

Implementation of Clean and Healthy Living Behavior (PHBS) in Kindergarten

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ABSTRACT

The implementation of Clean and Healthy Living Behavior (PHBS) in early childhood education environments plays a strategic role in shaping healthy habits from an early age. This study aims to describe the implementation of PHBS at Al-Ikhwan Kindergarten, analyze the role of teachers and the surrounding environment, and identify the factors that influence its success. A descriptive qualitative approach was used, with data collected through in-depth interviews and direct observation. The findings show that PHBS has been implemented through habits such as personal hygiene, environmental cleanliness, healthy eating patterns, and light physical activities. Educators play a central role in fostering these habits by integrating health values into fun and participatory teaching methods. Additionally, support from parents, school policies, and adequate facilities serve as key factors in creating a conducive environment for establishing healthy behavior. Therefore, the implementation of PHBS from an early age requires not only active and creative teachers but also the involvement of all stakeholders in building a sustainable culture of healthy living.

Introduction

The rapid pace of modern lifestyles often leads to neglect of cleanliness and health, particularly within the home environment.

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Parents' busy schedules result in a lack of emphasis on instilling healthy living habits in children, making them more susceptible to unhealthy, instant lifestyles that do not support clean and healthy behavior. Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is a developmental effort aimed at children from birth to six years of age to prepare them for the next level of education (Law No. 20 of 2003). PAUD plays an important role in the development of all aspects of a child's personality, including cognitive, social, emotional, physical, religious, moral, and motor development (Wahyudi et al., 2024). One essential aspect of PAUD is the cultivation of clean and healthy living behavior (PHBS). PHBS from an early age can foster positive habits, prevent diseases, and improve children's quality of life (Nurachadijat & Selvia, 2023; Aulina & Astutik, 2019). Collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community is also key to the success of health education in kindergarten. Parents who model healthy behavior at home can reinforce these habits in children (AS et al., 2024; Rizka et al., 2024).

At Al-Ikhwan Kindergarten, the implementation of a health-based curriculum has shown positive results, such as an increased awareness among children of the importance of cleanliness and healthy food consumption. The cooperation between the school and the surrounding environment further strengthens PHBS practices in the children's environment (Wahyudi et al., 2024). This research focuses on the implementation of PHBS in kindergarten, including personal hygiene, environmental hygiene, healthy eating habits, and physical activity

(Utami & Gunawan, 2024).

In Islam, maintaining cleanliness is a duty for the pious as a form of obedience to Allah SWT. As stated in the Quran, Surah Maryam verse 13, cleanliness is not only about preserving health but also reflects respect for God's commandments. A hadith from At-Tirmidhi emphasizes that Allah loves cleanliness and goodness, and thus, Muslims are taught to maintain personal and environmental hygiene as an embodiment of divine attributes.

This study aims to explain the implementation of PHBS through the health curriculum at kindergarten level. The main focus is to examine the extent of PHBS implementation in kindergarten, as previously studied in prior research (Sugiritama et al., 2021; Dzulfadhilah et al., 2023; Putri & Nurwita, 2025). This research is expected to provide deeper insight into the importance of collaboration between educational institutions and parents in shaping positive attitudes that support a clean and healthy lifestyle in early childhood.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach (Waruwu, 2024) aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the implementation of Clean and Healthy Living Behavior (PHBS) at Al-Ikhwan Kindergarten, located in Aek Nabara Tonga Village, Aek Nabara Barumun Subdistrict, Padang Lawas Regency, during the 2024–2025 academic year. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and direct observation.

The in-depth interview method was used to gather information

(Haki et al., 2024). The researcher interviewed four teachers regarding the PHBS indicators implemented at Al-Ikhwan Kindergarten. These teachers explained that the PHBS indicators applied include personal hygiene, environmental cleanliness, healthy eating habits, and physical activity. The aim of this research was to provide a clear and comprehensive overview of the implementation of PHBS at Al-Ikhwan Kindergarten. In doing so, it seeks to identify the extent to which PHBS is understood and practiced by all stakeholders, including the principal, teachers, and students, as well as their respective roles in supporting and optimizing the program.

The second method used was observation (Fadli, 2021), where the researcher directly observed the implementation of PHBS in the daily activities of teachers and students. The observation covered various aspects, from the time children arrived at school until they returned home, in order to understand how they internalized and applied the behaviors taught. One specific observation focused on whether children washed their hands after disposing of trash or after playtime. During mealtimes, the researcher observed whether children brought nutritious meals and whether they washed their hands before and after eating. Additional observations included personal hygiene, physical activity, and school environment cleanliness.

The data analysis technique involved three main stages. First, data reduction was conducted by filtering and categorizing information to ensure relevance and focus. Second, structured data display was used

to facilitate interpretation of findings. Third, conclusions were drawn based on the results of data reduction and analysis, continuously verified to ensure accuracy and relevance. This approach ensured a systematic and accountable analysis process.

Results and Discussions

The implementation of Clean and Healthy Living Behavior (PHBS) at Al-Ikhwan Kindergarten was carried out through a structured and comprehensive strategy involving all stakeholders: teachers, students, parents, and the surrounding community. Based on observations and interviews, the PHBS program was integrated into daily routines, accompanied by light counseling, strict supervision, and adequate infrastructure support.

The implementation steps began with raising awareness among children, teachers, and parents about the importance of PHBS. This was achieved through class discussions and engaging thematic approaches. Teachers routinely taught handwashing, personal hygiene, and incorporated cleanliness themes into children's play activities.

"We teach the children through handwashing songs and picture stories.

They understand more quickly when we combine play with learning."

