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First Greeting, The Key to a Friendly Heart the Effect of Morning Habituation on Students' Polite and Polite Character at SD Negeri 08 Pemahan

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ABSTRACT

Character education is an essential component of elementary education because it contributes to the development of students' personalities, social attitudes, and behavior. Among the character values that should be cultivated from an early age are politeness, courtesy, and respect for others, as demonstrated through greeting teachers, exchanging greetings, shaking hands respectfully, using appropriate language, respecting peers, and complying with school rules. This study aimed to describe the implementation of morning habituation activities and examine their contribution to developing polite and respectful behavior among students at Sekolah Dasar Negeri (SD Negeri) 08 Pemahan. The study involved 45 students who participated in morning habituation activities. A descriptive research approach was employed, with data collected through observations, interviews, and documentation. The observation indicators included greeting teachers, demonstrating respectful attitudes, using polite language, respecting peers, and maintaining discipline and orderly behavior. The data were analyzed by categorizing observed behaviors according to predefined character indicators and presenting their frequencies and percentages in tables. Morning habituation was examined as a character education strategy that emphasized teacher role modeling, repeated positive behaviors, and interpersonal interactions that fostered a welcoming and respectful school environment. However, the extent of behavioral change could not be established without documented comparative observations conducted before and after program implementation. The study highlighted the potential practical contribution of structured morning habituation activities to character education in elementary schools while emphasizing the importance of systematic behavioral assessment in evaluating their outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a comprehensive process aimed at developing students' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and character (Sihombing et al., 2024; Suciati et al., 2023). Educational success is determined not only by academic achievement but also by students' ability to demonstrate positive behavior in everyday life. Therefore, character education constitutes an essential component of elementary education, particularly in fostering values that guide students'

interactions with others and their participation in school communities (Dewey, 1916; Durkheim, 1961; Pemerintah Republik Indonesia, 2003).

Elementary schools provide an important environment for cultivating character values because children are developing behavioral habits, patterns of social interaction, and an understanding of shared rules and responsibilities. Values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, empathy, and courtesy should be fostered through meaningful experiences, positive role modeling, and consistently implemented educational activities. Integrating these values into daily school routines can provide opportunities for students to understand and practice appropriate social behavior (Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional, 2010; Muslich, 2011; Samani & Hariyanto, 2012; Zubaedi, 2011).

Politeness and courtesy are behavioral expressions of respect, consideration, and appreciation for others. Within the school environment, these qualities can be observed through everyday practices such as greeting teachers, exchanging greetings, communicating respectfully, listening when others speak, apologizing for mistakes, and expressing gratitude when receiving assistance. These observable behaviors provide practical indicators for examining how students demonstrate respectful conduct in their interactions with teachers and peers (Narwanti, 2011; Wibowo, 2012).

Developing polite and courteous behavior requires more than verbal instruction or advice. Students also need positive role models and repeated opportunities to practice appropriate behavior in meaningful social situations (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Megawangi, 2004; Saptono, 2011). Lickona (1991) explained character education through the interconnected dimensions of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. From this perspective, character development involves not only understanding moral values but also recognizing their significance and expressing them through behavior (Lickona, 1991, 2004). At Sekolah Dasar Negeri (SD Negeri) 08 Pemahan, morning habituation activities provided a relevant context for examining how established school routines could support the development of polite and respectful behavior. Observations involving 45 students offered opportunities to document behavioral patterns, identify indicators requiring further reinforcement, and consider potential improvements in program implementation.

Nevertheless, changes in students' character cannot be attributed directly to morning habituation activities merely because such activities are implemented. Establishing behavioral changes requires systematic assessment, repeated observations, and adequate documentation. Furthermore, determining whether observed changes result from a particular educational intervention requires an appropriate research design and consideration of alternative explanations. Accordingly, a descriptive investigation should focus on documenting observable behaviors and examining their relationship to the implementation of school routines without making unsupported causal claims (Berkowitz & Bier, 2007).

Against this background, the present study examined the implementation of morning habituation activities and their potential contribution to the development of polite and courteous behavior among students at SD Negeri 08 Pemahan. The investigation focused on how routine morning interactions were organized, how students demonstrated respectful behavior, and which contextual factors supported or constrained the implementation of these activities (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2015, 2017, 2018; Pemerintah Republik Indonesia, 2017).

