



## Strengthening the Character of Tolerance and Responsibility Through the Leadership and Habituation Program at SMP Negeri 2 Kedungreja, Cilacap Regency

Nur Asifin; Mukhamad Murdiono

Yogyakarta State University, Indonesia

<http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v11i12.6265>

---

### **Abstract**

This study aims to (1) analyze the planning of character strengthening for tolerance and responsibility through leadership and habituation programs at SMP Negeri 2 Kedungreja, Cilacap Regency; (2) describe the implementation process of character strengthening for tolerance and responsibility through leadership and habituation programs; (3) identify the obstacles in the implementation of character strengthening for tolerance and responsibility through leadership and habituation programs; The research method used is a qualitative approach with a case study type of research. This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Kedungreja, Cilacap Regency. The research subjects were determined using purposive sampling, consisting of 1 principal, 5 teachers, and 10 students involved in leadership and habituation programs. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The research instruments included observation sheets, interview guides, and documentation sheets. Data analysis was conducted inductively through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing based on patterns found during the research. The research results indicate that: (1) the planning of character strengthening for tolerance and responsibility through leadership and habituation programs has been designed based on student character analysis; (2) the implementation of tolerance and responsibility character strengthening programs runs smoothly through positive student interactions and activities that facilitate tolerance values; (3) obstacles in strengthening tolerance and responsibility character include time, resources, and participation. This study recommends increasing collaboration between teachers, students, and parents to strengthen character-building programs at school.

**Keywords:** *Character; Habituation; Leadership; Responsibility; Tolerance*

### **Introduction**

Education has always been a central concern for society. As one of the key pillars in national life, education plays a crucial role in shaping the younger generation, including in Indonesia. In recent times, various events in the education sector have drawn public attention, with some tarnishing its image. These incidents serve as a serious warning to all educational stakeholders to take action and reform. Education holds an essential role in character formation from an early age, aiming to produce citizens with values aligned with Indonesia's national identity.

The events in the education world consistently attract the public's attention. In this era of technological advancement, foreign cultures can easily penetrate Indonesia without strong barriers. Many Indonesian students imitate behaviors from other cultures that are not in line with the nation's values, such as school fights, motorbike gangs, and even bullying and violence. This phenomenon has spread to various regions, including small areas in Central Java, like Cilacap Regency. Recently, a bullying case involving a junior high school in Cilacap went viral, not only in Indonesia but also internationally on the web. This case even received special attention from the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), reflecting negatively on Indonesia's education system. According to Susilawati, Nimim, Suharyanto, & Darmayasa (2023), if these foreign behaviors continue to be left unchecked, the nation's identity will gradually erode.

The situation mentioned above is only a small part of a much larger problem that remains uncovered. This case has opened the eyes of many in society, particularly within education, to realize the lack of tolerance and responsibility among students, leading to inappropriate behavior. Regions still need character reinforcement to minimize such problems. However, the goal is not to point fingers but to collectively discuss and find solutions. Concrete actions are required both within family and school environments to reduce intolerant behavior and lack of responsibility among students (Abdulatif & Dewi, 2021).

Field observations show that the character of tolerance and responsibility at SMP Negeri 2 Kedungreja requires special strengthening. As part of the research, observations focusing on behavioral patterns and data from the guidance counseling teachers' records revealed that every class had at least one case related to tolerance, such as mocking and even forming cliques among students. Additionally, breaches of responsibility were evident from repeated violations of school rules. This is supported by school reports, which show a score of 61.45 out of 100 for the diversity climate regarding tolerance, while the independent or responsibility aspect only scored 49.03 out of 100.

Strengthening moral character values has been a historical solution to facing moral decay among students (Peterson, 2020). Education has long demonstrated how Indonesia's national character was shaped, from the independence era to preserving it. However, today, the nation's character is not as strong as it once was. The fighting spirit of this country is almost eroded by short-term interests. In this digital age, external influences are increasingly uncontrollable. Children easily access information that accelerates the erosion of character values due to foreign cultures inconsistent with Pancasila values.

Notoatmodjo (2013) emphasizes that an individual's influence within a group is a critical element in education, necessitating that individuals possess the ability to embrace positive character influences. The ease of access to technology and the influx of foreign cultures are often not matched by adequate filtering abilities. What is seen and heard is often accepted without prior selection. The phenomenon where bad behavior becomes common and good deeds become rare is a consequence of moral decline, closely related to the declining quality of education. If we delve deeper, the current state of education in Indonesia, particularly regarding the deterioration of character that can no longer filter values consistent with Pancasila, is a shared responsibility. Yudhar, Andi, & Jumadi (2021) argue that individuals strive to express their abilities, potential, and talents to reach personal development, and what young people exhibit reflects the potential they wish to express in life.

