

Education on Clean and Healthy Living Behaviors (PHBS) in Developing Healthy Character in Early Childhood: The Role of Teachers and The Early Childhood Education Environment at Suka Ceria Kindergarten Central Lombok Regency

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Abstract

Education on Clean and Healthy Living Behaviors (PHBS) is one approach to fostering healthy character development in early childhood. The implementation of PHBS at Suka Ceria Kindergarten in Central Lombok Regency aims to introduce healthy habits from an early age. This study seeks to identify how PHBS education is implemented at Suka Ceria Kindergarten and to analyze the roles of teachers and the early childhood education (PAUD) environment in building healthy character among children. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method, with data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation studies. The findings indicate that teachers at Suka Ceria Kindergarten play a crucial role by providing direct examples of clean and healthy behaviors, while a supportive PAUD environment further facilitates the implementation of PHBS. However, challenges remain, particularly related to the adequacy of facilities and parents' limited understanding of PHBS. The study highlights the importance of continuous teacher training and the improvement of PHBS-supporting facilities in early childhood education settings.

Keywords: PHBS Education, Early Childhood, Early Childhood Education (PAUD), Teacher's Role, PAUD Environment

Abstrak

Pendidikan Perilaku Hidup Bersih dan Sehat (PHBS) merupakan salah satu pendekatan untuk menumbuhkan perkembangan karakter yang sehat pada anak usia dini. Implementasi PHBS di TK Suka Ceria, Kabupaten Lombok Tengah, bertujuan untuk memperkenalkan kebiasaan sehat sejak usia dini. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi bagaimana pendidikan PHBS diimplementasikan di TK Suka Ceria dan menganalisis peran guru dan lingkungan pendidikan anak usia dini (PAUD) dalam membangun karakter yang sehat di kalangan anak. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif, dengan data yang dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi, dan studi dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru di TK Suka Ceria memainkan peran penting dengan memberikan contoh langsung perilaku bersih dan sehat, sementara lingkungan PAUD yang mendukung semakin memfasilitasi implementasi PHBS. Namun, tantangan masih tetap ada, khususnya terkait dengan kecukupan fasilitas dan pemahaman orang tua yang terbatas tentang PHBS. Penelitian ini menyoroti pentingnya pelatihan guru yang berkelanjutan dan peningkatan fasilitas pendukung PHBS di lingkungan pendidikan anak usia dini.

Kata kunci: PHBS Pendidikan, Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (PAUD), Peran Guru, Lingkungan PAUD



PENDAHULUAN

Early Childhood Education (ECE/PAUD) plays a crucial role in shaping children's character, including the introduction of Clean and Healthy Living Behaviors (PHBS). PHBS refers to a series of practices aimed at maintaining health, preventing disease, and improving children's quality of life (La Patilaiya, 2021). During early childhood, children have a strong tendency to imitate the behaviors of adults around them, particularly those within the PAUD environment. Therefore, introducing PHBS in early childhood education serves as an essential initial step in developing healthy lifestyle habits that can be sustained throughout life. Effective PHBS education in PAUD can foster awareness of the importance of hygiene and health, while encouraging children to practice healthy behaviors in their daily activities (Hasan et al., 2023). Through enjoyable and interactive approaches, children can more easily understand and adopt clean and healthy living habits in their daily lives, as these methods promote active engagement and make health-related practices more meaningful and enjoyable for young learners. (Munzirin & Afiani, 2024). Thus, the introduction of Clean and Healthy Living Behaviors (PHBS) in early childhood education benefits not only children but also families and the surrounding community by fostering a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable environment (Elly Susilawati et al., 2023).

Suka Ceria Kindergarten in Central Lombok Regency is one of the early childhood education institutions that implements the Clean and Healthy Living Behaviors (PHBS) program as part of its curriculum. This program aims to teach children the importance of maintaining personal and environmental hygiene as well as adopting healthy eating patterns. However, the implementation of the PHBS program in this PAUD setting has not yet been fully optimized due to several challenges related to facilities, parental awareness, and the availability of resources. To address these challenges, collaboration among all stakeholders, including parents and PAUD administrators, is essential to enhance the understanding and effective implementation of PHBS within early childhood education environments (Inayati et al., 2024).