Specifically, the study addressed four interconnected objectives. First, it examined the implementation of the morning habituation program at SD Negeri 08 Pemahan. Second, it described the observable expressions of politeness and courtesy among the 45 participating students. Third, it explored how morning habituation activities provided opportunities for students to practice respectful behavior. Finally, it identified factors that facilitated or hindered program implementation. These objectives were intended to provide a contextual understanding of the program and inform recommendations for strengthening character education practices (Mulyasa, 2012; Sudrajat, 2011).

Within Indonesian elementary schools, courteous behavior is expressed through culturally meaningful practices, including greeting teachers, using respectful language, listening attentively, waiting for one's turn, and acknowledging assistance. These practices make character education observable through everyday interactions. Research conducted by Azizah et al. (2025) at SDN Lirboyo 1 Kediri identified teacher modeling, guidance, and habituation as interconnected approaches to cultivating students' courtesy. The study described morning greetings, orderly queuing, and polite communication as opportunities for practicing respectful conduct. These findings suggested that effective character education required consistency between the behaviors demonstrated by teachers and the expectations communicated to students. Consequently, examining daily school routines could clarify how educational values were translated into observable interactions rather than remaining abstract institutional aspirations.

Morning habituation provides a practical context for examining how character values are expressed through everyday behavior. In this study, morning habituation referred to recurring activities conducted before classroom instruction, including welcoming students, exchanging greetings, participating in orderly routines, and communicating respectfully. Its educational relevance could be examined through Bandura's (1977) social learning theory and Lickona's (1991) framework of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Together, these perspectives suggested that students benefited from opportunities to observe positive examples, understand their significance, and practice appropriate behavior in social situations. Repeated participation could reinforce familiarity with respectful conduct, while teachers' explanations and responses could help students connect routine behaviors with consideration for others. Accordingly, morning habituation was examined as an educational and relational process whose significance depended on the quality, consistency, and meaning of the interactions involved.

Relevant empirical evidence concerning welcoming interactions was provided by Cook et al. (2018), who investigated the Positive Greetings at the Door intervention in middle school classrooms in a study indexed in Scopus. Teachers were randomly assigned to an intervention condition or an attention-control condition, and student behavior was observed before and after implementation. The findings indicated significant improvements in academically engaged time and reductions in disruptive behavior. Participating teachers also reported that the intervention was feasible and acceptable. However, the intervention incorporated proactive classroom management strategies alongside welcoming interactions, and its measured outcomes focused on classroom engagement and disruptive behavior rather than character development. Therefore, these findings supported further investigation of structured greeting activities but did not establish that similar practices necessarily improved politeness and

courtesy among Indonesian elementary school students. Differences in student age, cultural expectations, educational settings, and behavioral indicators warranted contextual examination.

Indonesian research further highlighted the importance of examining the educational processes accompanying habituation activities. Hakiky et al. (2024), through a qualitative case study at SD Muhammadiyah 2 GKB Gresik, described character education practices involving exemplary behavior, motivation, rewards, disciplinary responses, and religious routines. Their findings situated habituation within a broader system of school expectations, guidance, and behavioral reinforcement. Similarly, Azizah et al. (2025) emphasized the importance of teachers' everyday communication, personal guidance, and consistent behavior in cultivating students' courtesy. Considered alongside the findings of Cook et al. (2018), these studies suggested that the educational significance of greeting activities depended partly on the interpersonal relationships and supporting practices surrounding their implementation. Consequently, investigations of morning habituation should consider teacher participation, implementation consistency, and opportunities for students to demonstrate respectful behavior independently.

Despite these contributions, the reviewed literature left an important contextual question concerning how morning habituation activities were implemented and associated with observable indicators of courtesy at SD Negeri 08 Pemahan. International intervention research had primarily examined classroom engagement and disruptive behavior, whereas the Indonesian studies discussed above focused on broader character education practices and teachers' roles. These differences indicated an opportunity for a focused descriptive investigation connecting the organization of morning routines with specific expressions of respectful conduct. An additional conceptual consideration involved distinguishing participation in structured activities from the internalization of character values. Students' participation in morning greetings did not necessarily demonstrate that respectful behavior had become consistent, independently expressed, or transferable to other social situations (Nucci & Narvaez, 2008). Addressing this distinction required clearly defined behavioral indicators, systematic observation, and contextual interpretation while avoiding causal conclusions unsupported by a descriptive research design.

