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# Habituation of Disciplinary Character Traits in Early Childhood: A Case Study from RA Arif Rahman Hakim Yogyakarta

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## Keywords:

Early-Childhood Discipline, Character Education, Habituation Techniques, Teacher's Efforts

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Received 11 05 2023  
Revised 03 06 2023  
Accepted 28 06 2023  
Published Online First 30 06 2023



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## Abstract

This research constitutes a descriptive qualitative study aimed at delving deeper into the habituation of discipline traits in children and the efforts undertaken by teachers to shape these discipline character habits within the B1 group of Arif Rahman Hakim Kindergarten, Yogyakarta. Research data was collected through various methods, including participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation from supervising teachers, the school principal, and 15 students. Findings indicate the necessity of nurturing early childhood growth, emphasizing the pivotal role of habituating discipline at RA Arif Rahman Hakim. Critical indicators of children's discipline encompassed time management, rule adherence, behavior, and religious practices. Educators effectively used modeling and habituation methods, with collaboration among teachers, parents, and the school environment is instrumental in promoting positive behaviors. The study underscores the significance of schools and teachers in shaping disciplinary character traits, relying on a blend of firm guidance, democratic discipline approaches, and steadfast value system reinforcement. These insights present a roadmap for other institutions and educators aiming to enhance character education quality. Further studies are suggested to delve deeper into the intricate processes and factors influencing the development of children's disciplinary traits.

**To cite:** Nadlifah, N., Siregar, S. A., Ismayyah, N., & Maulidah, W. S. (2023). Habituation of Disciplinary Character Traits in Early Childhood: A Case Study from RA Arif Rahman Hakim Yogyakarta. *Golden Age: Jurnal Ilmiah Tumbuh Kembang Anak Usia Dini*, 8(2), 69–78. <https://doi.org/10.14421/jga.2023.82-02>

## Introduction

Character education, especially emphasizing discipline, has recently emerged as a primary focus in early childhood education research (Magfiroh et al., 2019). Discipline is a crucial trait that fosters success and progress throughout an individual's life (Hartini, 2017). Nevertheless, current studies suggest that gaps persist regarding the best approaches and strategies for instilling discipline in young children (Morrison, 2016; Sutarti, 2018; Suyanto, 2012).

Research by Ayub (2022) and Anggraeni et al. (2021) explores the relationship between parenting styles and habitual methods in shaping young children's disciplined behaviors. Ayub (2022) discovered that parenting practices that rely on strict supervision, clear rule-setting, and consistent consequence enforcement contribute significantly to a child's discipline. Interestingly, factors such as the age and gender of the parents do not have an impact. Conversely, Anggraeni et al. (2021) detail how teachers at RA Daarul Falaah Tasikmalaya use daily habits, like greeting, saying phrases of gratitude, and regular practices such as reciting prayers, play a vital role in instilling discipline and responsibility in children. However, challenges are present in this process, necessitating improvements. This aligns with Fakhruddin's (2019) findings that implementing strategies to foster discipline in young children still requires enhancement within the Indonesian educational context. Ayub (2022) further underscores the need for additional research in this domain, given the discipline's significant, positive contributions to child development.

Susanto's (2017) article shows a notable absence of studies discussing the habituation process of disciplinary values in children, especially within national character development. While the importance of shaping character in children through instilling values and good behaviors is acknowledged, there remains a deficiency in understanding how to effectively execute this discipline habituation in educational institutions, particularly kindergartens. In-depth and comprehensive research on effective methods and strategies for cultivating discipline in children could offer valuable insights into character education development. Discipline, as defined by Vitaloka (2021), is a form of obedience to rules. In the context of early childhood, one manifestation of discipline is obeying leaders. A child's discipline can also be observed from their sense of responsibility and punctuality (Ayub, 2022).

