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Character Education Transformation in Elementary Schools in the Society 5.0 Era: A Study of the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children (KAIH)

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ABSTRACT

The development of digital technology in the Society 5.0 era has significantly influenced changes in the character of elementary school students, leading to issues such as declining discipline, empathy, and social responsibility. This condition underscores the need for character education that is relevant to contemporary societal developments. This study aims to examine the contribution of the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children (7 KAIH) program to strengthening students' character. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation at SDN Kaliwates 01. The findings revealed that implementing the seven habits waking up early, praying, exercising regularly, cultivating a love of learning, consuming healthy and nutritious food, participating in community life, and going to bed early positively influenced students' character development. Students demonstrated improved discipline, responsibility, active engagement in learning, and greater social awareness. In addition, improvements were observed in students' physical well-being and readiness to learn. The program's success was supported by strong collaboration between the school and parents in guiding and consistently monitoring the implementation of these habits. Therefore, the 7 KAIH program contributes positively to strengthening character education among elementary school students and serves as a relevant strategy for addressing educational challenges in the digital era.

1. Introduction

Changes in the character of elementary school students have become an increasingly evident phenomenon over the past decade, particularly due to the rapid pace of globalization and the accelerated development of digital technology. Shifts

in lifestyle, imbalanced parenting practices, and exposure to digital content without adequate supervision have contributed to a decline in the quality of social interactions among young children, weakened empathy, and reduced levels of responsibility and independence (Fildzah Farahiyah et al., 2024). This situation poses a significant challenge for contemporary elementary schools.

The Society 5.0 era not only marks a digital revolution but also represents a profound transformation in human civilization that directly influences the ways individuals think, behave, and interact, particularly among children. (Sugiarto & Farid, 2023). Amid the ease of access to technology and children's increasing familiarity with digital devices such as gadgets, a striking irony has emerged: their growing detachment from the fundamental values of life. (Annisa et al., 2022). The rapid advancement of digital technology has introduced various new challenges for the younger generation, including information overload, shifts in cultural values, and decreased engagement in healthy social interactions, discipline, responsibility, and empathy (Widiani et al., 2025; Zidan Fahman Arbi, 2024). Therefore, character education must not only be strengthened in elementary schools but also adapted to current demands in order to create a generation that is not only intellectually competent but also emotionally and socially mature (Fadhillah Quratul 'Aini et al., 2024).

Several previous studies have examined student character development. These studies revealed that the decline in student character is influenced by the role of fathers and mothers in the digital age. Parents play a crucial role in shaping their children's character at home, contributing significantly to the development of positive mental attitudes and character traits amidst the increasing influence of digital technology (Rohmah et al., 2024). Furthermore, similar studies have found that many elementary school aged children tend to become angry more easily, experience difficulties in regulating their emotions, and show less respect for differences, all of which indicate a weakening of social and emotional character development (Astuti et al., 2024; Mahmud & Fajri, 2021)

This phenomenon has given rise to various increasingly concerning problems. One of the most prominent issues is the decline in time management discipline, as children tend to spend hours in front of screens without adequate supervision or control (Hidayah, 2026). In addition, spiritual awareness has also diminished, as the time devoted to worship and spiritual reflection is increasingly replaced by digital entertainment activities (Samiha & Fauzi, 2025). Furthermore, the health aspect has not been immune to these effects, with reduced physical activity and unhealthy eating habits contributing to both physical and mental health problems among children (Fauziyah et al., 2025). Equally important, social interactions among children have continued to decline, resulting in weakened abilities to empathize and engage effectively with others. These conditions highlight the urgent need for serious efforts to rebuild children's character in the digital era, ensuring that they are not only technologically literate but also firmly grounded in moral values and ethical conduct. (Qonita et al., 2023; Salsa Nurhabibah et al., 2025).