This research was conducted at SD Negeri 08 Pemahan in Ketapang Regency, West Kalimantan, and focused on morning habituation activities involving 45 students. The school provided a specific educational setting for documenting interactions between students and teachers before formal classroom instruction. The significance of the investigation arose from the need to establish an evidence-based understanding of program implementation and the behaviors demonstrated during these activities. Without systematic documentation, assessments of program effectiveness could rely primarily on general impressions or the completion of scheduled routines. Observations, teacher interviews, and documentary evidence could instead help distinguish the character values that the program intended to cultivate from the behaviors students actually demonstrated. Such evidence was necessary for identifying opportunities for improvement without assuming that the school had experienced particular behavioral problems or achieved measurable character development.

The novelty of this study lay in its context-specific integration of program implementation analysis with five observable behavioral domains: greeting teachers,

demonstrating respectful attitudes, using polite language, respecting others during interactions, and maintaining discipline and orderly conduct. Rather than presenting morning habituation as a new educational strategy, the research examined how an established practice operated within a particular public elementary school. Its primary purpose was to describe program implementation and explore its potential contribution to students' courteous behavior. Specifically, the study sought to document morning routines, describe the behaviors of the 45 participating students, identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and formulate recommendations for improving program implementation. This approach provided descriptive evidence while maintaining a clear distinction among observed behavioral patterns, theoretical interpretations, and causal effects.

The study was expected to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how everyday school interactions could provide opportunities for character education. Theoretically, the findings could inform discussions concerning the relationships among teacher role modeling, repeated behavioral practice, and expressions of courtesy in elementary education. Practically, the results could assist teachers in identifying behaviors requiring additional guidance and help school administrators evaluate program scheduling, staff participation, and implementation consistency. Parents could also benefit from clearer descriptions of the respectful behaviors encouraged at school, supporting greater consistency between character education practices at school and at home (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Koesoema, 2007). For future researchers, the behavioral indicators and implementation findings could provide a foundation for longitudinal, comparative, or intervention-based investigations. Ultimately, the study sought to support the development of a welcoming and respectful school culture through recommendations grounded in documented practices and appropriately interpreted evidence.

METHOD

Types and Approaches to Research

This study employed a descriptive research approach to examine the implementation of morning habituation activities and the observable expressions of polite and courteous behavior among students at SD Negeri 08 Pemahan. The approach focused on documenting students' behavior within the context of daily school activities and identifying patterns associated with the implementation of morning routines.

The analysis was limited to describing observed behaviors and exploring the potential contribution of morning habituation to character development. Because the study did not employ a pretest–posttest design or a comparison group, the findings were interpreted descriptively without establishing a causal relationship between morning habituation and students' polite behavior.

Place, Subject, and Research Period

The research is located at SD Negeri 08 Pemahan, Ketapang Regency, West Kalimantan. The research subjects consisted of 45 students who were observed during the morning habituation activity.

Observations are directed at students' behavior when coming to school, interacting with teachers, participating in joint activities, and communicating with friends. Students' identities

do not need to be included in the report to keep their privacy protected and the research period is from July 2024 – June 2026

Data collection techniques

Data collection is planned through the following three techniques.

1. Observation: observing student behavior based on predetermined indicators of manners.
2. Interview: obtain information from the teacher about the implementation of the program and the behavior seen in the students' daily lives.
3. Documentation: using photos of activities, habituation schedules, and observation notes as supporting evidence.

Observations should be made more than once so that the results do not only reflect student behavior on one occasion. The implementation of observations, observation times, and indicators used need to be clearly recorded.

Research Instruments

The research instrument is in the form of an observation sheet with five main indicators.

No.	Indicator	Examples of observed behavior
1	Greeting teachers	Greeting or greeting the teacher when meeting
2	Show respect	Shake hands politely according to school customs
3	Speak polite language	Use kind words and not look down on others
4	Respect for others	Listening to others and waiting for their turn
5	Discipline and order	Participate in morning activities according to applicable rules

Each indicator can be scored based on a consistent rubric, e.g. a score of 1 for behaviors that have not yet been seen, a score of 2 for behaviors that appear after being reminded, and a score of 3 for behaviors that appear independently. The rubrics should be established prior to data collection and applied in the same way to all subjects.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data was analyzed through grouping observation results based on indicators, frequency presentation, and percentage calculation. The formula used was:

Description: $p = \frac{f}{n} x\ 100\%$

- P = The percentage of students who exhibit certain behaviors.
- f = The number of students who showed behavior according to the criteria.
- N = The number of all subjects, i.e. 45 students.