On the other hand, instilling discipline in young children often faces challenges. Every child has a unique background, developmental stage, and personality, which means what works for one child may not be effective for another. Hence, educators must identify the most suitable methods and approaches for each child. Implanting disciplined character is no easy feat, but initiating this from an early age is vital. Such early discipline paves the way for positive habits and self-actualization as they grow into adults (Morrison, 2016). Sutarti (2018) posits that integrating character education into daily learning can effectively shape commendable character traits in students. Hurlock's book on child development highlights the profound impact of discipline on children's behavior, attitude, temperament, and habits. For instance, character education has significantly enhanced children's self-confidence, social skills, honesty, and cooperation.

Character education helps cultivate positive traits such as discipline, responsibility, independence, and tolerance among children. Hence, it is evident that character education plays a pivotal role in molding commendable character and personality in students (Magfiroh et al., 2019). The desired outcome can be achieved if educators emphasize foundational values in character education: honesty, responsibility, discipline, critical thinking, compassion, and sincerity during the learning process (Sudiyono, 2012).

A teacher's role is paramount for children in character education, mainly cultivating discipline. Every move a teacher makes serves as a reflection and source of inspiration for students (Fakhrudin, 2019). Consequently, the instillation of character values in early childhood is essential, undertaken by educators and parents, to accustom children to daily discipline. Encouragement and habitual practices fostered by teachers and parents can shape a child's disciplined behavior from a young age. During the COVID-19 pandemic, character-building strategies were implemented through habitual methods, executed with systematic activities such as program planning, monitoring, evaluation, and harmonizing school-devised strategies with long-distance learning character development programs (Firmansyah, 2021).

The importance of discipline in early childhood is ever-increasing, given the potential negative impacts of its absence. Children lacking discipline tend to be less independent, struggle with emotional regulation, and face challenges adapting to their environments (Khaironi, 2017). Moreover, undisciplined children often exhibit behaviors that do not conform to rules and find it. They have encountered various challenges throughout their journey, challenging to accept criticisms or suggestions (Riyanti, 2021). Therefore, it is crucial to research how to instill and cultivate discipline in early childhood and explore how educators or parents can aid children in building sound discipline. This research could shed new light on the development of discipline in young children and potentially enhance early childhood education quality.

Group B1 RA Arif Rahman Hakim in Yogyakarta represents one of the early childhood educational institutions dedicated to nurturing Indonesia's future generations through quality education. One of their pledges is to assist children in cultivating sound discipline. They have encountered various challenges throughout their journey in the discipline habituation process. This study explores and documents their experiences and approaches in this endeavor, aiming to understand, challenge, and accept their obstacles and strategies to overcome them. Early

childhood institutions like RA Arif Rahman Hakim also play an essential role in shaping children's character and discipline by integrating daily good habits and discipline into their learning programs. Their teachers employ diverse methods in their character-building endeavors. RA Arif Rahman Hakim has implemented various programs to shape children's character and discipline, which are integrated into daily lessons.

RA Arif Rahman Hakim employs five learning centers: the natural material center, block center, arts and creativity center, role-playing center, and faith and piety center. The educators therein utilize various methods to shape children's character. The Early Childhood Education (PAUD) provided by RA Arif Rahman Hakim is also recognized as pivotal for children's development and character education. Therefore, this research promises valuable insights into the cultivation of discipline in early childhood, potentially enhancing the quality of early childhood education through a deeper understanding of effective methods and strategies to instill discipline in children.

## Methods

This research centered on the discipline character habituation in children at RA Arif Rahman Hakim. The research method used in this study was descriptive qualitative with a case study approach (Sugiyono, 2019). The main goal was to collect comprehensive and contextual insights about how discipline character habituation is carried out on early-aged children at the RA Arif Rahman Hakim Yogyakarta school.

Data collection involved a participatory observation technique as an initial step, followed by in-depth interviews and documentation over two months, from August to September 2022. The research sample included classroom teachers, the principal, parents, and 15 students. The sample was chosen using simple random sampling, ensuring that each individual within the population has an equal chance of being selected as part of the research sample (Susanti, 2019). Consequently, the research sample would be more representative and could reduce bias in data analysis (Cohen et al., 2018). The students in Group B, aged 5-6 years, were chosen for this study.

