

# *Health Education Characters in Early Childhood Based on Cultural Values*

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**Abstract**— This study seeks to produce a character education model for healthy living in early childhood based on character values. In producing this model, the researcher uses four stages that must be taken, namely define, design, develop and disseminate. At the define stage, the researcher made preliminary observations by collecting how the description of healthy life character education activities carried out by schools has been done by collaborating with cultural values, both classroom, school and environment or community culture. The figures for each variable are calculated based on the observation questionnaire compiled by the researcher. Based on preliminary observations based on interviews of healthy living character education comprehensively, it has been established by schools, both teachers and students, but there is no evaluation whether the healthy living character education is developed based on cultural values. Furthermore, the researcher will explore in depth how the knowledge, implementation and feelings of students towards the character of a healthy life. Cultural values that can be implemented properly based on the results of observations show that the three cultural values influence each other on the formation of healthy living characters for early childhood.

**Keywords:** *Health Education Characters, Early Childhood, Cultural Values*

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **I.1 Background**

Education is a teaching-learning process, one of which can produce a form of behavior change in the students involved in it. This applies to all age levels, including the age of children. Education or the teaching and learning process at the age of children is basically regulated in Law number 20 (2003) which states that the school education pathway is education that is carried out in schools through tiered and sustainable teaching and learning activities. The level of education itself consists of: early childhood education, basic education, secondary education and higher education. Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is considered very important to be held because it is the basis of the formation of a child's personality which can be seen from various aspects including; character, manners, intelligence and skills. This is also reinforced by the statements of education experts who state that education given to early childhood is very important for their growth and development. This is because in the first year of life, a child experiences a very rapid development and development process. This stage is then seen as determining the quality of a child in his future.

In the current era of globalization, the most concerning thing is the moral degradation of education, where in the family environment parents often complain about deviant behavior that has been done by their children. It is undeniable that currently Indonesia has experienced a character crisis to a large extent. This should be of particular concern for parents and schools in implementing character from an early age. Where the family, which is essentially the initial source of children's character formation, needs to realize that the treatment of their children will have an impact on the development of children's behavior.

However, parents and families cannot fend for themselves without help from school, because not many parents have studied family education. They are formed by themselves without prior preparation (Jailani, 2014; Baharun, 2016). This is where the role of teachers and school institutions will be very helpful in preparing for character development at school and at home in the end (Berns, 2007). Emphasis and empowerment of the application of character education in various educational institutions, both informal, formal and non-formal, are expected to be able to answer the various

challenges and complex problems experienced by the Indonesian nation. So, character education itself must be started as early as possible (Hadisi, 2015).

Character education can be developed according to the stages of early childhood development through the knowing, acting and habit stages. The character development model through the knowing the good, feeling the good, and acting the good method in its implementation can be realized through the character education method in this model starting from early childhood because this age is a golden age for children's cognitive development. As soon as possible, it is avoided that the bad values attached to the child's personality. Instinctively, every day humans will carry out routine activities such as eating, resting, bathing and other activities. If this routine activity is carried out properly in accordance with the correct principles, it will form into good habits which in addition to getting health will also produce positive character values that are useful for themselves, others or the surrounding community. Therefore, this study will examine in depth how character education for healthy living habits can be formed based on the values developed in classroom culture, school culture and environmental culture in early childhood setting.

Based on the research background above, the research question can be formulated by the researcher: what is the model of healthy living character education in early childhood based on cultural values look like?

## ***1.2 Literature Background***

Character education at an early age is indeed the right beginning because this age is a very important period of development in human life. The growth and development of children during this period is very fast and will determine the characteristics of children in adulthood. Early childhood development plays a very important role because the development of the human brain has jumped and developed very rapidly, which is possible to reach 80%. At birth, in theory, children have reached 25% of brain development, then increased to 50% at the age of 4 years to then develop to 80% at the age of 8 and continue to develop until the age of 18 years (Bruer, 1999; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Cozolino, 2002).