Effective collaboration among parents, PAUD administrators, and the wider community can strengthen the implementation of PHBS programs, thereby enabling children to develop sustainable healthy lifestyle practices from an early age (Yadi Jayadilaga et al., 2024; Zulhakim & Syamsussabri, 2022). Therefore, collaboration among multiple stakeholders is essential to ensure the successful implementation of PHBS programs in early childhood education and to improve the quality of life of children within the community.

Awareness of the importance of Clean and Healthy Living Behaviors (PHBS) must be continuously enhanced through various educational activities and training programs involving all stakeholders within the early childhood education environment. Socialization and educational initiatives that actively engage parents and the community can strengthen understanding of PHBS, thereby enabling children to more effectively apply clean and healthy practices in their daily lives (Ramos-Pla & Fornons Casol, 2025; Zulhakim & Syamsussabri, 2022). These activities are expected to enhance parents' and community members' knowledge of Clean and Healthy Living Behaviors (PHBS) and to encourage active participation in supporting children's health within early childhood education settings.

Several previous studies have examined the implementation of Clean and Healthy Living Behaviors (PHBS) in early childhood education settings. Research by Zulhakim and Syamsussabri (2022) emphasized the importance of health education and socialization programs in increasing children's understanding and practice of PHBS. Other studies have highlighted the role of schools, teachers, and parents in promoting healthy habits among young children through structured learning activities and environmental support (Ramos-Pla & Fornons Casol, 2025). In general, previous

research has predominantly focused on PHBS education programs, the effectiveness of health promotion activities, and the involvement of parents and teachers in fostering healthy behaviors. However, limited studies have specifically explored how PHBS implementation contributes to the development of healthy character among early childhood learners within a particular kindergarten context, while simultaneously examining the roles of teachers, environmental support, and implementation challenges. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of PHBS implementation in developing healthy character among children at Suka Ceria Kindergarten.

Education on Clean and Healthy Living Behaviors (PHBS) in Early Childhood Education (PAUD) plays a significant role in shaping children's healthy character from an early age. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the implementation of PHBS in developing healthy character among early childhood learners at Suka Ceria Kindergarten. In addition, the study seeks to identify the role of teachers in educating and guiding children regarding clean and healthy living behaviors, which are essential aspects of fostering healthy habits in early childhood. This research also explores how the PAUD environment supports the implementation of PHBS and examines the extent to which environmental factors influence children's healthy behaviors. Furthermore, the challenges encountered in implementing PHBS are identified in order to propose appropriate solutions to improve the effectiveness of PHBS implementation at Suka Ceria Kindergarten.

METODE

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at describing the implementation of Clean and Healthy Living Behavior (PHBS) education at Suka Ceria Kindergarten in Central Lombok Regency. Kusumawardani et al., (2019) This approach was selected because the study seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of phenomena occurring within the early childhood education setting, particularly the roles of teachers and the PAUD environment in shaping healthy character among young children through PHBS education. The research participants consisted of PAUD teachers, parents, and PAUD administrators, who were selected purposively to obtain relevant and in-depth information regarding the PHBS program. There were 4 teachers at Suka Ceria Kindergarten who participated in the survey. There are 4 classes in total: 2 classes in Group A and 2 classes in Group B. The teachers' teaching experience varies; 2 teachers have 15 years of teaching experience, and 2 teachers have 8 years of teaching experience.

Data collection methods employed in this study included semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and documentation analysis (Ipa Hafsiah Yakin, 2023; Pyo et al., 2023). Interviews were conducted with teachers, PAUD administrators, and several parents to explore their understanding of Clean and Healthy Living Behaviors (PHBS) as well as the challenges encountered in its implementation. Direct observations were carried out to examine how children in the PAUD setting practiced PHBS-related habits, such as handwashing and maintaining personal hygiene. In addition, documentation related to PHBS activities in the PAUD institution was collected to provide supplementary information regarding the implementation of the program.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis process began with the transcription of interview and observation data, followed by coding of relevant data to identify key themes related to the implementation of Clean and Healthy Living Behaviors (PHBS). These themes were then analyzed to understand how PHBS contributes to the development of healthy character in children and the factors influencing the success of its implementation in early childhood education settings. Source triangulation and methodological triangulation were employed to ensure the

validity and reliability of the data by involving multiple data sources and data collection methods.