To ensure data validity, habituation and source triangulation technique was employed, which strengthened data validity through various perspectives from different parties involved in the discipline character habituation process at RA Arif Rahman Hakim Yogyakarta.

Data analysis utilized the Miles and Huberman model (Sugiyono, 2019), which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Therefore, this research aimed to provide an in-depth understanding of the strategies and processes of discipline character habituation for early-aged children in this educational setting.

## Result

Early childhood growth and development do not occur spontaneously. Maintenance and cultivation are vital for development during childhood, which serves as a foundation for subsequent growth (Khaironi, 2017). Based on comprehensive interviews and observations conducted with the supervising teacher of Group B1 at RA Arif Rahman Hakim regarding efforts to instill discipline in children, it was discerned that teachers play diverse roles, such as educators, facilitators, role models, motivators, and guides, all aimed at fostering a child's discipline.

*In an interview, Bunda N explained, "In my teaching process, I utilize learning methods tailored to the children's characteristics. I often blend various methods, including exemplification, habituation, storytelling, and field trips. For instance, using the storytelling method, there is a session named 'recalling' before the school ends where I convey crucial messages. This helps children comprehend better. In terms of instilling discipline, I narrate the positive outcomes of punctuality. The exemplification method involves presenting myself as a suitable role model because children are great imitators. Through habituation, I instill in children simple habits that can greatly benefit their future lives, hoping this practice will manifest in their daily behavior."*

From the interview, it can be concluded that the teaching approaches adopted significantly support the development of the children's character and discipline. Bunda N understands child characteristics and adapts her teaching methods accordingly. Using methods like storytelling in the "recalling" session enables essential messages to be easily understood by children. Furthermore, children are expected to adopt good behavioral patterns by exemplifying positive behavior. Bunda N has successfully established habits concerning discipline, which will undoubtedly benefit their future lives. A combination of diverse learning methods focused on instilling discipline can have a profoundly positive impact on children's development.

The teacher's approach reflects a keen awareness of the importance of effective teaching and supporting children's personal development. Bunda N's engagement in selecting learning methods, such as storytelling, exemplification, and habituation, underscores her attention to essential facets of the educational process. Bunda N creates an enjoyable learning environment through tales and positive behavioral examples, motivating children to study enthusiastically. Her emphasis on instilling discipline via habituation aims to mold children with strong character and ethics. Overall, Bunda N's approach illustrates her commitment to nurturing children to become disciplined, virtuous individuals ready for future challenges.

Field research data indicates that the discipline character realization of children in Group B1 at RA Arif Rahman Hakim Yogyakarta is categorized as moderate discipline, as shown in the table. The table of discipline indicator achievements is organized based on essential competencies aligned with the child's development stages, crafted by the institution.

Table 1. Achievement Indicators of Discipline in Group B1 Children

No	Name	Achievement of Child Discipline Indicators		
		MB	BSH	BSB
1.	DMS		8	
2.	RFI		8	
3.	FTN		7	
4.	GAZ		8	
5.	ZAI		8	
6.	LNA		6	
7.	FLS		7	
8.	MIA			13
9.	DLS		7	
10.	AIS			12
11.	KNT		8	
12.	NDR		8	
13.	CLS		7	
14.	ADB		8	
15.	DIR			9

The scale of the discipline indicator achievements for Group B1 students at RA Arif Rahman Hakim is categorized as:

- Starting to Develop (MB)/Low Discipline: 1-4 Achievement Indicators
- Developing as Expected (BSH)/Moderate Discipline: 5-8 Achievement Indicators
- Excellently Developing (BSB)/High Discipline: 9-13 Achievement Indicators

The field research results indicate that the habituation of discipline character in students of group B1 at RA Arif Rahman Hakim falls under the category of moderate discipline. Specifically, 12 students are in the "Developing as Expected" (BSH) category, and three students are in the "Developing Very Well" (BSB) category. This demonstrates that the efforts made by teachers in shaping the character of discipline in children have yielded positive results. The habitualization of discipline character reflects a process where the values and behaviors related to discipline are internalized by children, thus becoming part of their daily lives.