Schweinhart (2010) states that the results of a study conducted by him show that the experiences of children during early childhood education can have a positive influence on subsequent children's development. During the golden age, early age was a critical period for building one's character. Through character education starting at an early age, it is hoped that the future generations of the nation will have a strong character, which reflects the character of the Indonesian nation itself.

Character education can be done not only through religious education. One of them is through habituation in everyday life, such as habits for healthy living habits. Behavior is a person's action on environmental conditions. Skinner (Thobroni, 2011) states that behavior is a person's response or reaction to external stimuli or stimuli. Human behavior occurs because it is formed or learned behavior. One way of forming behavior is by conditioning or habits (Machfoedz, 2003). If a person accustoms himself to behaving as expected according to certain rules, this behavior will be formed. Thus, what is meant by behavior is the action or behavior of a person that can be seen through activities carried out in daily life. Therefore, what is meant by healthy behavior is a person's actions that are based on health principles or principles.

Healthy behavior as discussed above includes eating behavior, maintaining personal health, regulating rest, and exercising. If this healthy behavior is carried out regularly and follows the correct provisions, besides having an effect on improving health status, it will also have a positive effect on increasing character values that are upheld by the Indonesian nation, such as increasing discipline, developing self-confidence, controlling self, and gratitude.

Since 1954, the World Health Organization has been promoting health education with the aim of changing the behavior of a person or society from unhealthy behavior to healthy behavior

(Machfoedz, 2003). In the Republic of Indonesia Law no. 23 of 1992 states that health is a state of body, soul, and social well-being which enables everyone to live productively socially and economically. Thus, it is not enough for a healthy person to be shown only by large muscles or a muscular body, but in addition to being physically fit, he must also be spiritually healthy and not prone to mental disorders. Several years ago, the Human Population Laboratory in the California Department of Health published a list of habits related to health and longevity, which included regular exercise, adequate sleep, a good breakfast, regular eating, weight control, smoking and drug free, and not consuming alcohol (Sharkey, 2003). Furthermore, Irianto (2000) argues that to achieve fitness and health, one must regulate food, have adequate rest, and exercise regularly. Thus, a healthy lifestyle will include eating patterns, maintaining personal health, adequate rest, and actively exercising.

Role modeling is the behavior and attitude of teachers and other education personnel in providing examples of good actions so that they are expected to become role models for students to imitate them. If teachers and other education personnel want students to behave and behave in accordance with cultural values and national character, then teachers and other education personnel are the first and foremost to give examples of how to behave and behave in accordance with these values. For example, dress neatly, arrive on time, work hard, speak polite words, love, care for students, be honest, maintain cleanliness and so on.

Schools can also use habituation patterns in developing the character of students. In daily life at school, schools apply the totality of education by relying on exemplary, environmental creation and habituation through various tasks and activities. So that all what students see, hear, feel and do is education. Apart from making modeling the main educational method, value creation is also very important. The educational environment is what educates.

The creation of a school environment can be done through assignments, habituation, training, teaching, direction, and modeling. All of them have no small effect in shaping the character of students. The assignment is accompanied by an understanding of its philosophical basics, so that students will do various kinds of tasks with awareness and calling. Every activity contains educational elements, for example in scouting activities, there is education of simplicity, independence, solidarity and togetherness, love of the environment and leadership. In sports activities there is physical health education, cultivation of sportsmanship, team work and persistence in doing business. Organizing activities at school is handled by student organizations which are divided into many parts, such as chairman, secretary, treasurer, security, teaching, lighting, student cooperatives, kitchen cooperatives, student canteens, environmental cleanliness, landscaping, arts, skills, sports, language activation.

## II. METHODS

By using the research method Design Based Research (DBR) with a mix method approach that systematically tries to perfect the model by producing design principles that can be applied effectively by both parties, teachers and parents over a period of 3 months in an effort to develop life character education. healthy in accordance with the developmental stages of children aged 4 - 6 years through the stages of implementation in the aspects of knowing, acting, and habitual habits that need to be instilled from an early age in order to stick to adulthood.

