

INSTILLING CHARACTER EDUCATION FROM AN EARLY AGE BY MAKING A HABIT OF SAYING POSITIVE WORDS BEFORE ENTERING CLASS

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ABSTRACT

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) has a crucial role in instilling character from an early age. This article reviews the application of the habit of saying positive words as a form of affirmative strategy to build confidence, optimism, and positive mindset in children at ABA 01 Batu Kindergarten. Through daily activities such as morning welcomes, a fun approach and parental participation, these habits are able to create a learning environment that supports and strengthens children's social and emotional development. The results of the evaluation showed an increase in confidence, enthusiasm for learning, and children's ability to establish healthy social relationships. Obstacles that arise, such as children's limited understanding of the meaning of affirmation and challenges in maintaining consistency of practice, are overcome through easy-to-understand explanations and active involvement of parents. This article concludes that getting children used to saying positive words is a simple method but has a great effect on shaping children's character as a whole and continuously.

Keywords: Habituation, Character Development, Children's Confidence

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education (PAUD) plays a very vital role in shaping children's character and mindset. At this time, children are in a developmental stage that is very sensitive to environmental influences, both at home, school, and in the surrounding community. One of the approaches that has proven effective in supporting children's character development is the application of positive habituation (Puspita & Harfiani, 2024). Early childhood education focuses not only on cognitive development, but also on the formation of positive character and attitudes. Children at this stage are in the golden age, where they absorb the values given by the surrounding environment, including from teachers and peers. Therefore, accustoming children to think and speak positively from an early age is an important step in supporting their social-emotional development.

Habituation in fact has deeper implications if done in the right way and approach (Shunhaji et al., 2021). Early childhood education is a very important time in the formation of children's character and mindset. Habits that are instilled from an early age will leave a mark and affect their development in the long term. One positive habit that can be applied is to say positive words before starting an activity, such as before entering class. This habit not only forms an optimistic and confident character in children, but also creates an atmosphere conducive for them to learn and develop. By accustoming children to speak kind, passionate, and positive words, they will get used to looking at the world with optimism, which in turn can increase motivation and confidence in facing various challenges. In addition, this habit also plays a role in forming a healthy and resilient mindset, which allows children to be better prepared to face future difficulties with a calmer and more constructive attitude. In this context, instilling positive habits through verbal affirmation is an important step in shaping the character of children who are strong, independent, and ready to face the future, as well as strengthening harmonious social relationships in the school environment. As part of a holistic approach to education, these habits can encourage children's emotional and social development, as

well as instill positive values that will shape them into individuals with integrity, optimism, and passion in all aspects of life. (Khofifah, 2022) Emphasizing that habituation is a repetition, something that is practiced, in habituation it becomes very effective because it will train good habits in children, fostering children's attitudes through habituation is very effective because it will train good habits in children.

Research shows that positive affirmations can help children build confidence, reduce anxiety, and increase motivation to learn. As a kindergarten teacher at ABA 01 Batu Kindergarten, I see that this habituation has a good impact on children. They are more enthusiastic in learning, more adaptable to peers, and show a more polite and optimistic attitude in their daily lives. Based on this experience, this practice is expected to be an inspiration for educators and parents in shaping children's character from an early age through simple but impactful habits.

Forming children's character from an early age with consistency in giving habituation to positive habits and support from the environment, children will grow up to be individuals who have strong character, are able to face challenges, and contribute positively to society. This method not only educates children to be academically intelligent, but also shapes them into individuals with integrity, empathy, and a high sense of responsibility (Ulya, 2020). (Sarinastitin, 2019) Emphasizing that integrative holistic education is the basis for character formation in children. The formation of an integrative holistic character is determined by the involvement of many parties. Policies and agreements, both national and international, assist the parties in the formation of early childhood character. (Permisi et al., 2024) Emphasizing that character education is about behaviors such as discipline, responsibility, and behavior that has a purpose, has a skilled and good attitude in socializing so as to help the learning process well. This is in line with Hamid's opinion that character education has a definition that character education is like a character, Ahlaq or personality, and a mindset, a person is formed.