In this context, the teacher's role as a stern educator and instructor in determining good, bad, right, and wrong values is crucial in shaping a child's disciplined character. While the teacher educates and nurtures students, she also sets boundaries and consequences for their actions, guiding them towards desired discipline values. Consistency in imparting discipline learning and habits daily is also crucial to success in this habitualization process. Although most students are categorized as Developing as Expected (BSH), a notable number fall under the Excellently Developing (BSB) category. This indicates that while capitalizing discipline requires time and consistency, the results can be excellent, positively influencing children's character development.



Figure 1. A child placing shoes and toys in their designated spots

This image demonstrates a child's discipline in adhering to established rules, namely, placing everything in its proper place. To optimize the habitualization process of the disciplined character, there must be good collaboration between teachers, parents, and the school environment. Parents play a crucial role in instilling discipline habits at home, ensuring these values are carried into the school setting and vice versa. A conducive and supportive school environment also facilitates the habitualization of this discipline's character.

The findings of this research provide a positive outlook on the habitualization of the discipline character in group B1 students. The habitualization of discipline is essential in shaping positive behavior and attitudes in children. Teachers and a supportive school environment are pivotal in achieving good outcomes. To enhance the quality of character education, collaboration among teachers, parents, and the school environment is vital, as is further research to understand more deeply the processes and factors influencing children's discipline character development.

Teachers have indicators of child discipline, including time discipline, rule enforcement, attitude discipline, and religious discipline. Concerning time discipline, teachers emphasize starting and ending lessons on time, punctual school attendance, and completing and submitting assignments. Attitude discipline involves orderly lining up, wearing the uniform according to the set schedule, and greeting upon entering the classroom. Rule enforcement includes storing bags and shoes correctly, tidying up toys after playing, washing hands before and after eating, and disposing of trash properly. Religious discipline involves group dhuha prayers and memorizing selected verses and hadiths. Thus, through these disciplined routines, children can develop self-awareness and self-concept. In this context, the roles of teachers and parents are paramount in shaping a child's discipline character and helping them adapt to the regulations both at school and home. According to Maulana (2017), for parents to instill discipline in children, they must adapt their parenting styles to the child's growth and development stages.

Bunda N stated, "The discipline condition of group B1 students, thank God, is improving over time. Overall, the students can follow the rules set by the school, so the discipline condition of group B1 can be considered good and is categorized as moderate

*discipline. A few students are still not very disciplined, like some who come late to school or don't wear proper headscarves for girls or caps for boys during the learning process. The good discipline condition of group B1 is due to the teacher's efforts in shaping the children's discipline character by establishing good habits during the teaching and learning process, like discipline in terms of time, rule enforcement, attitudes, and religious observance. Based on these discipline indicators, it is hoped that discipline will be reflected in the children's daily lives."*

Good character education, involving discipline and other character values, shapes and nurtures students' potential. Furthermore, it facilitates the enhancement and fortification of children's character while also acting as a filter for cultivating positive traits and dispositions that youngsters will carry into their future lives. This study aims to elucidate the endeavors undertaken by teachers in instilling discipline-related character traits among students in the B1 group at RA Arif Rahman Hakim Yogyakarta. In early childhood education, PAUD educators assume the roles of instructors, caregivers, and companions, all adeptly executed by the teaching staff involved in this research.



Figure 2. Dhuha prayer activities

The image presented emphasizes the importance of capitalizing on the disciplined character of children within the context of education at RA Arif Rahman Hakim. Teachers in this school seem to be meticulous in their approach to education while maintaining strict discipline regarding what is right and wrong, good and bad. Time discipline is strictly upheld; any tardiness results in students missing independent literacy activities and jumping straight to the core lesson.