In response to the challenges outlined above, the government has taken a concrete step by launching the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children (7 KAIH) program as an effort to revitalize students' character values. The 7 KAIH program was introduced by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education with the objective of strengthening character education through simple yet impactful daily habits. These seven habits include waking up early, worshiping, exercising regularly, cultivating a love of learning, consuming healthy and nutritious food, engaging in community life, and going to bed early. Each habit is designed not only to promote physical well being but also to foster strong mental resilience and moral character (Sinulingga, 2025; Syahni et al., 2025).

This study aims to examine the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children (7 KAIH) program in shaping and strengthening the character of elementary school students. The primary focus of this research is to assess the extent to which the implementation of the seven habits namely waking up early, worshiping, exercising regularly, cultivating a love of learning, consuming healthy and nutritious food, engaging in community life, and going to bed early can bring about positive changes in children's behavior and character in their daily lives. Furthermore, the study seeks to determine whether the 7 KAIH program is truly effective in encouraging students to become more disciplined, responsible, physically and mentally healthy, and socially aware individuals. Through an in depth examination of the implementation of this program in elementary school settings, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of its contribution to character development among young learners

2. Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at gaining an in depth understanding of the implementation of the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children (7 KAIH) program in shaping students' character within its natural setting, without manipulating any variables, and at describing the phenomenon systematically and factually (Nurrisa et al., 2025). This approach was selected because it enables a comprehensive exploration of the dynamics of character habituation, including the habits of waking up early, worshiping, exercising regularly, cultivating a love of learning, consuming healthy and nutritious food, engaging in community life, and going to bed early as practiced in students' daily lives. The study was conducted at SDN Kaliwates 01, Jember Regency, Indonesia.

Research Participants

The participants in this study consisted of the principal, classroom teachers, students, and parents. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on their direct involvement in the implementation of the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children (7 KAIH) program both at school and within the family environment. The selected informants were considered capable of

providing rich and in depth information regarding the implementation process of the program, including its practices, challenges, and perceived impacts on students' character development.

Research Instruments

The research instruments used in this study included observation guidelines, interview guidelines, and documentation. The observation guidelines were employed to directly observe students' activities and behaviors that reflected the seven habits promoted in the 7 KAIH program. The interview guidelines were designed in a semi structured format to obtain in depth information regarding experiences, perceptions, and the impact of the program on students' character development from the perspectives of the principal, teachers, parents, and students (Nurhayati et al., 2026). Meanwhile, documentation was utilized to collect supporting data, including photographs of activities, worship monitoring books, student activity reports, and school program archives related to the implementation of the 7 KAIH program (Fadhilah & Kasrیمان, 2026).

Data Collection

Data were collected through an integrated process of observation, interviews, and documentation (Rindanita et al., 2026). Observations were conducted directly and continuously to examine students' activities at school, particularly in relation to the implementation of the seven habits promoted in the 7 KAIH program. In depth interviews were carried out with the principal, teachers, parents, and students to explore character development, experiences in implementing the program, and the nature of collaboration between the school and families. Documentation was used to gather supporting evidence, including photographs of activities and student reports. These three data collection techniques were employed through triangulation to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Rony Zulfirman, 2022). Data reduction involved selecting, organizing, and categorizing data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation based on the indicators of the seven habits within the 7 KAIH program. Data display was conducted in the form of descriptive narratives that illustrated the program's implementation process and the resulting changes in students' character. Subsequently, conclusions were drawn through the interpretation of the data in relation to the findings obtained from the field. The data analysis process was carried out continuously throughout the study, beginning with data collection and continuing until valid and trustworthy findings regarding the effectiveness of the 7 KAIH program in fostering students' character development were obtained.

3. Results and Discussion

Students' character development should be nurtured from an early age, as character formation during childhood has a significant influence on their behavior and personality in later life (Nuraeni & Lubis, 2022). Children who grow up without proper character development are more likely to carry negative habits into adulthood, which may ultimately affect both their quality of life and their contributions to society. Therefore, character education constitutes an essential component of the educational process, serving not only to develop individuals who are intellectually capable but also morally, emotionally, and socially resilient. Through well directed and consistent character education, young Indonesians can develop into individuals of integrity, responsibility, and strong moral values, enabling them to navigate the challenges of an ever changing era effectively (Khairunisa et al., 2025).