This study also adhered to research ethics by ensuring that all respondents were provided with clear explanations regarding the objectives and benefits of the research. All participants gave their voluntary informed consent, and the confidentiality of the collected data was strictly maintained. Through a transparent and ethical research approach, this study is expected to provide an accurate depiction of the implementation of Clean and Healthy Living Behaviors (PHBS) at Suka Ceria Kindergarten and to offer useful recommendations for the development of PHBS programs in other early childhood education institutions.

HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

Results of an interview with “Ms. Lina,” a teacher: How does Ms. Lina help children develop the habit of Clean and Healthy Living Practices (PHBS), particularly when it comes to handwashing? Ms. Lina explained that she first demonstrates how to wash hands properly and thoroughly, including the steps involved. In addition, she always sets an example by washing her hands after finishing activities and after using the restroom.

Direct observations of students’ handwashing habits were conducted after they had been engaged in outdoor activities, ensuring that the students had touched various objects on the playground and various educational toys. The following are photos of handwashing activities taken during direct observations at Suka Ceria Kindergarten.



Figure 1. Photo of the process of instilling the habit of handwashing with soap and running water as part of the implementation of Healthy Living Behaviors (PHBS) among children.

Meanwhile, the documents analyzed regarding the practice of handwashing with soap and running water are the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for handwashing maintained by Suka Ceria Kindergarten, as shown in the document below.



Figure 2. Photo of the handwashing SOP document at Suka Ceria Kindergarten

1. Implementation of PHBS at Suka Ceria Kindergarten

The implementation of Clean and Healthy Living Behaviors (PHBS) at Suka Ceria Kindergarten begins with basic instruction on personal hygiene, one of which is handwashing with soap before meals. This activity is recognized as one of the most effective measures for preventing the spread of infectious diseases and is essential to be introduced from an early age. Research indicates that proper handwashing habits can significantly reduce the risk of various gastrointestinal and respiratory infections among children (Tofail et al., 2018). At Suka Ceria Kindergarten, teachers play a primary role in teaching this habit to children by providing direct demonstrations and regularly reminding them of the importance of hand hygiene. Teaching children to wash their hands with soap before meals not only promotes healthy habits but also builds their understanding of the importance of maintaining cleanliness for their own health as well as for the well-being of others (Penders et al., 2025).

In addition to handwashing, it is also important to teach children to maintain cleanliness in the classroom environment. A well-maintained classroom has a direct impact on children's health by reducing the risk of infectious diseases and creating a conducive learning environment (Yadi Jayadilaga et al., 2024). A clean environment can also enhance children's comfort and concentration during learning activities. Teachers at Suka Ceria Kindergarten are highly proactive in maintaining classroom cleanliness by involving children in collective cleaning activities. Through these activities, children learn to develop a sense of responsibility toward maintaining the cleanliness and health of their environment. This finding aligns with theoretical perspectives suggesting that hygiene education in early childhood can foster long-lasting healthy lifestyle patterns (Yadi Jayadilaga et al., 2024).

Regarding healthy dietary patterns, children at Suka Ceria Kindergarten are also provided with education on the importance of consuming nutritious foods. This education is crucial, as healthy eating habits established in early childhood can have long-term effects on children's health, including their physical growth and cognitive development. (Fitria Budi Utami, 2020; PAUD & The Indonesian Human Development Foundation Team, 2020). Teachers at Suka Ceria Kindergarten not only educate children about healthy foods but also model healthy eating behaviors by selecting nutritious meals to be served to the children and explaining why these foods are beneficial for their bodies. Education on healthy dietary patterns is essential for instilling positive habits related to children's food choices in the future.