1. The Concept of Habituation of Positive Words in Early Childhood Education. The habit of saying positive words before entering class is a form of affirmation strategy in early childhood education. Positive affirmations are statements that are consciously repeated to instill better beliefs and mindsets. In the context of early childhood, this affirmation helps build confidence, develop an optimistic attitude, and create a more conducive learning atmosphere. According to Vygotsky's theory of social development, social interaction has a great influence on children's cognitive development. By getting children into the habit of saying positive words every morning, they not only internalize positive values but also build a stronger self-concept through interactions with teachers and peers. In addition, in Vygotsky's theory, the concept of scaffolding or the help provided by adults in the learning process is also very relevant. By accustoming children to say positive words, teachers act as guides who provide the emotional and intellectual support needed to build confidence and optimism in children. This process strengthens the child's social connection with the people around him and creates an environment that supports their emotional and social development. Thus, habituating positive words is one of the effective ways to enrich children's learning experiences and help them grow into more confident, open, and ready individuals to face challenges in life.

2. Implementation of Positive Word Habituation in ABA 01 Batu Kindergarten. At ABA 01 Batu Kindergarten, this habituation activity is carried out every morning before the children enter the classroom. The implementation steps are as follows:
 - a. Welcoming Children at the Classroom Door
 The teacher greeted the children with a smile and a friendly greeting.
 Children are invited to say positive words, such as:
 "I'm a great kid!"
 "I love learning!"
 "I love my friends and teachers!"
 "I'll do good today!"
 "I'm healthy and strong"
 And there are many other positive words according to the ideas of children.
 - b. Using Interesting Methods. Say positive affirmations with applause or songs. Invite children to make their own positive sentences according to their experiences. Give appreciation to children who are active and consistent in doing so.
 - c. Creating a Supportive Atmosphere. After the children say positive words, the teacher guides them to feel and internalize the statement in their hearts. The classroom atmosphere is cheerful, full of positive energy, and attentive makes children feel comfortable and more open in participating in this activity. Teachers also set an example by saying positive words directly, so that children can imitate and feel the impact.
 - d. Integrating Positive Habituation in Daily Activities. This habit is not only carried out when welcoming children in the morning, but is also integrated into other learning activities. For example, before starting a lesson or activity, children are reminded to say positive words that are relevant to the activity, such as "I can learn something new today!" or "I will work with my friends to complete the assignment well." This aims to maintain children's enthusiasm for learning throughout the day.
 - e. Collaboration with Parents. In addition to school, teachers also invite parents to support the habituation of positive words at home. Teachers provide guidance to parents on positive affirmations that can be applied in the home environment, as well as invite parents to communicate with their children using words that build and support their emotional development. With close collaboration between schools and parents, these positive habits can develop more consistently in children's daily lives. Through these steps, it is hoped that children at ABA 01 Batu Kindergarten will not only have the habit of saying positive words, but also be able to feel and apply these values in their lives. This habit will strengthen children's confidence, create a fun learning atmosphere, and help them grow into a more positive and optimistic person.
3. Evaluation and Reflection. Before going home, the teacher invited the children to share their experiences of how they felt after saying nice things about themselves. Teachers provide positive reinforcement so that children are more accustomed to thinking and speaking in a good way. At the end of the day, the teacher invites the children to sit together and share their experiences of how they feel after saying positive words in the morning. Questions such as, "How do you feel after saying kind words about yourself?" or "How do you feel after starting the day with

enthusiasm?" are given to dig into their understanding of the impact of positive affirmations. This reflection process not only provides an opportunity for children to express their feelings, but it also reinforces the positive thinking habits they have built up throughout the day. Teachers provide positive reinforcement, such as praise and appreciation, so that children become more accustomed to thinking and speaking in a way that builds and supports their character development. Through this reflection, children can be aware of changes in themselves, which will strengthen their desire to continue to implement a positive mindset in their daily lives. After a few months of implementing this habit, some significant positive changes were seen in the children in the classroom. One of the main impacts that can be observed is the increase in children's confidence. They become more courageous to speak in front of friends, express opinions, and no longer feel hesitant to interact socially. The positive affirmations they utter regularly have helped them to trust their own abilities, so that they are more open and believe in their potential. In addition, the habit of saying positive words also fosters a positive attitude in children. They become easier to manage emotions, more patient in facing challenges, and more enthusiastic in participating in learning activities. With an optimistic mindset, children can more easily overcome the difficulties they face, both in the classroom and in daily life, and are able to see problems as opportunities to learn and grow. On the other hand, the implementation of this habit also creates a more harmonious learning environment. By getting used to using kind and enthusiastic words, the atmosphere in the classroom becomes more positive and enjoyable. Children support each other, talk in a more respectful way, and create an atmosphere conducive to working together. Classrooms become a safer and more fun place for children to grow and learn. Finally, a very real impact is increased motivation to learn. Children who have a positive mindset are more receptive to the subject matter and are more motivated to learn. With greater confidence and a more open attitude towards learning, they become more focused and enthusiastic in following the learning process, and more initiative to explore new knowledge. Thus, the habit of saying positive words not only affects the social and emotional aspects of children, but also on their academic development, making them better prepared for the challenges ahead. Not only that, the habit of saying positive words also increases confidence, children are more courageous to speak, express opinions, and interact with their friends. Fostering a Positive Attitude, They are easier to manage emotions, more patient in facing challenges, and more enthusiastic in participating in learning activities. Creating a More Harmonious Learning Environment, With this habit, the classroom atmosphere becomes more comfortable because children are used to using good words and are able to foster a sense of enthusiasm. Increase Learning Motivation, Children who have a positive mindset are more likely to accept subject matter and are more motivated to learn.