One concrete effort to strengthen character education is the implementation of the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children (7 KAIH) program, initiated by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. This program promotes seven positive habits: waking up early, worshiping, exercising regularly, cultivating a love of learning, consuming healthy and nutritious food, engaging in community life, and going to bed early. These habits not only encourage a healthy lifestyle but also foster discipline, responsibility, spirituality, a passion for learning, and strong social skills. Through the consistent implementation of the 7 KAIH program in elementary schools, it is expected that students' character development will be nurtured holistically, producing a generation of Indonesians who are resilient, morally upright, and well prepared to face the challenges of the future.

Waking Up Early

Waking up early instills important values such as discipline, life balance, productivity, and respect for time. When children are accustomed to waking up early, they learn to manage their daily routines more effectively, have sufficient time to prepare before going to school, and begin their day without feeling rushed. This habit fosters an awareness of the importance of responsibility and time management from an early age, which ultimately contributes to a better quality of life in the future. Moreover, the discipline of waking up early helps develop a positive mindset and mental readiness to engage in daily activities more effectively. At SDN Kaliwates 01, the habit of waking up early has been actively promoted through an approach that involves parents, as illustrated in Figure 1. The school provides guidance and education to parents, encouraging them to help their children develop the habit of waking up earlier, particularly at the time of the Fajr prayer. This initiative aims not only to establish the habit of waking up early but also to encourage students to begin their day with meaningful and purposeful activities.



Figure 1. Socialization Program for Parents

Based on the results of an interview with one of the parents, the implementation of this habit has had a positive impact on students' behavioral development. The parent stated, "My child is no longer difficult to wake up. Previously, it usually took a long time to get them out of bed, but thankfully there has been noticeable improvement. They have also become accustomed to going to bed earlier." This statement indicates that the habit of waking up early not only fosters discipline in starting daily activities but also encourages students to adopt a more regular sleep schedule. By going to bed earlier, students obtain sufficient rest, enabling them to wake up feeling refreshed and better prepared to participate in various daily activities.

The successful implementation of the habit of waking up early cannot be separated from the role of parents, who consistently guide, remind, and supervise their children at home. In addition, teachers play an important role in ensuring that this habit is effectively practiced by students. Based on an interview with one of the teachers, it was revealed that the school regularly evaluates and monitors the implementation of the established habits, including the habit of waking up early. Through continuous monitoring and strong collaboration between the school and parents, students become more motivated to practice this habit consistently. This synergy between the family and the school serves as one of the key factors contributing to the successful development of discipline through the habit of waking up early at SDN Kaliwates 01.

Worshipping

Worship also serves as a means of finding meaning in life and fostering gratitude, patience, and empathy toward others. Through regular and sincere worship, children not only strengthen their spiritual relationship with God but also learn to live more orderly, honestly, and compassionately within their social environment. This practice promotes a harmonious relationship between human beings, god, nature, and fellow members of society, making worship a strong foundation for character development in facing the challenges of the modern era.

In the context of character education at SDN Kaliwates 01, worship activities are implemented in an inclusive manner by respecting the religious diversity and beliefs

of the students. The practice of worship is adapted to the teachings of each student's religion. For Muslim students, the worship habits encouraged include performing the five daily prayers, while students from other religious backgrounds engage in forms of worship in accordance with their respective beliefs.

The implementation of these worship habits has yielded positive results, recognized by many parents. One parent, the mother of fourth grade student Rachel, stated that the encouragement of worship provided by teachers significantly supports her child's religious development. As a convert to Islam, she emphasized that school support plays a crucial role in helping her child develop a consistent worship routine. This effort is further strengthened through the use of a worship monitoring book provided by the school. This book is used to record and monitor students' daily worship activities. Through this structured monitoring system, students become more motivated and responsible in regularly carrying out their worship practices.

