

Implementation of The Tapak Suci Extracurricular Program to Instill Discipline and Humility in Social Interaction at TK ABA 57 Surabaya

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ABSTRACT

Character education in early childhood is the primary foundation for forming a noble personality (akhlakul karimah). This research aims to describe the implementation of the Tapak Suci extracurricular program in instilling discipline and humility in early childhood at TK Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal 57 Surabaya. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data collection techniques included participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results indicate that Tapak Suci activities serve not only as physical exercise but also as a medium for internalizing character values through habituation, role modeling, and the reinforcement of religious values. The value of discipline is reflected in children's compliance with training rules, while the value of humility is evident in mutual respect and a lack of arrogance in interactions. Thus, Tapak Suci extracurricular activities are effective as a means of culture-based and religious character education for young children.

Keywords: character education, Tapak Suci, discipline, humility, early childhood

INTRODUCTION

Character education is a fundamental aspect of the educational system aimed at developing individuals who are not only intellectually competent but also possess moral integrity, noble character, and the ability to act according to ethical values in society. Within the context of national education, character education plays a crucial role in preparing high-quality and competitive human resources. According to Buchori (2002), character education is a process of internalising values that shapes individuals into morally responsible human beings. Similarly, Lickona (1991) argues that character education consists of three interconnected dimensions: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. These dimensions must be developed holistically to enable individuals not only to understand moral values but also to appreciate and practise them in their daily lives.

In the era of rapid digital transformation and globalisation, character education has become increasingly important. The expansion of digital technology, changing patterns of social interaction, and the widespread influence of global culture have created new challenges for children's moral and social development. Previous studies indicate that excessive exposure to digital media and weakening social control may contribute to declining levels of discipline, respect, and social responsibility among children (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Nucci & Narvaez, 2008). Therefore, educational institutions are expected not only to foster cognitive development but also to strengthen character formation from an early age. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 2020) emphasises that early childhood education should integrate

social-emotional and moral development as essential components of children's holistic growth.

Early childhood represents a strategic period for character development because it coincides with the “golden age” of human development. During this stage, children's cognitive, emotional, and social capacities develop rapidly, making them highly receptive to values, habits, and behavioural models present in their environment (Hurlock, 1999; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Consistent with Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, children acquire behaviours through observation, imitation, and interaction with significant others. Consequently, character values such as discipline and humility are more effectively developed through direct experience, repeated practice, and consistent role modelling.

One effective approach to character education is the use of extracurricular activities. Such activities provide opportunities for experiential learning, allowing children to actively engage in situations that require self-regulation, cooperation, and social responsibility. Dewey (1938) emphasised that meaningful learning occurs through direct experience, which serves as the foundation of educational development. Participation in extracurricular programmes has also been shown to enhance social competence, discipline, and engagement within educational settings (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006).

Within the Indonesian cultural context, pencak silat represents a form of intangible cultural heritage that embodies educational, cultural, and moral values. Beyond its function as a martial art, pencak silat promotes discipline, responsibility, perseverance, self-control, respect, and humility (Wilson, 2015). Among various pencak silat schools, Tapak Suci Putera Muhammadiyah is distinctive because it integrates physical training with Islamic moral and spiritual education. The philosophy of Tapak Suci emphasises that physical strength should be balanced with faith and good character, as reflected in its motto, “With faith and character I become strong; without faith and character I become weak.”

The selection of Tapak Suci as a medium for character education is based on several practical and pedagogical considerations. First, the learning process within Tapak Suci involves structured routines, such as punctual attendance, orderly participation, obedience to instructors, and adherence to training rules. These practices provide concrete opportunities for children to develop discipline through repeated habituation. Second, Tapak Suci training encourages children to respect trainers and peers regardless of differences in ability, thereby fostering humility and mutual respect. Third, the activity combines physical movement, play, and social interaction, making it developmentally appropriate and engaging for young children. Since early childhood learners tend to learn more effectively through active participation rather than abstract instruction, Tapak Suci offers a realistic and contextual environment for the internalisation of character values. Consequently, Tapak Suci is not merely a sports activity but also a practical educational medium through which discipline and humility can be cultivated through daily experiences and behavioural practice.

Previous studies have demonstrated the contribution of pencak silat, particularly Tapak Suci, to character development. Mahligaiyani (2018) reported that participation in Tapak Suci activities promotes discipline and responsibility among students. Similarly, Putra (2023) found that Tapak Suci training fosters noble character traits, including humility and mutual respect. Furthermore, Wulandari (2023) emphasised that humility in early childhood can be effectively developed through habituation processes and consistent role modelling within educational settings. Although these studies provide valuable insights into the character-building potential of Tapak Suci, most have been

conducted in primary and secondary school contexts. Research focusing specifically on the implementation of Tapak Suci as a character education strategy in early childhood education remains limited. This gap highlights the need for further investigation into how discipline and humility are introduced and internalised through Tapak Suci activities among young children.

