

Fostering Mental Resilience in Elementary Students Through the Seven Habits at Muhammadiyah 1 Malang Elementary School

Meti Wisma Rini¹, Arina Restian², Ichsan Anshory^{31*}

ABSTRACT

This study explores the implementation of the "Seven Habits of Highly Effective Indonesian Children" and their impact on students' mental toughness at SD Muhammadiyah 1 Malang. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were gathered through interviews, observations, and documentation. The results show that these habits such as being proactive, goal-oriented, and synergizing have been effectively integrated into the school culture and daily student routines. Students demonstrated improved emotional regulation, perseverance, and social resilience. The findings suggest that structured character education through the seven habits significantly contributes to the development of students' mental toughness in facing academic and social challenges.

Keywords: Mental resilience, Seven habits, Fostering

1 Introduction

Mental toughness is a crucial aspect of student development, especially at the elementary school level, where children are in a transitional stage of cognitive, social, and emotional development. Mental toughness can be defined as an individual's ability to endure pressure, overcome obstacles, and continue to function adaptively under various difficult conditions [1]. In elementary education, mental resilience is important to help students face academic difficulties, social demands, the process of study and positive self-identity. However, in practice, many elementary school students exhibit symptoms of low mental toughness.

As a response to these challenges, character education through instilling virtuous values has become a widely developed approach in educational institutions. One model that has gained attention in character development is The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People which has been adapted into the Indonesian educational context as The Seven Habits of Excellent Indonesian Children. This model emphasizes the importance of internalizing positive values such as proactivity, goal setting, priority management, cooperation, empathy, synergy, and continuous self-development[2]. SD Muhammadiyah 1 Malang, as an educational institution based on Islamic values and character, has adopted the seven habits approach in its teaching and school life. However, the extent to which this implementation contributes to developing students' mental toughness still requires comprehensive empirical research. Therefore, this study aims to systematically examine the implementation of the seven habits of excellent Indonesian children at SD Muhammadiyah 1 Malang and analyze their impact on students' mental toughness.

2 Literature Review

Mental toughness in elementary school children is defined as the ability to manage pressure, stay motivated, and respond positively to challenges. It encompasses emotional regulation, problem-solving, and perseverance during learning and can be nurtured through education, supportive environments,

¹ Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang

*Alamat korespondensi: metiwismarini@gmail.com

and positive behavior habituation. Research shows a strong connection between mental toughness and academic performance, emotional stability, and social competence, emphasizing its importance in basic education.

The "Seven Habits of Excellent Indonesian Children," adapted from Covey's model, are designed to build strong character in children. These habits include waking early, worshipping, exercising, eating healthily, enjoying learning, participating in community life, and sleeping early. Implementation in schools has proven effective in improving discipline, responsibility, empathy, cooperation, and perseverance among students. There is a close relationship between the seven habits and mental toughness. Habits like being proactive and prioritizing tasks develop self-control and stress management, while socially oriented habits enhance resilience to social challenges. Structured practice of these habits fosters character and resilience, aligning with the whole child development approach that balances academic, social, and emotional growth. The structured habituation of positive values can shape resilient personalities from an early age. Therefore, the seven habits can serve as a strategic tool to nurture mental toughness within the framework of character education at elementary level. This aligns with the whole child development on par with academic achievement[3].

3 Research Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the implementation of the Seven Habits of Excellent Indonesian Children and its impact on students' mental toughness at SD Muhammadiyah 1 Malang. Qualitative research aims to explore meaning, understand experiences, and interpret behavior in complex social contexts[4]. The location of the research is SD Muhammadiyah 1 Malang, a school known for integrating character education into its culture. The subjects include the principal, homeroom teachers, guidance and counseling teachers, and sixth-grade students participating in the seven habits program. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring relevance to the study's focus. The data was collected with three techniques: semi-structured interviews to explore experiences and strategies; participant observation to witness daily practices; and documentation, such as school records and student journals, to support findings. Then the data was analyzed following Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's interactive model, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. To ensure data validity, the study used source and method triangulation, along with member checking, to confirm interpretations. These strategies enhanced the credibility and reliability of the research findings.

4 Result and Discussion

The findings support previous research showing that the habituation of the Seven Habits of Excellent Indonesian Children enhances students' responsibility and resilience. Habits like being proactive and prioritizing tasks strengthen self-regulation, a vital part of mental toughness, while habits such as think win-win and synergize promote healthy peer relationships and reduce social pressure. This approach aligns with character education principles that emphasize value formation through routine and modeling. On Muhammadiyah 1 Malang Elementary School, the integration of these habits has created a supportive learning environment that nurtures both character and mental strength. The school applies a whole school approach, involving all stakeholders in reinforcing positive values. However, challenges remain, such as inconsistent teacher involvement and limited parental support, which underscore the need for collaboration between school and home. Overall, the implementation of the seven habits contributes significantly to students' mental toughness and character development, equipping them to handle academic and social challenges effectively.

5 Conclusion

The study at SD Muhammadiyah 1 Malang reveals that the structured implementation of the Seven Habits of Excellent Indonesian Children significantly enhances students' mental toughness. Students showed marked improvement in emotional regulation, problem-solving, motivation, and social interactions key components of mental resilience. The first three habits fostered self-control, initiative, and

time management, while the next three enhanced empathy and social skills. The seventh habit promoted self-reflection and balance in academic, emotional, and social areas. This holistic approach not only develops character but also prepares students to handle academic and environmental pressures more effectively. The program's success relies on active involvement from all school elements, particularly teachers as role models. Strong leadership, a supportive culture, and consistent evaluation play essential roles in sustaining the program's effectiveness.

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