Furthermore, the implementation of congregational Zuhur prayers at school serves as a strategy to strengthen worship habits among Muslim students. This activity not only establishes a consistent spiritual routine but also instills the values of discipline, responsibility, and togetherness. As part of the monitoring process, SDN Kaliwates 01 has introduced a worship activity logbook, which is used to record students' participation in various religious practices both at school and at home. Through the use of this logbook, the school can monitor the consistency of students' worship practices while encouraging greater accountability and commitment to their spiritual development. This initiative further supports the integration of religious values into students' daily lives, as illustrated in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Congregational Dhuhr Prayer and the Worship Activity Logbook

In addition to fostering spiritual worship, SDN kaliwates 01 also promotes other forms of worship that emphasize social values, particularly generosity and concern for others. To achieve this, the school has implemented the dawn charity (*sedekah subuh*) program, which is open to all students regardless of their religious background. For muslim students, the activity is carried out after the fajr prayer by setting aside a small amount of money in a personal charity box each morning. Meanwhile, non-muslim students participate in a similar initiative known as morning charity (*sedekah pagi*). The program aims to cultivate kindness, social awareness, and a spirit of sharing from an early age. Its positive impact has been recognized by parents. One parent stated, "I am very pleased because my child has

become more willing to share with others. Every morning, he never forgets to ask for money to put into his charity box.” This testimony indicates that the consistent practice of charitable giving can effectively foster generosity and social responsibility among students.

To ensure the effective implementation of the program, the school conducts regular monitoring and evaluation. Students’ charity boxes are collected every Friday, and the funds gathered are subsequently distributed through various social and religious activities. Through this practice, students learn the value of sharing and develop an understanding of the importance of caring for others. As illustrated in figure 3, this initiative serves as an effective means of nurturing generosity, empathy, and social responsibility among students from an early age.



Figure 3. Religious Activities and Charity Sharing Programs

Exercising Regularly

Based on the observation results, morning exercise activities at SDN kaliwates 01 are conducted regularly before the start of lessons, at approximately 06:50 a.m., for 15-20 minutes. This activity has become part of the school’s daily routine aimed at promoting a healthy and active lifestyle among students. The interview findings revealed that students responded very positively to the activity. One student stated, “Morning exercise makes us happy, and we wish it could always be carried out.” However, morning exercise is not conducted every day, as it is suspended on Mondays, Fridays, and certain special occasions. Students’ high level of enthusiasm is also evident from their frequent inquiries to the physical education teacher about whether the exercise session will be held.

These findings were further supported by a statement from the physical education teacher, who noted, “Students often ask whether there will be a morning exercise session or not. To maintain their enthusiasm, I vary the exercise routines that are performed.” Observation results also indicated that students appeared more enthusiastic, cooperative, and active before participating in classroom learning activities. This suggests that morning exercise not only contributes to students’ physical fitness but also enhances their readiness to learn and helps create a more positive and conducive classroom environment.

These findings are consistent with several previous studies which have reported that regular physical activities, such as morning exercise, can improve students' physical fitness while also fostering discipline and learning motivation (Mukta et al., 2026). Furthermore, sports activities carried out consistently within the school environment play an important role in developing positive character traits, including cooperation, responsibility, and mental resilience (Hidayat et al., 2025). Therefore, the implementation of morning exercise at SDN kaliwates 01 serves not only as a form of physical activity but also as an effective means of promoting the development of healthy, disciplined, and motivated students. This activity represents a concrete manifestation of the third habit in the 7 kaih program, namely engaging in regular and enjoyable physical exercise. as shown in figure 4.



Figure 4. Morning Exercise Activities

Eating Healthy and Nutritious Food

Based on the observation results, the habit of healthy eating at SDN kaliwates 01 is promoted through the monitoring of students' lunchboxes and the implementation of a "clean and healthy eating" campaign involving both teachers and parents. In addition, the school has a flagship program known as BBM (*Gardening, Cleaning, and Healthy eating*), which is conducted every saturday. This program serves as a medium for fostering healthy lifestyle habits while integrating character education into students' daily activities.