In shaping children's discipline character, teachers at RA Arif Rahman Hakim employ foundational principles, including identifying characters that need improvement, change, or development. Furthermore, clear directions and instructions regarding the desired discipline character are imparted to the children. Teachers also provide rewards and praise when students exhibit disciplined behavior, encouraging them to continue excelling. A democratic discipline type is practiced, allowing students to understand and internalize discipline values so they not only obey rules but understand and integrate them into their self-concept. Research indicates that several fundamental values are vital in forming a disciplined character in children: rules, consistency, punishment, and rewards. The RA Arif Rahman Hakim teachers consistently apply the established value system, teaching children the importance of embracing values daily.

This emphasizes the importance of the continuous and consistent process of habituating discipline character in shaping children's positive behavior and attitudes. Factors such as the educational role of a firm yet nurturing teacher, the application of democratic discipline, and consistency in the value system are crucial in achieving the goal of effective discipline character development. The implications of this study highlight the significant role of schools and teachers in providing the proper conditioning to develop a positive, disciplined character in children. Hopefully, these findings can guide other schools and teachers in improving character education and children's discipline development.

## Discussion

This research provides a highly relevant overview of habituating disciplinary character traits in young children at RA Arif Rahman Hakim. The study's findings indicate that the efforts made by teachers in instilling disciplinary character traits in children have yielded positive outcomes. Teaching methods aligned with the student's character traits, such as modeling, habituation, storytelling, and educational outings, play a crucial role in creating an enjoyable and effective learning environment (Anggraeni et al., 2021).

Disciplinary character traits serve as a crucial foundation for children's future development, underscoring the significance of establishing positive habits and patterns of behavior from an early age (Palupi & Sawitri, 2017; Suharjana, 2012). In this regard, the role of teachers is pivotal. As educators, instructors, and role models, teachers assume a vital function in shaping children's disciplinary character traits. Firmly upholding values such as punctuality, rule adherence, attitude, and worship lays the groundwork for children to internalize and embrace these values (Salouw et al., 2020). Furthermore, the selected teaching methods, including storytelling and modeling, also play a pivotal role in forming disciplinary character traits.

Through storytelling, important messages and values can be conveyed in an engaging and easily understandable manner for children. Meanwhile, the exemplary behavior demonstrated by teachers serves as a good model for children to emulate positive attitudes and actions (Putri, 2017). The research outcomes also reveal that a significant portion of students fall into the "Developing As Expected" category (BSH), indicating that the process of habituation indeed requires consistency and time. However, the presence of students classified as "Developing Very Well" (BSB) suggests that the efforts made by teachers can yield highly positive outcomes in shaping children's disciplinary character traits.

Additionally, this study underscores the importance of consistency in implementing value systems and habituating disciplinary character traits within the school environment (Febriyanto et al., 2020). This consistency ensures that all school stakeholders, including teachers and students, uphold the values of discipline taught and practiced. Through consistency, children are taught to understand and internalize positive and negative values, fostering harmony (Sobri et al., 2019). This research provides valuable insights into the significance of habituating disciplinary character traits in young children at RA Arif Rahman Hakim. The pivotal role of teachers as firm educators and instructors, combined with appropriate teaching methods, forms the key to nurturing positive disciplinary character traits in children. The research findings also reaffirm the importance of consistency in implementing value systems and disciplinary character trait habituation within the school environment (Nurzannah, 2022). It is anticipated that these research findings will serve as a reference for other schools and teachers to enhance the quality of character education and form disciplinary character traits in young children.

Effective collaboration among teachers, parents, and the school environment is essential in habituating disciplinary character traits. This collaboration enables children to adhere to rules such as placing their shoes and toys in designated places after playtime and performing the mid-morning prayer. In this context, parents play a significant role in instilling disciplinary character habits at home, extending to the school environment and vice versa. A conducive and supportive school environment also facilitates forming of disciplinary character traits (Muhibbah & Kurniawan, 2023).

