



## Instilling the Value of Mutual Cooperation in Civics Education through Regular Collective Waste Disposal Activities as a Strategy for Environmental Damage Prevention among Elementary School Students

Syaibatul Aslamiah<sup>1</sup>, Mirna Astuti<sup>2</sup>, Wahyu Hidayat<sup>3</sup>

Phone number: 089526822842

<sup>1</sup>Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Muhajirin Pemangkih Seberang. [syaibatulaslamiah@staimuhajirin.ac.id](mailto:syaibatulaslamiah@staimuhajirin.ac.id)

<sup>2</sup>Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Muhajirin Pemangkih Seberang. [mirnaastuti@staimuhajirin.ac.id](mailto:mirnaastuti@staimuhajirin.ac.id)

<sup>3</sup>Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Nahdlatul Ulama, Purworejo. [wahyuhidayat@stainupwr.ac.id](mailto:wahyuhidayat@stainupwr.ac.id)

Corresponding Author:  
Wahyuhidayat, Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Nahdlatul Ulama, Purworejo. [wahyuhidayat@stainupwr.ac.id](mailto:wahyuhidayat@stainupwr.ac.id)

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### Abstract

The natural environment is closely interconnected with human life, making environmental awareness and responsibility essential to ensure sustainability. One of the current challenges in education is the decline of students' environmental awareness as a result of moral degradation, particularly reflected in the habit of littering. This study aims to describe the implementation of routine waste disposal activities through habituation of gotong royong (mutual cooperation) as an effort to develop environmental care character among students at SDN 2 Pemangkih Seberang. This research employed a qualitative method with a case study approach. Data were collected through direct observation, documentation, and interviews with the school principal. The collected data were analyzed descriptively to portray the process and outcomes of the habituation activities. The results indicate that routine gotong royong activities carried out three times a week effectively foster positive habits among students, including discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and environmental awareness. Furthermore, this habituation process successfully internalizes character values integrated into Civic Education learning, particularly within the gotong royong material. Therefore, routine waste disposal activities through gotong royong habituation can serve as an effective strategy for instilling environmental care character and shaping students with noble character and responsibility toward their surrounding environment.

**Keywords:** *habituation, environmental care, gotong royong, civic education, elementary school*

## Introduction

Nature is an inseparable part of human life so it has a close relationship between humans and the universe. Therefore, a positive environment will create a good life for humans (Idrus & Novia, 2018). The goodness of nature provides health and safety for human life. Nature can provide health in the form of clean air and a clean environment. Preserving nature is the responsibility of humans as caliphs fiil ard. By taking care of nature, we protect the lives and future of future generations and keep them always on good (Marlina et al., 2024). Knowledge of nature teaches students to understand natural concepts, but also equips them with a systematic, logical way of thinking (Dwiyanti et al., 2022). This is in line with Mustafa's statement in his research that if the quality of human resources is good, life on this earth will be better so that productivity is high, but vice versa. If human resources are bad, then life on this earth becomes bad (Mustafa, 2022). Improving human resources is an effort made by education to create good, dignified and moral individuals.

Education is something that shapes and directs students to goodness and towards the direction of change for the Indonesian nation (Mansur, 2018). Education in general has the purpose of educating the life of the nation, this is in line with the preamble of the 1945 Constitution which is a source of reference for the life of the Indonesian people, in particular. Currently, education is not only intellectual, in the context of understanding or thinking, but also behavioral intelligence or morals. Indonesian education is an education based on character. This is in line with the characteristics of a society that does live in a culture of upholding good manners. However, in fact, Indonesia is currently experiencing a moral deterioration, which is shown by the decline in polite and polite attitudes towards parents, especially teachers, and the moral deterioration of school-age young people. This is the starting point for the world of education to focus on teaching and learning activities not only thinking skills but also the ability to behave or it can be said that education is starting to focus efforts on improving morals in students.

This moral deterioration has a serious impact on the lives of the nation's children, especially in behavior that shows indifference to the environment and surroundings so that this has an impact on environmental damage (Hudi et al., 2024). This is because careless behavior can affect the environment, where one of the acts of indifference that reflects moral deterioration is littering that is used as culture and considered ordinary for the community, so that various impacts occur such as environmental pollution, respiratory disorders to the occurrence of flash floods that often harm humans (Radjak et al., 2023). So that in this regard, it can be understood that human life that does not care about the environment has an influence on the order of human life itself.

School is an important part of the educational process for humans. Various efforts in the educational process are made to change and shape human beings for the better, one of which is to change the character of students to become human beings who have high concern and are useful for the country and nation. This is in accordance with the purpose of education contained in Article 1 Paragraph 1 of the NRI Law No. 20 of 2003 that: "Education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble morals (Abdur et al., 2024). Based on the Law, educational achievements form human beings who are not only academically intelligent but also formed by well-behaved humans. In elementary school learning, education that includes knowledge and character formation is contained in the subject of Civic Education.

In civic education, students who are moral and care about the environment are formed as contained in the gotong royong material. In this material, students are required to understand and apply concern for the surroundings through collaborative learning activities,

care, and mutual help (Putri et al., 2024). Other studies also highlight the formation of Pancasila student profile character. The novelty of this research is in the formation through habituation activities that focus on the ability to care for the environment. This research looks at and reveals how the value of mutual cooperation in disposing of waste can foster character, caring attitudes and protecting the environment for children as a generation that makes changes and protects nature through their sense of concern for the environment. Therefore, the implementation of regular joint waste disposal activities can be an innovative means in instilling character and awareness in preventing environmental damage in students. In this study, it will be observed in depth on the implementation of routine waste disposal activities carried out at SDN 2 Pemangkih Seberang.