With various challenges in the education system, especially in terms of character, this country is facing an unresolved multidimensional crisis. The situation is worsened by the moral and ethical crisis among the nation's leaders, impacting the younger generation. Student conflicts, uncontrolled sexual behavior, drug abuse, social indifference, and the decline of values and norms not only occur in urban areas but also extend to rural communities. As a preventive measure, education is expected to improve the quality of the younger generation in various aspects to tackle the root of cultural and character issues.

In response to these circumstances, it is essential to understand and take steps to rebuild a character reflective of Pancasila values. The educational curriculum is not rigid and static but dynamic and must adapt to current conditions. Currently, the curriculum is deemed too complex and pressured, as it emphasizes intellectual aspects, making some students uncomfortable at school and prone to negative behavior. Therefore, educational reform is critical, with an emphasis on a curriculum that focuses on cultural and character values. Character in education reflects the character of the Indonesian nation, aligned with Pancasila values such as faith, honesty, politeness, responsibility, discipline, compassion, and mutual cooperation. By integrating character education into school activities, it is hoped that the desired character will be developed (Nuroniya, 2020).

In light of these issues, this study explores how leadership programs, which are a series of activities aimed at developing students' leadership abilities, can shape and strengthen their tolerance and responsibility character. Additionally, habituation plays a significant role in character formation. Through positive habits, students are expected to more readily accept and implement tolerance and responsibility values. Programs that create awareness of tolerance are expected to help students internalize these values in their daily behavior. This research aims to identify the extent to which leadership and habituation programs influence the reinforcement of tolerance and responsibility character among students at SMP Negeri 2 Kedungreja, Cilacap Regency.

Several previous studies have highlighted the importance of strengthening tolerance and responsibility through various approaches, including leadership programs and habituation. Latifah's (2021) study showed that leadership programs in schools have a positive impact on developing students' responsibility and increasing their tolerance for differences. Meanwhile, Waldi's (2019) research emphasizes the role of habituation in shaping students' responsibility character. The study demonstrated that habituation activities integrated with positive values increase students' awareness of their personal responsibilities.

However, there is a gap in the literature that has yet to specifically explore the simultaneous implementation of leadership and habituation programs in the context of junior high school education. This study aims to fill that gap by exploring the collaborative impact of leadership and habituation programs on strengthening tolerance and responsibility character among students at SMP N 2 Kedungreja, Cilacap Regency. By synthesizing previous research, it is concluded that this study not only enriches our understanding of the impact of character programs but also contributes new insights into designing a holistic approach that combines leadership and habituation programs to achieve more comprehensive character formation at the junior high school level. Therefore, it is essential for researchers to investigate the reinforcement of tolerance and responsibility character based on Pancasila values through leadership and habituation programs at SMP Negeri 2 Kedungreja, Cilacap Regency. This type of research, from a civic education perspective, will encourage active citizenship to address character issues in schools.

## ***Method***

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. The case study method allows the researcher to focus on a specific case, in this instance, SMP N 2 Kedungreja. The selection of research data sources in this study uses purposive sampling, which involves selecting data sources based on specific considerations and careful judgment. This means the data sources chosen are those capable of providing answers to the predefined research problems. The study utilizes both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data refers to data collected directly by the researcher from informants selected through the purposive technique (Sugiyono, 2019).

## **Results**

### **Planning for Strengthening Tolerance and Responsibility Character through Leadership and Habituation Programs**

The planning for strengthening the character of tolerance and responsibility at SMP Negeri 2 Kedungreja is conducted through systematically integrated leadership and habituation programs. This aligns with the school's policy to instill character values continuously within the school environment. The planning process begins with an in-depth analysis of student characteristics, indicators of values that need strengthening, and school policies as a basis for formulating leadership and habituation programs.

In this context, the character strengthening planning at SMP Negeri 2 Kedungreja involves developing work programs that encompass objectives, activities, and evaluations oriented toward the values of tolerance and responsibility. According to Lickona (2012), effective character planning should integrate character values into all aspects of school life, both academic and non-academic. This is implemented at SMP Negeri 2 Kedungreja, where every leadership and habituation activity, such as flag ceremonies, group work, and various student activities, contains elements of developing the character of tolerance and responsibility. With thorough planning, the school hopes that students can internalize these values in their daily lives.

This planning process is also influenced by the analysis results of student character, where the school routinely evaluates the character conditions of the students. As expressed by Koesoema (2010), this evaluation is important to understand the strengths and weaknesses of students in terms of experiencing and applying moral values, so that character strengthening programs can be tailored to the specific needs of students. At SMP Negeri 2 Kedungreja, this evaluation is carried out through teacher observations of student behavior, discussions with parents, and student reflections through daily journals. From this analysis, the school can determine the character indicators to be strengthened, especially tolerance in social interactions and responsibility in completing school tasks.