The research findings positively depict habituating disciplinary character traits in the B1 participants at RA Arif Rahman Hakim. Habitualizing disciplinary character traits is considered a vital process in shaping positive behaviors and attitudes in children. The roles of teachers and a supportive school environment emerge as crucial factors in achieving favorable outcomes (Maskuri, 2018). In this context, teachers indicate children's discipline, including punctuality, rule adherence, attitude, and worship. Teachers emphasize the importance of starting and concluding lessons on time, being punctual at school, completing and submitting assignments

with discipline, maintaining tidiness and politeness, and engaging in worship appropriately (Ihsania, 2022).

Forming children's disciplinary character traits necessitates fundamental principles, including identifying the character traits that require improvement, alteration, or cultivation (Salsabila & Lessy, 2022). Clear understanding and instructions regarding disciplinary character traits are provided to children. Teachers offer rewards and commendations when children exhibit good disciplinary behavior, encouraging them to excel. Teachers employ a democratic discipline approach to allow students to comprehend and internalize disciplinary values (Febianti, 2018). Moreover, the research highlights the importance of the school and teachers in providing appropriate habituation to foster positive disciplinary character traits in children. The implications of this research underscore that collaborative efforts among teachers, parents, and the school environment can enhance character education quality. Teachers at TK Arif Rahman Hakim School demonstrate a thoughtful approach to educating and nurturing students while maintaining firmness in upholding values of right, wrong, sound, and evil. Time discipline emerges as a crucial aspect, as lateness could lead to students missing out on independent literacy activities and core learning sessions (Setiawan, 2019).

The discussion emphasizes that shaping children's disciplinary character traits requires foundational principles encompassing identifying character traits to improve, alter, or cultivate (Salsabila & Lessy, 2022). Additionally, clear understanding and instructions regarding disciplinary character traits are provided to children, and teachers offer rewards and praise when children demonstrate good disciplinary behavior. Teachers implement a democratic discipline approach to allow students to comprehend and internalize disciplinary values (Febianti, 2018).

The implications of this research underscore the crucial role of the school and teachers in providing appropriate habituation to foster positive disciplinary character traits in children. Factors such as the teacher's educational and firm role, applying a democratic discipline approach, and consistency in value systems are crucial in achieving effective disciplinary character formation. In conclusion, habituating children's disciplinary character traits involves an ongoing and consistent process of shaping positive behaviors and attitudes in children. Collaborative efforts among teachers, parents, and the school environment are pivotal in this process. The research findings are expected to guide other schools and teachers in enhancing character education quality and forming disciplinary character traits in young children at RA Arif Rahman Hakim Yogyakarta.

## Conclusion

In this study, researchers focused on examining the habituation of disciplinary character traits in young children within the context of B1 RA Arif Rahman Hakim Yogyakarta. They utilized a qualitative descriptive approach to delve into the subject matter, aiming to uncover insights into the development of discipline-related habits in children and the strategies educators employ to instill these habits. The findings underscore the importance of nurturing and guiding early childhood growth, highlighting the significance of habituating disciplinary traits at RA Arif Rahman Hakim. Educators' efforts, including modeling and habituation techniques, successfully shaped children's discipline. Critical indicators of discipline included time management, rule enforcement, behavior, and religious adherence. Collaborative efforts among teachers, parents, and the school environment were crucial in cultivating positive behaviors. The study's implications emphasize the pivotal role of schools and educators in shaping children's positive disciplinary traits. Effective establishment of these traits involves firm yet supportive guidance, democratic disciplinary approaches, and consistent reinforcement of value systems. The process of habituating children's discipline requires ongoing collaborative efforts. The research outcomes offer a guiding framework for other educational institutions and teachers, enhancing character education quality. Future research can explore deeper processes influencing children's disciplinary traits, enriching early childhood character development knowledge.



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