### Methods

This study uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. Case studies were used in this study because they focused on direct observation to see the habits carried out in small groups (Ilhami et al., 2024). The small group in this study is the implementation of routine waste disposal activities at SDN 2 Pemangkih Seberang which are rarely carried out by other schools as an implementation of the PKn subject of mutual cooperation material. This research was conducted on students at SDN 2 Pemangkih Seberang. School activities that aim to form students through habituation, waste disposal activities as routine activities. The collection of research results is in the form of direct observation and observing activities held by the school which are then documented and interviewed with the Principal at SDN 2 Pemangkih Seberang. The data that has been obtained is then analyzed and described in the form of research results. The illustration in this research is as follows:



Figure 1. Case Study Research Stage (Modifikasi dari Kusmarni, 2012).

### Results

The habit of children throwing garbage in its place is the result of habituation carried out by teachers. The habit is carried out by wrapping it in a routine garbage disposal activity which is carried out 3 times a week with various ways of packaging activities, including, after rest, after gymnastics and during breaks. From this study, it can be seen that the habituation

carried out can shape students into individuals with good habits. Habits in children are not formed by themselves but are formed through habits.

Education forms people who are not only intelligent in their way of thinking but also have insight into caring for others who are said to be characters (Mustaghfiroh & Listyaningsih, 2023). Through education, one of the things that is formed in individuals is character. National Education No. 20 of 2003 Chapter III Article 3 states that: National education functions to develop abilities and form personalities or dispositions that aim to build a dignified national civilization in order to educate the life of the nation (Salsabilah et al., 2021). The purpose of character education is to develop the potential of students to become human beings who believe in God Almighty, as well as create goodness for the surroundings (Isnaini H, & Fanreza, 2023). One of the characters that is formed and can also provide good for the surroundings is to help others en masse without reciprocity, there is called mutual cooperation.

Gotong royong is a term that means working together to achieve the desired common results and goals (Kurnia et al., 2023). Gotong Royong activities are generally carried out in cleaning activities. The attitude of mutual cooperation develops students' ability to collaborate, care, and share (Akmaliani & Rohita, 2025). This ability at SDN 2 Pemangkih Seberang was then developed through habituation packaged through a routine activity program at school. This is as conveyed by the Principal of SDN 2 Pemangkih Seberang:

*“Students at this school are accustomed to cleaning the school yard to teach them about environmental cleanliness. In the school, children are accustomed to working together to clean the school environment every three times a week, namely Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. The gotong royong activity which is used as a key is carried out after the morning gymnastics activity, with the existence of gotong royong activities, indirectly the teacher teaches that maintaining the school environment is not only the teacher's job but also they are involved in maintaining the cleanliness of the school environment”.*

The activities carried out are activities that cause *funishment* in students where students end up throwing garbage in their place as conscious individuals. This is in line with the research conducted by Zachroh and Fahrana which states that practicing this habit consistently and effectively and giving a warning in its practice can have a huge impact on good habits and concern for others who have done the activity (Zachroh & Farhana, 2024). This is as conveyed by the teacher at the school who said:

*“After the implementation of the gotong royong activity, students are aware and no longer throw garbage carelessly, because they think that if they throw garbage carelessly, they will be punished and they will also take the garbage they threw earlier, so they think that it is better to immediately throw garbage in its place”.*

## Discussion

Activities carried out with this habituation make students perform good behavior as part of the self-awareness that is formed. Through direct activities that make students involved and encourage activeness and play a role in improving their understanding of learning, especially in the subject of citizenship of gotong royong materials (Nugroho et al., 2025). This is in line with what was conveyed by Danuara and Giyoto in their research that habituation methods that involve students directly in the form of good habits or habituation in daily life can shape individual character (Danuara & Giyoto, 2024). In character education, good habits are very important in shaping the character of good and quality students (Sofia et al., 2023). This is

also supported by what was conveyed by Navayana et al, that this habituation method can be an effective strategy in instilling good values in the school environment in shaping the character of students that have a sustainable effect on life (Navayana et al., 2024). It is also supported by the statement by Lindra and Tetrawan that the teaching strategy that actively engages students and encourages critical thinking and fosters student awareness (Lindra & Tetrawan, 2025). Towards this formation, education prepares students to be equipped through learning activities. One of them is contained in civics learning.

## Conclusion

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of routine waste disposal activities through the habit of mutual cooperation at SDN 2 Pemangkih Seberang has proven to be effective in forming the character of environmental care in students. This activity not only instills the habit of disposing of waste in its place, but also fosters character values such as responsibility, cooperation, discipline, and environmental awareness in a sustainable manner. Habituation that is carried out consistently, structured, and integrated in civic education learning, especially in gotong royong materials, is able to internalize moral values to students. Through the active involvement of students in school cleaning activities, education is not only oriented to the mastery of cognitive knowledge, but also to the formation of attitudes and behaviors that reflect noble morals. Thus, schools play a strategic role as an effective educational environment in forming human resources who have character, care for the environment, and are responsible for the sustainability of social life and the surrounding nature. The habit of disposing of garbage through mutual cooperation needs to be maintained and developed with a variety of more innovative activities so that the motivation and participation of students are maintained. May this program become a sustainable school culture. Civic Education teachers are expected to continue to integrate the values of caring for the environment in the learning process, both through intracurricular and extracurricular activities, so that the formation of students' character can take place holistically. The research is expected to be used as a reference to further examine the formation of environmental concern character with different approaches or methods, as well as involve a wider range of research subjects and locations to obtain more comprehensive results and stronger generalizations.

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