 1. Observation Findings

Discipline Indicators	Pre-cycle (%)
Arrived on time	50%
Returned toys to their proper places	58%
Followed teacher instructions	67%
Completed assignments on time	46%

The findings revealed that only 50% of children arrive at school on time, while the rest still tend to be late or arrive just in time. Children's low sense of responsibility is evidenced by the fact that only 58% of them are in the habit of putting their toys back in their proper places. Additionally, children's ability to

follow teachers' instructions remains inadequate, with only 67% able to do so effectively. This highlights the need for a more effective approach to help children understand and comply with given instructions. The final assessment indicator – the ability to complete tasks on time – was achieved by only 46% of the children.

Cycle 1

In Cycle I, the researcher began implementing a structured habit-forming method through daily routine activities at the Melati Early Childhood Education Center in Tobungku Village, South Totikum District. The habit-forming activities were conducted by providing direct modeling, verbal reinforcement, and consistent daily reminders. The focus of habit formation in Cycle I included arriving at school on time, returning toys to their proper places after use, following the teacher's instructions, and completing tasks on time.

Table 2. Cycle I Findings

Assessment Indicators	Cycle I (%)
Arrived on time	67%
Returned toys to their proper places	67%
Followed teacher instructions	71%
Completed assignments on time	54%

Based on the results of observations following the implementation of interventions in Cycle I, there was an improvement in the children's disciplinary behavior compared to the pre-cycle phase. The children began to show greater awareness of the importance of punctuality, and most were willing to return items, although they still needed to be reminded by the teacher.

However, there were still some children who required further guidance and reinforcement so that disciplined behavior could be consistently established without the need for constant reminders. Based on the results obtained in Cycle I, there was an improvement in the children's disciplinary behavior compared to the pre-cycle phase. However, the results achieved have not yet met the success indicator (>85%). Therefore, the intervention will proceed to Cycle II with more optimal reinforcement and strategies to ensure the children's discipline develops to its fullest potential.

Cycle II

Based on the results of the interventions implemented in Cycle II, there was an improvement in the children's disciplinary behavior compared to Cycle I. The more consistent application of the habituation method, combined with the provision of positive reinforcement and simple rewards, yielded more optimal results. The percentage of children arriving on time reached 79%, returning toys to their proper places 71%, following the teacher's instructions 75%, and completing tasks on time 83%.

Another significant improvement was observed in the indicator of completing tasks on time. The children appeared more responsible in completing the assigned activities. In Cycle II, the children's disciplinary behavior showed greater improvement compared to the previous cycle. Although not all indicators met the target (<85%), the majority of children had begun to demonstrate disciplinary habits more consistently. Thus, the habit-forming method proved effective in improving the children's disciplinary character; however, continued reinforcement and consistent practice are still necessary to achieve optimal results.

Table 3. Findings of cycle II

Indicators	Percentage %
Arrived on time	79%
Returned toys on time	71%
Followed teacher instructions	75%
Completed assignments on time	83%

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the classroom action research conducted at PAUD Melati, it can be concluded that the application of the habit-forming method in a planned, consistent, and repetitive manner is effective in improving the disciplinary character of young children. Improvements were observed in disciplinary indicators, such as punctuality, returning toys to their proper places, following the teacher's instructions, and completing tasks on time, from the pre-cycle stage through Cycle II. This method is easy to implement in daily activities, involves teacher modeling, and can be carried out continuously. Although not all indicators have reached the success target (>85%) and there are still children who require intensive support, consistent habit formation supported by cooperation between teachers and parents has the potential to become an effective strategy in strengthening character education for young children.

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