However, although the implementation of Clean and Healthy Living Behaviors (PHBS) at Suka Ceria Kindergarten has generally been effective, challenges remain related to limited facilities, such as the availability of adequate handwashing stations and resources to support more intensive health-related activities. Inadequate facilities can hinder the optimal implementation of PHBS, particularly in early childhood education settings, where children require child-friendly and easily accessible facilities. Research by Zulhakim & Syamsussabri (2022) indicates that inadequate sanitation facilities can hinder efforts to improve children's personal hygiene, ultimately affecting the effectiveness of PHBS education. Therefore, to support the successful implementation of the PHBS program at Suka Ceria Kindergarten, it is essential to improve existing sanitation facilities, such as providing sufficient handwashing stations and ensuring that these facilities are safe and easily accessible for children.

Nevertheless, the successful implementation of Clean and Healthy Living Behaviors (PHBS) at Suka Ceria Kindergarten highlights the importance of teachers' active roles in providing appropriate modeling and education related to health, hygiene, and healthy eating patterns. Support from parents and a conducive environment also plays a significant role in the success of PHBS implementation. In this context, it is essential to involve all stakeholders—including teachers, parents, and government authorities in creating a healthy environment that supports the implementation of PHBS in early childhood education settings. Such a holistic and integrated educational approach is expected to foster healthy character development in early childhood, which will continue to evolve throughout their lives.



Figure 3. Children's activities involving learning tools and materials that require the habituation of Clean and Healthy Living Behaviors (PHBS) after activities, such as disposing of waste properly and practicing handwashing with soap (CTPS), at Suka Ceria Kindergarten.

2. The Role of Teachers in PHBS Education

Teachers at Suka Ceria Kindergarten play a crucial role in educating children about Clean and Healthy Living Behaviors (PHBS). As primary caregivers and educators in early childhood education settings, teachers are not only responsible for delivering theoretical knowledge related to hygiene and health but are also expected to provide concrete examples of healthy behaviors that children are encouraged to practice. Research by Penders et al. (2025) indicates that teachers, as facilitators, play a significant role in shaping healthy lifestyle habits in early childhood. At Suka Ceria Kindergarten, for instance, teachers actively teach practices such as handwashing before meals and maintaining personal hygiene through enjoyable and age-appropriate approaches. Behavioral modeling, or providing direct examples in daily practice, has

proven to be one of the most effective methods for encouraging children to adopt PHBS, as children tend to imitate behaviors they observe in their immediate environment (Xu et al., 2025).

However, despite the critical role played by teachers at Suka Ceria Kindergarten in implementing PHBS, they also face challenges related to training and professional skill development. Most teachers expressed the need for continuous professional development to learn more engaging and effective techniques for teaching PHBS to young children. Ramos-Pla and Fornons Casol (2025), in their study on health education in early childhood education, emphasize that continuous teacher training is essential for improving the quality of health-related instruction. Without adequate training, teachers may encounter difficulties in adapting teaching strategies to suit children who are at different stages of cognitive development. Therefore, more frequent and structured training programs are necessary to strengthen teachers' competencies in delivering PHBS education in early childhood settings.

In this context, continuous professional development for early childhood educators at Suka Ceria Kindergarten not only enhances their understanding of PHBS but also improves the quality of instruction in integrating healthy habits into the daily curriculum. Effective PHBS education offers long-term benefits for children's health, particularly by increasing awareness of the importance of personal hygiene and healthy dietary patterns (Penders et al., 2025). In line with the findings of Xu et al. (2025), training programs that involve active teacher participation can optimize educators' capacity to deliver comprehensive health education and motivate children not only to understand PHBS concepts but also to apply them in their daily lives.

3. The Role of the Early Childhood Education Environment in Supporting PHBS

The early childhood education (PAUD) environment plays a crucial role in supporting the successful implementation of Clean and Healthy Living Behaviors (PHBS). A clean, comfortable, and healthy environment provides children with opportunities to develop healthy habits from an early age. At Suka Ceria Kindergarten, a learning environment that sufficiently supports hygiene education—such as the provision of safe and clean play areas, demonstrates that healthy habits can be fostered through a supportive environment (Penders et al., 2025). However, despite efforts to create a healthy environment, several areas still require improvement. One of the primary concerns is the provision of better sanitation facilities, such as adequate handwashing stations with running water. This is essential to support hand hygiene education, which is a core component of PHBS. According to Ramos-Pla and Fornons Casol (2025), adequate sanitation facilities in early childhood education settings assist children in developing clean and healthy living habits that can be practiced both at home and within their broader social environments.