In this planning, the school also considers existing policies at both the national and local levels. The 2013 Curriculum implemented in Indonesia emphasizes the importance of character education, where every student is expected to have critical, creative, communicative thinking skills, and noble morals (Kemendikbud, 2017). This policy is implemented through planning at the school level, which is then reflected in leadership and habituation programs at SMP Negeri 2 Kedungreja. The school policies supporting this program's implementation include rules regarding student behavior, the role of teachers as role models, and supervision in every school activity.

With supportive policies in place, the school is able to design sustainable and directed programs. One of the main strategies used is habituation, where students are encouraged to consistently apply the values of tolerance and responsibility in various daily activities. As expressed by Sugiyono (2017), habituation is an effective method for character building, as it involves the repetition of positive actions until they become habits. At SMP Negeri 2 Kedungreja, routine activities such as group prayers before studying, community service, and other social activities are designed to establish habits that support character strengthening.

### **Implementation of Character Strengthening of Tolerance and Responsibility through Leadership and Habituation Programs**

The implementation of character strengthening for tolerance and responsibility through leadership and habituation programs at SMP Negeri 2 Kedungreja has proven effective. The success of this program implementation is closely related to the active role of teachers and school staff, who serve as role models for students. As Lickona (2012) pointed out, one of the key factors in character education is the presence of positive role models for students to emulate. At SMP Negeri 2 Kedungreja, teachers consistently

demonstrate attitudes of tolerance and responsibility in their daily interactions, both inside and outside the classroom. For example, in leadership activities, teachers and school staff provide real examples of how to lead wisely, listen to others' opinions, and make fair decisions, allowing students to emulate these behaviors in their own activities.

Active student participation in leadership and habituation activities is also an important component of this program's implementation. According to Yusup (2016), student participation in school activities aimed at character development will reinforce the values intended to be instilled because students are directly involved and feel the impact. At SMP Negeri 2 Kedungreja, activities such as group work, group discussions, and leadership tasks in various school organizations provide opportunities for students to practice tolerance and responsibility. Through intensive interactions with fellow students and teachers, they learn to accept differing opinions, collaborate to complete tasks, and take responsibility for the roles and tasks assigned to them.

The effectiveness of this program is also reflected in the increasingly developed practice of tolerance among students. They are not only taught to understand the concept of tolerance but are also given opportunities to practice it in real life through various activities. According to Tilaar (2014), effective character education must provide students with direct experiences in applying the values taught. This is done at SMP Negeri 2 Kedungreja by integrating tolerance values into daily activities such as flag ceremonies, community service, and joint religious activities. In these activities, students are taught to respect differences in religion, ethnicity, and social background, as well as how to collaborate in a harmonious environment.

The ongoing habituation programs also play a vital role in strengthening students' character. Habituation is one of the methods commonly used in character education, where positive behavior is formed through consistent repetition. At SMP Negeri 2 Kedungreja, the habituation program includes various activities designed to foster responsibility and tolerance. One example is the assignment of routine tasks to students to maintain classroom cleanliness or to organize social activities. Through this habituation, students gradually develop a sense of responsibility that extends beyond academic aspects to daily life (Zuchdi, 2009).

Moreover, collaboration between teachers, students, and parents further strengthens the implementation of this program. Although the program's implementation mainly occurs within the school environment, parental involvement in supporting character strengthening at home is crucial. This aligns with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) perspective on human development ecology, where the family and school environments mutually influence the formation of individual character. At SMP Negeri 2 Kedungreja, teachers regularly communicate with parents about the development of students' character, creating synergy between education at school and at home.

Overall, the implementation of character strengthening for tolerance and responsibility at SMP Negeri 2 Kedungreja is effectively carried out thanks to comprehensive support from all components of the school. Teachers and staff serve as role models, students are actively engaged in various activities, and habituation programs are consistently applied. Thus, the character of tolerance and responsibility can be strongly instilled in students, in line with the goals of the character education program that has been designed.

### **Obstacles to Strengthening Tolerance and Responsibility Character through Leadership and Habituation Programs**

The strengthening of tolerance character through leadership and habituation programs at SMP Negeri 2 Kedungreja faces several significant obstacles. These challenges arise not only from the internal school environment but also involve the role of parents who are less optimally supporting the program. The main obstacles identified in this study include low awareness among school community members

about the importance of strengthening tolerance character, limited time for program implementation, and minimal active participation from parents.

First, low awareness among school members, including teachers and students, poses a challenge in strengthening tolerance character. Although the school has developed leadership and habituation programs effectively, not all school members have a deep understanding of the importance of tolerance values in daily life. Some teachers and students still regard this program as a routine activity without embodying the values intended to be formed. This aligns with Suparno's (2010) findings, which state that character education requires profound internalization of values, rather than mere formal implementation. Without a deep understanding from all school elements, efforts to strengthen tolerance character become less effective.