(Teacher A)

In the classroom, children were encouraged to wash their hands before and after meals, keep their desks and stationery clean, and maintain a neat appearance. Observations revealed that these habits were becoming internalized in children's daily routines. At mealtimes,

some children would go directly to the sink to wash their hands without being prompted. The presence of supportive facilities—such as soap-equipped sinks, clean toilets, and trash bins in every school corner—was instrumental in promoting this practice.

“We ensure that soap is always available at handwashing stations, and teachers have a weekly inspection schedule.” (Teacher B)

The school also conducted regular evaluations and rewarded students who consistently practiced healthy behaviors as a form of positive reinforcement.

“Every Monday, we announce which student was the most diligent in maintaining cleanliness. It motivates the others.” (Teacher C)

Teachers played a vital role as facilitators, role models, and bridges between school and home. PHBS was taught not only through theory but also via direct example and participatory activities. Teachers kept parents informed of their children's progress and encouraged them to reinforce PHBS habits at home.

“In the parents’ WhatsApp group, we always remind them to teach cleanliness at home too. Consistency between school and home is key.”
(Teacher D)

The surrounding community also supported the success of this program. Residents demonstrated awareness by not smoking near the school and helping maintain cleanliness in nearby areas. Observations confirmed this behavior, as parents accompanying children disposed of trash properly and reminded their children to wash their hands.

"We also invite parents to join our 'Clean Friday' activities. Even the area outside the school becomes cleaner because of this program." (Principal)

Parental involvement played a critical role in the successful and sustainable implementation of PHBS at Al-Ikhwan Kindergarten. Their support included providing healthy food, reminding children of cleanliness, and supplying personal hygiene items for use both at school and home. Parents contributed not only materially but also by consistently modeling healthy habits in the home environment.

Beyond personal contributions, parents actively participated in school activities related to PHBS, such as group morning exercises, cleanliness competitions, and health education sessions. This created a collaborative atmosphere conducive to fostering a culture of cleanliness and health. The school routinely involved parents in program evaluations, both through formal meetings and informal discussions. This enabled productive two-way communication between school and family in support of PHBS.

"I don't just monitor school activities, but also how parents guide their children at home and how the environment contributes to a supportive setting." (Principal)

The school principal demonstrated a strong commitment to a comprehensive and sustainable PHBS program. In addition to administrative duties, the principal ensured full involvement of all school components. In daily practice, the principal emphasized synergy between the school and the community. Public awareness of cleanliness

was a crucial component of the program's success. The principal was also actively involved in technical monitoring of PHBS, such as facility inspections and tracking behavioral changes in children.

"We make sure every teacher has a schedule for facility checks, and children's daily activities are recorded to observe behavioral changes."
(Principal)

From the analysis, five main factors supported the success of the PHBS program at Al-Ikhwan Kindergarten:

1. **Active and consistent teacher roles:** Teachers were not only theoretical instructors but also role models and facilitators in forming healthy habits. They guided children through engaging approaches and provided consistent supervision.
2. **Adequate supporting facilities:** The school provided necessary infrastructure, including clean toilets, handwashing stations with soap, and learning media that reinforced PHBS values.
3. **Intensive parental involvement:** Effective communication between teachers and parents ensured continuity in PHBS practices between school and home, reinforcing consistent healthy behaviors in children.
4. **Early habituation:** PHBS practices were introduced from the child's first day at school, helping instill strong daily habits.
5. **Regular monitoring and evaluation:** The school regularly assessed both facility conditions and children's behavior, adjusting the program as needed based on evaluative findings.

Despite systematic implementation, the PHBS program faced challenges. A major issue was inconsistency in children's behavior, particularly among newcomers who required additional time and training. Another challenge was uneven parental participation due to time constraints, work, or limited awareness of PHBS importance. Furthermore, limited teaching staff hindered optimal supervision, especially in larger classes.

Nonetheless, strong collaboration between teachers, the principal, parents, and the community helped minimize these barriers. This partnership served as the foundation for fostering a clean, healthy school environment that supports the optimal growth and development of early childhood learners.

Conclusion

This systematic literature review has revealed that role-play holds significant pedagogical value in early childhood education, particularly in enhancing children's verbal communication, social cooperation, and emotional regulation. The reviewed empirical studies consistently demonstrate that when implemented with structure and intentionality, role-play serves as a powerful medium for fostering language development, promoting peer interaction, and supporting emotional understanding. The results directly address the research objectives by confirming that role-play is not merely a recreational activity but a developmentally appropriate and evidence-based learning strategy that aligns with sociocultural and constructivist

learning theories.

The evidence drawn from 20 empirical studies across diverse cultural and educational contexts provides a robust foundation for reinforcing the integration of role-play into early childhood curricula. The average increase of 35% in expressive language use, 42% improvement in social cooperation, and qualitative gains in emotional literacy collectively suggest that role-play is instrumental in achieving early learning standards. These outcomes not only support but also extend current theories of guided play and social learning by demonstrating the nuanced impact of dramatic play on multiple dimensions of child development.

Based on these findings, educators are encouraged to adopt and refine guided role-play methodologies to optimize learning outcomes in preschool settings. Further research may develop a more structured framework or pedagogical model for role-play implementation, potentially contributing to a new theory that integrates emotional learning and literacy development within a role-based play schema. The review also highlights the need for longitudinal studies to explore sustained developmental impacts and the role of teacher mediation in maximizing role-play benefits. In practice, educational policymakers should consider embedding structured role-play in early childhood curricula as a strategic tool for holistic development, especially in contexts aiming to cultivate foundational competencies for lifelong learning.

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