TK Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal 57 Surabaya, as an Islamic-based early childhood education institution, is committed to integrating character education into its learning programmes. One initiative is the implementation of Tapak Suci extracurricular activities. The programme is designed not only to improve children's physical abilities but also to instil discipline and humility through enjoyable, age-appropriate learning experiences. The activities incorporate learning-by-doing approaches, games, and habituation practices that align with the developmental characteristics of young children. Given these characteristics, Tapak Suci offers considerable potential as a medium for character education. However, a deeper understanding is needed regarding how the programme is implemented and how character values are effectively internalised by children. Therefore, this study aims to describe the implementation of the Tapak Suci extracurricular programme in fostering discipline and humility among early childhood learners at TK Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal 57 Surabaya.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. A qualitative approach was selected because the research sought to gain an in-depth understanding of the processes, experiences, meanings, and interactions involved in the implementation of the Tapak Suci extracurricular programme in fostering discipline and humility among young children. Qualitative research enables researchers to explore social phenomena within their natural settings and to understand participants' perspectives in depth (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, this approach is particularly suitable for investigating character education because character formation involves complex social interactions, values internalisation, and behavioural practices that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measurement alone.

The study adopted a single-case study design because it focused on a specific educational setting, namely TK Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal (ABA) 57 Surabaya. According to Yin (2018), a case study is appropriate when researchers seek to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. Through this design, the researcher was able to examine holistically how discipline and humility were developed through Tapak Suci activities and how these values were internalised by children within the school environment.

The research was conducted at TK ABA 57 Surabaya, located at Jalan Semolowaru Utara VIII/1-A, Sukolilo District, Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia. This institution was purposively selected because it actively implements the Tapak Suci extracurricular programme as part of its Islamic-based character education curriculum. In addition, the school has consistently integrated religious, moral, and character values into its educational practices, making it a relevant setting for investigating the implementation of character education through martial arts activities.

Data collection was conducted over approximately one month and consisted of preparation, fieldwork, and preliminary data analysis. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, a technique commonly employed in qualitative research to identify

individuals who possess relevant knowledge and experience related to the phenomenon under investigation (Patton, 2015). The participants included the school principal, classroom teachers, the Tapak Suci instructor, and several children participating in the programme. These participants were selected because of their direct involvement in planning, implementing, and experiencing the Tapak Suci activities. The final number of participants was determined based on the principle of data saturation, whereby data collection continued until no new themes or significant information emerged from the interviews and observations (Guest et al., 2020).

Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation studies. Observation was conducted using moderate participant observation, where the researcher was present in the research setting and observed activities directly without becoming fully involved in the programme. This technique enabled the researcher to examine children's behaviours, interactions, participation patterns, and responses during Tapak Suci sessions, particularly those reflecting discipline and humility. Field notes were systematically recorded throughout the observation process to capture contextual information and emerging patterns.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principal, teachers, and Tapak Suci instructor. This interview format allowed participants to express their views and experiences freely while ensuring that the discussion remained focused on the research objectives (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Interview questions explored the objectives of the programme, strategies used to instil character values, forms of habituation implemented during training, perceived outcomes, and challenges encountered during implementation. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Documentation was used as a complementary data source to enrich and verify information obtained through observations and interviews. The documentation materials included photographs of activities, training schedules, lesson plans, school profiles, attendance records, and other institutional documents related to the Tapak Suci programme. These documents provided additional evidence regarding programme implementation and character education practices within the school.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the study employed source triangulation and method triangulation. Source triangulation was achieved by comparing information obtained from different participants, including the principal, teachers, instructor, and students. Method triangulation involved cross-checking data collected through observations, interviews, and documentation. Member checking was also conducted by confirming interview interpretations with participants to enhance the credibility of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of four interconnected stages: data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. During the condensation stage, interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were organised, coded, and categorised according to emerging themes. The data were then presented in descriptive narratives and thematic matrices to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn and continuously verified through comparison across data sources to ensure consistency and accuracy. This analytical process enabled the researcher to identify patterns related to the implementation of Tapak Suci and its role in fostering discipline and humility among young children.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Tapak Suci Extracurricular Activities in Fostering Discipline and Humility

The findings indicate that the implementation of the Tapak Suci extracurricular programme at TK Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal (ABA) 57 Surabaya is systematically designed and closely integrated with the institution's character education objectives. The programme is conducted once every two weeks for approximately 30 minutes, a duration that has been adjusted to the developmental characteristics and attention span of early childhood learners. Although relatively brief, the activities are organised into three structured stages—opening, core activities, and closing—each of which incorporates opportunities for the development of discipline and humility. This finding suggests that the effectiveness of character education is not primarily determined by the duration of instruction but by the consistency, quality, and meaningfulness of children's experiences. This supports Lickona's (1991) argument that character formation occurs through continuous exposure to moral practices and values embedded in everyday activities rather than through direct moral instruction alone.