In collecting data as the basis for this research, it can be described through a mixed approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Creswell, 2010). Mix research methods, namely research methods that combine or combine two research approaches, quantitative and qualitative methods carried out in one research activity (Sugiyono, 2011). This research method aims to obtain data that is more comprehensive, valid, reliable, and objective (Sugiyono, 2011).

The model development procedure used in the DBR method is a 4-D (Four D) development model which consists of 4 stages, including: define, design, develop and disseminate (Thiagarajan, 1974). This research was conducted at 1 kindergarten school in Purwakarta Regency which has a program based on class culture values, school culture and environmental culture (community). The institution where this research was carried out was in the area of Tegal Munjul Village, Purwakarta District, Purwakarta Regency which was randomly selected with the consideration that at the time of this research, the area was classified as a yellow zone, so that face-to-face sessions between researchers and teachers and students were possible at the specified time. (Schools remain closed and distance education is carried out), following strict health protocols. Respondents in this study were 51 respondents and it was conducted from September to October 2020. Data collection techniques used interviews and questionnaires. Data analysis in this study is to organize, sort, classify, code, and categorize.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The forms of clean and healthy living habits applied by parents to children during this pandemic are in accordance with government recommendations by always maintaining distance, washing hands with soap, always using masks and keeping the home environment clean. This is like expressed by parents that: Wash hands for 20 seconds, pray, eat regularly, keep the house clean, wash vegetables and fruit if from outside take a bath and soak the clothes that have been used (interview, M, 9 September 2020).

Other respondents said that always wash your hands with soap under running water for at least 20 seconds, do not hold your face with dirty hands, eat with attention to the composition of 4 healthy 5 perfect meals (interview, SGP 9 September 2020), maintain cleanliness at home and the environment, always wash your hands after doing activities. Eating that fulfills four health and five perfect, bathing 2x a day, getting enough sleep and taking additional vitamins every day (VR interview on September 9, 2020), and washing your hands diligently, going out of the house, you must wear a mask, sneeze and cover your mouth with a mask / inner elbow, Currently, no shaking hands, 2 baths a day, eat more vegetables, no crowding / keep a distance from people from outside the house (MY interview on 9 September 2020). According to Roger, to form a positive behavior, it must be based on knowledge (Zulfa Husni Khumayra; Madya Sulisno, 2012). This is related to the factors that influence knowledge, namely information. Information will have an influence on someone's knowledge. If the individual is not given correct information, a bad attitude will be perceived or formed so as to form a bad or negative behavior.

The more spread of the Covid-19 virus, now is the right time to protect and improve health. Eating healthy is very important to keep your immune system in tip-top shape. Habits of healthy and clean lifestyles that are applied to early childhood in various ways that are simple and easy to understand by children. The habit of a healthy and clean lifestyle can be seen by getting used to regular exercise, adequate rest and eating nutritious foods. The results of the interviews with four teachers can be concluded that the teacher always reminds children to adopt a healthy and clean lifestyle by providing activities to children through the child's parents. The teacher sends a video of the activity to the child then the child imitates the teacher's activities, as evidence of the parent recording the child's activity and sending it back to the teacher.

Giving understanding to children must be accompanied by providing examples of clean and healthy living habits. From the results of the questionnaire, it can be seen that as many as 100% of respondents provide good examples of children, such as when leaving the house they must use a mask, keep their distance, wash their hands for at least 20 seconds, eat nutritious food, sunbathe, and immediately shower and change clothes when leaving the house. By giving good examples from parents, children will imitate what their parents do. So that it is not only giving understanding by parents but also



providing examples of clean and healthy living habits. Adiwiryo stated that the role of parents is an external factor to the practice of clean and healthy living habits in school. If parents have good knowledge and sufficient time to provide examples of clean and healthy living habits and provide information about the benefits, goals and importance of behavior living clean and healthy for children in the school environment, the child's practice of clean and healthy living habits will be better (Berliana, 2016).