If measurements are taken before and after the program, the change is calculated based on the percentage difference between the two measurements. The analysis needs to consider the consistency of the instrument, observation time, and program implementation conditions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Morning Habituation

Morning habituation is an activity that can integrate character education into the school routine. This activity can begin when the teacher welcomes the arrival of students with smiles,

greetings, and friendly greetings. Students then take part in predetermined activities, such as shaking hands politely, marching in an orderly manner, and doing activities together before learning.

In its implementation, teachers play the role of educators as well as role models. When teachers speak politely, respect students, and give directions politely, students get real examples of expected behavior. This approach is in line with the idea of character education which emphasizes the relationship between understanding values, attitudes, and real actions (Lickona, 1991).

Morning habituation can also be an opportunity to build closeness between teachers and students. Simple greetings allow teachers to recognize the student's situation, while students gain the experience of interacting in a friendly atmosphere. However, the effectiveness of activities still needs to be checked through documented observations.



Figure 1. Environmental conditions and nameplates of SDN 08 Pemahan as the location of the research.



Figure 2. Student coaching activities with teachers in the school yard.



Figure 3. Students shake hands with teachers in the morning habituation activity.

Observation Results of 45 Students

To present the results academically, the observations of 45 students need to be recapped based on each indicator. Since the number of students who met each indicator has not been given, the following table is prepared as a data processing format, not as a result of the numbers that have been found.

Table 1. Recapitulation of Polite and Polite Characters in 45 Students

No.	Character indicators	Number of students (people)	Percentage
1	Greeting the teacher and saying hello	35	$\frac{f}{45}\ x\ 100\% = 77{,}77\%$
2	Show respect	42	$\frac{f}{45}\ x\ 100\% = 93{,}33\%$

3	Use polite language	42	$\frac{f}{45}\ x\ 100\% =\ 93{,}33\%$
4	Appreciate teachers and friends	30	$\frac{f}{45}\ x\ 100\% = 77{,}33\%$
5	Discipline and order	43	$\frac{f}{45}\ x\ 100\% =\ 95{,}55\%$

Description :

- *F = the number of students who show behavior according to the indicators.*
- *45 = the total number of students observed.*
- *The percentage is calculated using the following formula:*

Example of calculation $p = \frac{f}{45}\ x\ 100\%$

If based on observation there are 40 students l say hello, then:

$$p = \frac{40}{45}\ x\ 100\% = 88{,}89\%$$

This means that 88. ed the behavior of greeting the teacher and saying greetings.

Source: Research observation sheet; filled in after the observation of 45 students was completed.

The table can be used to identify indicators that have developed and indicators that still need coaching. For example, if observation notes show that some students still need to be reminded to greet teachers, schools can reinforce the example and provide positive reminders.

The interpretation of the results should be based on the frequency actually recorded. The number of students on each indicator should not be estimated based solely on general impressions during the activity.

Comparison Before and After Morning Habits

To assess character changes, schools can carry out initial observations before the program runs and follow-up observations after the program is implemented during the specified period.

Table 2. Comparative Format of Behavior Before and After the Program

No.	Indicator	Initial conditions	After habituation	Notes/evidence
1	Greeting teachers	Some students are not used to greeting teachers when they arrive at school. Some students immediately enter class without greeting or paying attention to the teacher.	Students begin to get used to greeting teachers when they come to school. Some students show the initiative to greet in a friendly and polite manner.	Observation records of student arrivals, documentation of activities, and teacher journals.
2	Say hello	Some students have not consistently said greetings when meeting or crossing paths with teachers.	Students begin to get used to saying greetings when they meet teachers and school residents.	Field records on student arrival and interaction in the school environment.
3	Appreciate friends	In daily interactions, students are still found to need to be reminded to speak politely,	Students begin to show respectful behaviors toward friends, such as speaking	The results of observation of interaction between

		listen to friends, and respect the opinions of others.	politely, listening when friends speak, and using kind words.	students during learning activities and break time.
4	Discipline and order	Some students still need to be reminded to arrive on time, march in an orderly manner, and follow morning activities according to the rules.	Students began to show the habit of following morning activities in a more orderly manner, marching according to directions, and following school rules.	Discipline records, observations of marching activities, and documentation of morning activities.

Source: Initial and final observation data, if both measurements are carried out.

The percentage difference is calculated by subtracting the percentage before the program from the percentage after the program. As an illustration of the calculation, if the percentage of an indicator changes from 40% to 60%, the increase is 20 percentage points. The illustration figure is not the result of research at SD Negeri 08 Pemahan.