Observation findings revealed that students not only brought healthier meals to school but also developed greater awareness of maintaining a clean school environment through gardening and community clean up activities. Students appeared active and enthusiastic throughout the program, participating in activities ranging from caring for plants to enjoying healthy meals together. These findings were further supported by an interview with one of the school's cleaning staff members, who stated, "The gardening activities have been very helpful in maintaining and organizing the school yard." This statement indicates that the BBM program has not only contributed to shaping students' positive behaviors but has also provided tangible benefits in improving the cleanliness and overall appearance of the school environment.

More broadly, the promotion of healthy eating habits through this program has contributed to increasing students' awareness of the importance of maintaining their personal health. This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that healthy dietary patterns positively influence students' learning concentration, immune system function, and cognitive development (Rachmawati, 2025) furthermore, according to the ministry of health of the republic of indonesia, establishing nutritious eating habits from an early age is a crucial factor in supporting children's optimal growth and development, both physically and mentally (Rani et al., 2025). Therefore, the implementation of the bbm program at SDN kaliwates 01 not only fosters healthy eating habits but also instills values of environmental awareness and overall wellbeing. The program represents a concrete example of how the healthy and nutritious eating habit within the 7 kaih framework can be implemented in a contextual, meaningful, and sustainable manner. The integration of healthy eating practices with school gardening activities provided students with direct learning experiences that strengthened their understanding of nutrition and environmental sustainability, as shown in Figure 5.



Figure 5. Healthy Eating and Gardening Activities

Cultivating a Love of Learning

This habit aims to develop students who possess a strong enthusiasm for learning, a high level of curiosity, and the ability to think critically and creatively. It is not limited to classroom learning activities but also encompasses reading interests, participation in discussions, exploration of new ideas, and the practice of independent problem solving. Within the school environment, this habit is promoted through engaging learning activities, attractive reading corners, and regular visits to the library according to a predetermined schedule. Teachers also play a crucial role in creating a learning atmosphere that stimulates curiosity and fosters a love of learning. As a result, students are expected not only to achieve academic growth but also to develop into individuals with strong character.

The findings of this study indicate positive changes in students' learning behaviors. Based on the observation results, students appeared to be more actively engaged in the learning process. This was reflected in their increased enthusiasm for asking questions, participating in discussions, and engaging in reading activities at the reading corner. According to interviews with teachers, "Students now ask questions

more frequently and are more confident in expressing their opinions compared to before.” In addition, teachers reported that “Some students have begun to demonstrate independent learning habits, such as taking books on their own without being instructed and discussing lesson materials with their peers.” The interview results with students further supported these findings. One student stated, “i enjoy reading in the reading corner because there are many interesting books,” while another commented, “when i do not understand something, i am now more confident in asking the teacher or my friends for help.” These findings suggest that the cultivation of a love of learning has contributed to greater student participation, confidence, and independence in the learning process.

Engaging in Community Life

The habit of engaging in community life aims to develop students’ character so that they do not become individualistic, but instead learn to cooperate, respect differences, and demonstrate concern for others. Through this habit, students come to understand that they are part of a broader social environment and therefore need to build and maintain positive relationships with the people around them. At school, these values are instilled through various activities such as mutual cooperation, community service projects, environmental care programs, social service activities, and collaborative group work. Through participation in these activities, students are encouraged to develop social awareness, empathy, teamwork skills, and a sense of responsibility toward their community.

The interview results with teachers further supported these findings. One teacher stated that, “Students have become more accustomed to working together and show greater concern for their surrounding environment, particularly during communal service activities at school.” The teacher also added that “The values of togetherness instilled at school have begun to be reflected in students’ interactions outside the classroom.” From the parents’ perspective, the interview results also revealed positive behavioral changes in students’ daily lives. One parent commented, “My child now often participates in community clean-up activities in our neighborhood without being asked,” while another parent stated that “My child has started helping with social activities, such as cleaning the environment and participating in community events.” These findings indicate that the habit of engaging in community life has successfully encouraged students to become more socially responsible, cooperative, and actively involved in their communities.