It is hoped that the provision of understanding and good examples from parents can lead to early childhood independence towards clean and healthy living habits amid this pandemic. Independence will bring children to get used to implementing clean and healthy living habits in everyday life.

The result of the study (see table 1), it can be seen that as many as 100% or 51 child respondents dispose of garbage in its place. As many as 92.2% or 47 child respondents tidy up their own games and 7.8% or 4 child respondents did not tidy up their own games. As many as 98% or 50 child respondents washed their hands with soap after playing and 2% or 1 child respondents did not wash their hands with soap after playing. As many as 80.4% or 41 child respondents helped clean the house and 19.6% or 10 child respondents did not help clean the house. As many as 88.2% or 45 child respondents tidied their sandals and shoes in their place and 11.8% or 6 child respondents did not tidy up their sandals and shoes in their place.

A total of 100% or 51 child respondents defecated and urinated in place. As many as 100% or 51 child respondents, if clean, cover their mouths with palms. As many as 96% or 48 child respondents bathed 2 times a day and as many as 4% or 3 child respondents did not bathe 2 times a day. As many as 100% or 51 child respondents wash their hands with soap before eating. As many as 90.2% or 46 child respondents used to have breakfast and 9.8% or 5 child respondents were not used to breakfast. As many as 92.2% or 47 child respondents ate 3 times a day and 7.8% or 4 child respondents did not eat 3 times a day. As many as 84.3% or 43 child respondents drink milk every day and as many as 15.7% or 8 child respondents do not drink milk every day. As many as 100% or 51 child respondents eat nutritious food. As many as 98% or 50 child respondents if they leave the house using a mask and as many as 2% or 1 child respondent if they leave the house without using a mask. As many as 100% or 51 child respondents when they returned home immediately took a shower and changed clothes and as many as 100% or 51 child respondents liked to sunbathe in the morning.

Table 1. Application of Clean and Healthy Living Behavior for Early Childhood

| No | Perilaku Hidup Bersih dan Sehat                                    | Jawaban                 |                         |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
|    |                                                                    | Ya (%)                  | Tidak (%)               |
| 1  | Anak membuang sampah pada tempatnya                                | 100% atau 51 responden  | 0%                      |
| 2  | Anak merapikan sendiri mainannya                                   | 92,2% atau 47 responden | 7,8% atau 4 responden   |
| 3  | Anak mencuci tangan dengan sabun setelah bermain                   | 98% atau 50 responden   | 2% atau 1 responden     |
| 4  | Anak membantu membersihkan rumah                                   | 80,4% atau 41 responden | 19,6% atau 10 responden |
| 5  | Anak merapikan sandal dan sepatu pada tempatnya                    | 88,2% atau 45 responden | 11,8% atau 6 responden  |
| 6  | Anak buang air besar dan buang air kecil pada tempatnya            | 100% atau 51 responden  | 0%                      |
| 7  | Anak jika bersin menutup mulutnya dengan telapak tangan            | 100% atau 51 responden  | 0%                      |
| 8  | Anak mandi 2 kali dalam sehari                                     | 96% atau 48 responden   | 4% atau 3 responden     |
| 9  | Anak cuci tangan dengan sabun sebelum makan                        | 100% atau 51 Responden  | 0%                      |
| 10 | Anak terbiasa sarapan pagi                                         | 90,2% atau 46 responden | 9,8% atau 5 responden   |
| 11 | Anak makan 3 kali dalam sehari                                     | 92,2% atau 47 responden | 7,8% atau 4 responden   |
| 12 | Anak minum susu tiap hari                                          | 84,3% atau 43 responden | 15,7% atau 8 responden  |
| 13 | Anak makan makanan bergizi                                         | 100% atau 51 responden  | 0%                      |
| 14 | Anak jika keluar rumah menggunakan masker                          | 98% atau 50 responden   | 2% atau 1 responden     |
| 15 | Anak jika sudah kembali ke rumah langsung mandi dan mengganti baju | 100% atau 51 responden  | 0%                      |
| 16 | Anak suka berjemur di pagi hari                                    | 100% atau 51 responden  | 0%                      |