4. Challenges and Solutions in Deployment. In its implementation, the application of the habit of saying positive words does not always go without obstacles. Several challenges arise, which need to be overcome so that this habit can be carried out optimally. One of the challenges that is often faced is that some children are still shy or reluctant to say positive words. This shame or discomfort can prevent the child from fully engaging in positive affirmation activities. Solution: Teachers can overcome this challenge by setting an enthusiastic example and showing how much fun it is to say positive words. Using fun methods, such as applause, songs, or interactive

games, can help your child feel more comfortable and motivated to participate. Additionally, creating a stress-free atmosphere where children feel unafraid to try and possibly make mistakes is also very important. This approach will help the child overcome the shyness and begin to feel the benefits of this habit. Another challenge that often arises is that not all children immediately understand the meaning of the words they say. Although children say positive affirmative sentences, sometimes they do not fully understand the meaning or impact of these words in the context of their daily lives. This can make them say positive words just by following a routine without really feeling it. Solution: To overcome this, teachers can provide a simple and easy-to-understand explanation of the meaning of each positive word spoken. For example, explaining that "I'm a great kid" means they're confident in their own abilities, or "I love my friends" teaches the values of empathy and friendship. Connecting positive words to children's everyday experiences, such as events at school or home, will help them better understand the meaning and importance of those words in their lives. One of the biggest challenges in implementing this habit is consistency in its application. To ensure this habit doesn't just become a momentary routine, but actually forms a positive mindset for the child, it's important to maintain its sustainability and consistency. Solution: In order for this habit to be applied consistently, teachers and parents need to work together in getting children into the habit of saying positive words not only at school but also at home. Good communication between the school and parents is essential to creating an environment that supports these habits, both inside and outside the classroom. Parents can be invited to remind their children to say positive words at home, set a good example, and appreciate every effort of the child in speaking and acting positively. With solid cooperation, this habit will be easier to form and survive in children's daily lives.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with a case study to describe the application of the habit of saying positive words in early childhood in ABA 01 Batu Kindergarten. The research sample consisted of 20 children of group B and 2 classroom teachers. Data was collected through direct observation of positive affirmation activities that were routinely carried out every morning, semi-structured interviews with teachers and parents to obtain in-depth information, and documentation in the form of photos and activity notes. Data analysis was carried out thematically with stages of reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions based on the main themes regarding the implementation, impact, and obstacles to habituation. To ensure the accuracy of the data, the researcher used triangulation of sources and methods and validated the data through member checks with teachers. This research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness and challenges in the application of positive affirmations for early childhood character formation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of the habit of saying positive words in early childhood at ABA 01 Batu Kindergarten has a real impact on the development of children's character and confidence. Children become more courageous in communicating, more enthusiastic about participating in learning

activities, and showing a friendly and optimistic attitude in their daily social interactions. These habits help form a positive mindset that supports their social and emotional development.

The implementation of habituation is carried out routinely every morning with fun methods, such as applause and songs, so that children feel comfortable and motivated to participate. The role of teachers as facilitators is very important in providing emotional and intellectual support so that children are able to absorb these positive values. Despite some obstacles, such as some children's shyness and incomplete understanding of the meaning of positive words, solutions with an interactive approach and simple explanations can help children understand the meaning of affirmation. Cooperation between teachers and parents is also an important factor in maintaining the consistency of this habit at school and at home. Overall, the habit of saying positive words can increase confidence, create a harmonious learning atmosphere, and motivate children in the learning process. This confirms that verbal affirmation is an effective strategy in shaping early childhood character.

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