The opening stage serves as an important foundation for character development. Before beginning the physical exercises, children are required to line up neatly, listen attentively to instructions, and participate in collective prayers. At first glance, these routines may appear to be simple procedural activities; however, a deeper analysis reveals their significant role in cultivating self-discipline. Through repeated participation in these routines, children gradually learn to regulate their behaviour, wait for their turn, and follow agreed-upon rules. These practices reflect the essence of discipline as the ability to control one's actions in accordance with social expectations and institutional norms.

The findings demonstrate that discipline is not taught through punishment or coercion but through a process of habituation embedded in daily practices. This observation is consistent with Hurlock's (1999) view that discipline develops through repeated experiences and consistent reinforcement. The regularity of the routines creates behavioural patterns that eventually become internalised by children. From a socio-cultural perspective, these routines function as mechanisms through which institutional values are transmitted and reproduced. Rather than merely teaching children to obey instructions, the activities encourage them to understand the importance of order, responsibility, and respect for collective rules. This finding reinforces previous studies suggesting that character values are more effectively developed when integrated into authentic learning experiences rather than delivered through abstract moral explanations.

The core stage of the programme involves basic Tapak Suci movements delivered through games, demonstrations, and enjoyable physical activities. This approach reflects developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood education, which emphasise active learning, play-based experiences, and direct participation (NAEYC, 2020). Through these activities, children not only develop motor coordination and physical fitness but also encounter situations requiring concentration, patience, cooperation, and self-control. Consequently, the learning process simultaneously supports physical and character development.

A critical aspect emerging from the findings is the role of the Tapak Suci instructor as a moral model. During training sessions, the instructor consistently emphasises that martial arts should not be used to dominate or harm others. Instead, children are encouraged to respect their peers, help friends who experience difficulties, and demonstrate sportsmanship during practice. This finding highlights that the transmission of character values occurs primarily through social interaction and observation rather than through verbal instruction alone. Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory explains that

children acquire attitudes and behaviours by observing significant role models and imitating behaviours that receive positive reinforcement. In this context, the instructor functions not merely as a technical trainer but also as a moral educator whose actions and attitudes influence children's character formation.

In the core stage, children do basic movements through games and fun activities. This fits early childhood principles of *learning by doing* and play (Dewey, 1938; NAEYC, 2020). Children develop motor skills and learn rules, cooperation, and self-control. The coach models values like respect, not hurting, and sportsmanship.



Figure 1. Preparation for Tapak Suci training

Furthermore, the findings reveal that humility is fostered through collaborative learning situations embedded within Tapak Suci activities. Children are encouraged to practise together regardless of differences in ability and are reminded that physical strength should not be used to show superiority over others. This is particularly important because martial arts training is often associated with competitiveness and demonstrations of strength. However, the implementation at TK ABA 57 Surabaya presents a different educational orientation, where martial arts become a medium for developing self-awareness, empathy, and respect. This finding extends previous research by Mahligaiyani (2018) and Putra (2023), which identified the contribution of Tapak Suci to character development among older students. The present study demonstrates that similar values can also be introduced and internalised effectively at the early childhood level when learning activities are adapted to children's developmental needs.

Another significant finding is that the integration of Islamic values within Tapak Suci activities strengthens the process of character internalisation. Prayers, respectful interactions, and reminders about good behaviour are consistently incorporated throughout the programme. This integration creates coherence between religious teachings and practical experiences, enabling children to connect moral values with their daily actions. Such a process is particularly important in early childhood education because young children tend to understand values more effectively through concrete experiences rather than abstract concepts. Therefore, the success of the programme appears to stem not only from the martial arts activities themselves but also from the integration of religious, social, and behavioural learning within a supportive educational environment.

Overall, the findings suggest that Tapak Suci functions not merely as a physical activity programme but as a comprehensive character education medium. The systematic routines, role modelling provided by instructors, opportunities for social interaction, and integration of religious values collectively contribute to the development of discipline and humility among young children. These findings underscore the importance of experiential

and contextual approaches in early childhood character education and demonstrate how culturally rooted extracurricular activities can serve as effective vehicles for character formation.

CONCLUSION

Character education at TK Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal 57 Surabaya, specifically through Tapak Suci, plays an important role in forming character. Through these activities, children are not only taught self-protection and culture, but are guided to develop noble values like discipline, humility, trustworthiness, responsibility, and mutual respect. The process uses a fun "learning by doing" approach so values are naturally received. Tapak Suci, with its philosophy of faith and character, contributes to building strong and virtuous youth.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors thank Universitas Negeri Surabaya for academic support during this research. Highest appreciation to TK Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal 57 Surabaya for permitting research via observation, interview, and documentation. Thanks also to the coaches and all students who participated, helping collect data for this article.

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