When interviews were conducted during the study, data was obtained that invite children to jointly carry out the character values that are told. The children's character at the beginning of the study showed that some children were not able to do their own tasks, such as taking off their own shoes, washing their own hands, and eating by themselves. When faced with this, the teacher helps students to carry out their duties. As stated by Mrs. A (interview on October 30, 2020) about the character of students who have not been able to do their own tasks, namely

*"Usually, we get help first and wait a minute. Usually the name is a child, we reverse the position, put in his most important shoe. how can we, his hands, basically taught by his teacher first, ... yes, washing hands accompanied. Now you are used to doing it yourself. Usually when the teacher is new to the initiative to set an example, but now the children can be themselves. "*

Based on parents' observations through the interview process, children are now able to do their own tasks.

The values taught are manners, standing in line, speaking not shouting, taking off one's own shoes and putting shoes in their place. This is in accordance with the narrative of Bu B (Interview 30 October 2020) as follows:

*"... Like clear manners, the culture of queuing, taking turns, keep on talking so that you don't scream, how do you keep throwing the trash in, just like throwing trash in its place, even if the name is sometimes a child, right? differentiate between men and women, I also differentiate between shapes like that, keep clear shoes. Taking off their shoes when they enter the house, and they already know that when they enter, they have to take off, take off and put their own shoes on like that .... "*

In addition, every time they wanted to start and end a lesson, the children and the teacher prayed and greeted each other even though it was done online. This indicates that the cultivation of character values is carried out from learning to school.

Habituation of healthy and clean lifestyles in children can be applied by modeling methods, namely techniques that are carried out by giving examples to children then children directly practice what has been exemplified by teachers or parents (Arifiyanti & Prasetyo, 2018). During this pandemic, to apply a character education model based on cultural values, after the initial meeting, the teacher sends a video on how to wash hands properly and then the child follows the instructions from the teacher, parents record children's activities then send it back to the teacher.

"We as teachers always provide activities to implement a healthy and clean lifestyle at home especially during the Covid-19 pandemic like today" (Teacher A, interview, 4 October 2020)

Activities provided include:

- a. Wash your hands and use soap before and after eating
- b. Pray before and after eating
- c. Eat regularly (3x a day)
- d. Eating alone (not fed)
- e. Bring supplies to school
- f. Eating healthy snacks
- g. Pay attention to the composition of eating 4 healthy 5 perfect
- h. Bath
- i. Brushing teeth

- j. Cleanliness of dress
- k. Hair cleanliness
- l. Throw garbage in its place
- m. Wake up in the morning before 7 am
- n. Take a nap regularly every day
- o. Get 10 to 13 hours of sleep each day
- p. Doing gymnastics at least once a week
- q. Doing healthy walking activities every day
- r. Able to run at least 50m every day
- s. Doing play activities that generate motion.

This model emphasizes simple activities that can be done together with children so that parents do not encounter significant obstacles when introducing their habituation activities.

*"We, as teachers, provide simple activities that can be carried out together with the child's parents. We ask parents to always record children's activities and report them to us".* (Teacher B, interview 30 October 2020).

Activities in this model are carried out continuously so that it becomes a habit for children.

*"We usually give orders in the form of video or voice recordings because children usually do not want to do activities if the parents order".* (Teacher A's Interview, October 30, 2020). Instructions given by the teacher are made sound recordings so that children can immediately listen to them.

Initially, parents find it difficult to apply a healthy and clean lifestyle to their children, but gradually children begin to understand and understand the importance of getting used to a healthy and clean lifestyle.

*"Initially we as parents had difficulty getting the children to do activities related to healthy and clean lifestyles, but over time, because the teacher provided activities with video or sound recordings the child finally wanted to do it and now it doesn't need to be reminded again"* (Interview SGP, 30 October 2020).