Second, another obstacle identified is the limited time available for program implementation. Activities aimed at strengthening tolerance character often have to share time with a packed academic program, limiting the allocation of time for non-academic activities such as character development. According to Wiyani (2013), one of the main challenges in implementing character education in schools is finding a balance between the academic curriculum and character development programs. At SMP Negeri 2 Kedungreja, the leadership and habituation programs designed to instill tolerance values often need to be adjusted to fit an already full class schedule, making their implementation less than optimal.

Third, the lack of active participation from parents in supporting character strengthening programs also poses a significant obstacle. Based on interviews with several teachers, it was found that although the school has attempted to involve parents in various activities, their participation remains relatively low. Parents often only engage in formal activities such as parent-teacher meetings but are less active in monitoring and supporting their children's character development at home. This aligns with research conducted by Epstein (2001), which shows that parental involvement in children's education is crucial to support school programs, including character education. Minimal involvement from parents leads to the character strengthening process at school not being well-integrated with the family environment, so students do not receive consistent support in instilling tolerance values.

Addressing these obstacles requires a more comprehensive approach. Raising awareness among school community members can be achieved through specialized training and workshops on the importance of character education, ensuring that teachers, staff, and students have a deeper understanding of the values to be instilled. Additionally, more flexible and collaborative scheduling between academic and non-academic activities is necessary for the optimal implementation of tolerance character strengthening programs. Lastly, increasing parental participation can be achieved through more intensive communication between the school and families, as well as involving parents in programs that support character strengthening at home.

## **Conclusion**

This study aims to analyze the strengthening of tolerance and responsibility character through leadership and habituation programs at SMP Negeri 2 Kedungreja. The results indicate that the planning for character strengthening of tolerance in this school is conducted systematically by integrating tolerance values into the school's work programs. This program is based on an analysis of student character, relevant value indicators, and school policies. The implementation of this program is effective due to the active support of teachers and school staff as role models, as well as student participation in various activities that encourage positive interaction and the practice of tolerance. However, several challenges are faced in its implementation, such as uneven awareness among school members, time constraints, and a lack of active parental participation.

Additionally, the planning for responsibility character is designed by integrating the value of responsibility into leadership programs and habituation activities that require students to be accountable for both academic and non-academic tasks. The implementation of this responsibility program runs fairly optimally with active student participation. However, challenges that arise in strengthening the character of responsibility include maintaining student consistency, a lack of human resources to assist students, and still low parental participation. This conclusion illustrates the importance of enhancing collaboration between schools and parents, as well as the need for more adequate resource support to ensure the sustainability and success of character strengthening programs in schools.

## References

- Abdulatif, S., & Dewi, D. A. (2021). The role of citizenship education in fostering tolerance attitudes among students. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran Guru Sekolah Dasar (JPPGuseda)*, 4(2), 103–109. <https://doi.org/10.55215/jppguseda.v4i2.3610>.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*. Harvard University Press.
- Epstein, J. L. (2001). *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Preparing Educators and Improving Schools*. Westview Press.
- Kemendikbud. (2017). *Kurikulum 2013: Konsep dan Implementasi*. Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia.
- Koesoema, D. (2010). *Pendidikan Karakter: Strategi Mendidik Anak di Zaman Global*. Grasindo.
- Lickona, T. (2012). *Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility*. Bantam Books.
- Notoatmodjo, S. (2013). *Ilmu Pendidikan*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Nuroniayah, Siti. (2020). Development of Measurement Instruments for Student Responsibility Attitudes in Madrasah Tsanawiyah. *Jurnal Penelitian dan Evaluasi Pendidikan*, 6(2).
- Sugiyono. (2017). *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan: Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Alfabeta.
- Suparno, P. (2010). *Filsafat Pendidikan untuk Pendidikan Karakter*. Kanisius.
- Tilaar, H. A. R. (2014). *Kekuasaan dan Pendidikan: Suatu Tinjauan dari Perspektif Budaya*. Rineka Cipta.
- Wiyani, N. A. (2013). *Managing Schools with a Character Education Approach*. Ar-Ruzz Media.
- Waldi, Rohmat. (2019). *Praktik Habitiasi Sebagai Pembentukan Karakter Tanggung Jawab Peserta Didik di SMP Ta'limul Islam Surakarta*. Thesis, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta.
- Yudhar Astuti Nurdin, Andi Agustang & Jumadi Sahabudin. (2021). Habituation of character values in junior high school students. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Sciences*, 16(2), 659-668. <https://doi.org/10.18844/cjes.v16i2.5642>.
- Yusup, M. (2016). *Pendidikan Karakter di Sekolah: Teori dan Praktik*. Graha Ilmu.
- Zuchdi, D. (2009). *Humanisasi Pendidikan: Pendidikan Humanis Indonesia*. UNY Press.

## **Copyrights**

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).