Going to Bed Early

Going to bed early is the seventh habit in the seven habits of great indonesian children (7 KAIH) program, which aims to promote a healthy and disciplined lifestyle. This habit is important because it helps students maintain their physical health, emotional well-being, and readiness for learning. By going to bed early, students are able to wake up feeling more refreshed, stay more focused, and be better prepared to carry out their daily activities. This habit is fostered through educational efforts directed at both students and parents regarding the importance of maintaining a regular sleep schedule. It is also reinforced by other programs,

such as waking up early, performing the fajr prayer, and participating in morning charity activities. Therefore, close collaboration between the school and parents is essential to ensure the successful implementation of this habit and to support the overall objectives of the 7 KAIH program.

Based on the observation results, noticeable changes were identified in students' habits related to managing their rest and sleep schedules. The observation records indicated that most students arrived at school feeling more refreshed and better prepared to participate in morning learning activities. They also appeared physically fitter and more energetic compared to their previous condition. These findings suggest that the habit of going to bed earlier has begun to produce positive effects on students' learning readiness and overall well being.

These findings were further supported by the interview results with teachers. The teachers reported that students who had developed the habit of going to bed early demonstrated better concentration during classroom instruction and were less likely to feel sleepy during lessons. Furthermore, the teachers emphasized that these improvements contributed to a more conducive and effective learning environment. From the parents' perspective, the interview findings also revealed positive effects at home. Parents reported that their children had become easier to wake up in the morning and appeared calmer and less irritable when starting their daily activities. These observations suggest that the habit of going to bed early not only enhances students' readiness for learning but also supports their overall physical and emotional well-being.

To Ensure The Consistent Implementation Of These Habits, Parents Are Required To Report Their Children's Activities To The Homeroom Teacher. This Reporting Process Continues Even On Holidays, Including Sundays And Other Public Holidays, As Shown In Figure 6. Through This Mechanism, The School Is Able To Continuously Monitor The Implementation Of The 7 KAIH Program Within The Family Environment While Strengthening The Partnership Between The School And Parents In Fostering Students' Character Development. This Ongoing Collaboration Plays A Crucial Role In Ensuring That Positive Habits Are Practiced Consistently Both At School And At Home. The reporting system also serves as an important tool for documenting students' daily habit formation and monitoring their level of participation in the program, as shown in Figure 6.

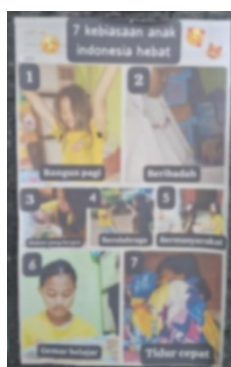


Figure 6. Implementation Report of the 7 KAIH Program

4. Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that each habit within the 7 KAIH program contributes significantly to positive changes in students' behavior. The habits of waking up early and going to bed early were found to enhance students' discipline and learning readiness, as reflected in their improved physical condition and increased concentration during classroom activities. The habit of worshipping not only strengthened students' spiritual values but also fostered empathy, honesty, and a sense of responsibility. Meanwhile, the habits of exercising regularly and consuming healthy and nutritious food had positive effects on students' physical well being while promoting an active and balanced lifestyle. In addition, the habit of cultivating a love of learning led to noticeable improvements in students' engagement during the learning process, including greater confidence in asking questions, participating in discussions, and studying independently. The habit of engaging in community life also successfully fostered cooperation, social awareness, and positive interpersonal interactions both within the school environment and the wider community. These findings demonstrate that the 7 KAIH program has a positive impact not only on students' individual development but also on their social relationships. The success of the program can be attributed to the strong collaboration between the school and parents in consistently guiding, monitoring, and reinforcing these habits. This collaborative approach serves as a key factor in ensuring the sustained implementation of the program both at school and at home. Therefore, it can be concluded that the 7 KAIH program is an effective and relevant strategy for addressing the challenges of character education in the digital era. Furthermore, the program has the potential to develop a generation of students who possess strong character, good health, and the competencies necessary to thrive in an increasingly competitive society.

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