On the same occasion, the children said that initially they did not know why they had to always wash their hands with soap after doing activities. However, because parents always reminded them, always telling stories coupled with stories from the teacher caused children to understand and understand that there was a Covid-19 pandemic. *"I'm now diligently washing my hands and now I like to eat vegetables and fruit, every morning I also invite my father and mother to sunbathe while playing"* (AP interview, 30 October 2020).

*"We as teachers provide activities that familiarize ourselves with a simple clean lifestyle such as washing hands with soap".* (Teacher A's Interview, October 30, 2020).

The children follow the instructions given by the teacher and the parents make a recording of the activities carried out by the child after which the video is sent to the teacher as a report on the child's activities carried out on that one day.

*"We, as parents, provide facilities for children such as a hand washing place that is easily accessible to the child and a place to dispose of trash that can be reached by the child, besides that we also remind children to always maintain personal and environmental hygiene".* (SGP interview, 30 October 2020).

Based on information from the child, the parents always accompany the child's daily activities. *"Mother always accompanies my activities at home, you also like to record what I do, she said, making a report to the teacher".* (BS interview, 30 October 2020).

The teacher's statement is strengthened by interviews with children.

*"After doing activities I always wash my hands, then when I leave home I always wear a mask".* (FA Interview, 30 October 2020)

Initially the child admitted that he did not know what was going on, but over time the child understood because teachers and parents always gave understanding to children about the covid-19 pandemic.

*"The teacher and mother said that there is currently a Covid-19 pandemic, so I have to maintain cleanliness by diligently washing my hands with soap".* (IG Interview, 30 October 2020)

Habitual clean lifestyles that can be done by early childhood, such as washing hands with soap, cutting nails and disposing of trash in its place. Washing hands with soap is one of the activities that can prevent infectious diseases in the body (Clark et al., 2016). Washing hands with soap can overcome the spread of viruses and various diseases (Azor-Martinez et al., 2018). The habit of a healthy and clean lifestyle is carried out continuously so that it becomes a good habit for children. Clean living habits in children, especially in early childhood, can be assisted with visual aids such as pictures and infrastructure. Props in the form of pictures such as pasting pictures of how to wash hands properly, providing a place to wash hands that is easily accessible to children (Yufiarti et al., 2019).

Habituation of healthy and clean lifestyles in early childhood aims to improve children's health. Health is the basic capital for all activities. Poor health causes many threats and dangers, especially for early childhood. These threats include diseases caused by viruses or bacteria or fungi (Suyatmin & Sukardi, 2018). It is hoped that the habit of a healthy and clean lifestyle in children will break the chain of disease spread. Healthy children will develop according to age, clean, fun, and can adapt to the environment (Wijayanti, 2017).

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results of the study, it was found that the clean and healthy behavior of early childhood in the institution that was the research location after the introduction of the Cultural Value-based Early Childhood Character Education model design has been running very well in the midst of the Covid 19 pandemic. Clean and healthy living habits of early childhood are in very good category.

Inculcating healthy and clean-living habits as early as possible will ensure that people achieve good hygiene and healthy living habits when they grow up. The application of the character education model based on cultural values is carried out by the teacher sending videos on how to regulate eating and eating patterns, maintaining personal health, regulating rest and exercising regularly properly and correctly, then the child follows instructions from the teacher, parents record children's activities then send it back teachers are very helpful and relevant to pandemic conditions.

But even so, children need to be guided and given direct examples in carrying out this clean and healthy lifestyle, so that they become more enthusiastic. Good communication and cooperation are the keys to the success of this clean and healthy lifestyle, even at this time, it is the key to efforts to live a peaceful life with the Covid-19 pandemic. Parents should remain united and motivate their children to adopt this clean and healthy lifestyle so that they can grow strong characters in trying to keep themselves and their environment healthy. It is hoped that the development of character based on cultural values in each child will crystallize and continue to grow when they grow up.



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