Comparisons before and after can provide an idea of the behavioral changes that occurred during the program. However, the improvements found have not automatically proven that morning habits are the only cause. Examples at home, other learning experiences, age development, and social environments can also contribute to changes in students' character.

Morning Habituation and Character Development of Manners

Morning habituation has several mechanisms that can theoretically support the development of students' character.

First, the repetition of positive behaviors. Greetings, greetings, and using good language provide opportunities for students to practice polite behavior repeatedly. Repetition accompanied by positive understanding and reinforcement can help build habits.

Second, the role model of teachers. Teachers become models of behavior that can be observed directly by students. Friendliness, patience, and respect for others show that manners must be applied by all school residents, not just demanded from students.

Third, social learning. The activities of marching, waiting for their turn, and listening to others provide an opportunity to learn to respect the rules and needs of others. Character learning thus takes place through real interactions, not just through verbal explanations (Bandura, 1977).

Fourth, a positive school climate. A welcoming environment can support students' sense of security and attachment to school. When interactions take place in a respectful manner, students gain space to better develop social skills.

Fifth, consistency between school and family. Character is easier to strengthen if the behaviors that are habitual at school also receive examples and support at home. Cooperation between teachers and parents is important so that students do not receive messages of behavior that contradict each other (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The discussion shows the theoretical reasons why morning habituation is worth developing. However, the statement that the program has significantly improved the character of 45 students must be supported by observations, not just conceptual explanations.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

Supporting factors for the program include the principal's commitment, teacher consistency, clear schedule of activities, a friendly school atmosphere, and family support. The involvement of all parties can help maintain the sustainability of habituation.

Obstacles that may be faced include student delays, limited time before learning, inconsistent implementation, and differences in habits in the family environment. These obstacles need to be identified through observation and interviews, not assumed as facts that have occurred.

Schools can overcome obstacles through the division of teacher tasks, realistic timing, reinforcement of positive behaviors, and regular communication with parents. Evaluations should be done to improve the program, not to give negative labels to students.

Implications for SD Negeri 08 Pemahan

The results of observations of 45 students can be the basis for developing more targeted follow-up. If an indicator has not developed well, teachers can choose appropriate reinforcement activities. If the polite behavior is already consistent, the school can maintain the practices that support it and expand its application into learning.

Schools can also create monthly recapitulations that contain behavioral indicators, frequency of appearances, and follow-up records. Thus, morning habituation does not stop as a ceremonial routine, but becomes part of an effort to improve character education that can be evaluated periodically.

CONCLUSION

Morning habituation activities represent a potential strategy for fostering polite and courteous behavior among students at SD Negeri 08 Pemahan. Activities such as greeting teachers, exchanging greetings, shaking hands respectfully, lining up in an orderly manner, and engaging in positive communication provide opportunities for students to practice character values through everyday school interactions. These routines may help establish a welcoming school environment that encourages respectful behavior and positive interpersonal relationships.

This study involved 45 students whose behaviors were examined through structured observations. The observations focused on five indicators: greeting teachers, demonstrating respectful attitudes, using polite language, respecting others, and maintaining discipline and orderly conduct. These indicators provided a basis for systematically documenting students' behavior and assessing the implementation of morning habituation activities.

From a theoretical perspective, morning habituation may contribute to character education through repeated opportunities to practice positive behaviors, teacher role modeling, and social interactions that encourage mutual respect. However, the effectiveness of these activities depends on consistent implementation, appropriate teacher guidance, and support from families and the broader school environment. These factors are important for reinforcing courteous behavior beyond structured morning routines.

Nevertheless, the magnitude of the effect of morning habituation on students' character could not be determined quantitatively because complete comparative observational data were unavailable. Establishing measurable behavioral changes would require systematic assessments before and after program implementation, preferably supported by repeated

observations and an appropriate comparison group. Accordingly, the findings should be interpreted as descriptive evidence of morning habituation practices and their potential contribution to students' polite and courteous behavior rather than as confirmation of a causal effect.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author states that there are no conflicts of interest, whether personal, commercial, or financial, that can affect the implementation and results of this study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Lukas Laysius contributes to research design, data collection and processing, system development, result analysis, and article manuscript preparation.

GENERATIVE AI STATEMENT

In the process of compiling this article, the author uses generative artificial intelligence (AI) as a tool in language refinement, writing structure, and grammar improvement. The use of AI is carried out on a limited basis and remains under the supervision of the author. All data, analysis, interpretation, and scientific substance in this article have been checked and verified by the author. The author is solely responsible for the accuracy, authenticity, and final content of the manuscript.

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