Figure 4. Inadequate handwashing facilities and handwashing activities using soap and running water at Suka Ceria Kindergarten.

The inadequate handwashing facilities at Suka Ceria Kindergarten, as shown in Figure 2, highlight one of the challenges faced in implementing Clean and Healthy Living Behaviors (PHBS) in early childhood education settings. Research by Xu et al. (2025) indicates that insufficient facilities, such as limited or inconvenient handwashing stations, can hinder the success of PHBS programs in schools or early childhood education institutions. Improving sanitation facilities is therefore essential for teaching children the importance of washing their hands with soap before meals or after play, which constitutes a core component of PHBS. Furthermore, more environmentally friendly waste management practices and the implementation of more organized hygiene systems can enhance the overall quality of the PAUD environment, enabling children to become more accustomed to healthy surroundings that support the development of positive health behaviors (Penders et al., 2025).

In addition to environmental factors, parental involvement is also a crucial element in supporting the implementation of PHBS in early childhood education. Interviews with several parents at Suka Ceria Kindergarten revealed strong support for the PHBS program implemented at the school; however, parents also expressed the need for additional guidance on how to apply healthy habits at home. As noted by Xu et al. (2025), parents play a significant role in reinforcing healthy behaviors taught at school. Therefore, to achieve broader and more effective PHBS implementation, collaboration among teachers, parents, and the surrounding community is essential in educating children to adopt healthy lifestyles. Through parental education on the importance of PHBS and consistent implementation of PHBS practices at home, healthy living habits can be more easily integrated into children's daily lives.

4. Challenges in Implementing PHBS

Several challenges were identified in the implementation of Clean and Healthy Living Behaviors (PHBS) at Suka Ceria Kindergarten, including:

- a. Limited facilities to support healthy habits, such as an insufficient number of handwashing stations and limited clean and spacious play areas.
- b. Limited parental knowledge of PHBS, which results in inadequate support for the implementation of PHBS practices at home.
- c. Time constraints in delivering more intensive PHBS education due to an already dense curriculum.

SIMPULAN

This study demonstrates that the implementation of Clean and Healthy Living Behaviors (PHBS) at Suka Ceria Kindergarten contributes positively to the development of healthy character among early childhood learners. The habituation of healthy practices, such as handwashing with soap, maintaining classroom cleanliness, and consuming nutritious foods, enables children to develop awareness and responsibility toward personal and environmental hygiene from an early age. These findings indicate that PHBS serves not only as a health promotion program but also as an important strategy for fostering healthy character development in early childhood education.

The findings further reveal that teachers play a central role in the successful implementation of PHBS. Through direct instruction, behavioral modeling, supervision, and continuous guidance, teachers help children understand and practice healthy behaviors in their daily activities. However, the effectiveness of PHBS education can be enhanced through continuous professional development programs that strengthen teachers' competencies in delivering health education using engaging and age-appropriate approaches.

In addition, the PAUD environment significantly influences the implementation of PHBS. A clean, safe, and supportive learning environment encourages children to consistently practice healthy habits. Nevertheless, limitations in sanitation facilities, particularly inadequate handwashing infrastructure, remain a challenge that may reduce the effectiveness of PHBS implementation. Therefore, improvements in facilities and learning resources are needed to create an environment that fully supports healthy behavior development.

The study also highlights the importance of collaboration among teachers, parents, school administrators, and the wider community in strengthening PHBS implementation. Parental involvement is essential to reinforce healthy habits beyond the school environment and ensure consistency between practices at school and at home. To optimize PHBS implementation, efforts should focus on improving sanitation facilities, providing continuous teacher training, and strengthening parent engagement programs. Through these integrated efforts, PHBS can be implemented more effectively and contribute to the sustainable development of healthy character among young children.

This study contributes to the existing literature by providing a comprehensive understanding of how PHBS implementation, teacher involvement, environmental support, and implementation challenges collectively influence healthy character development in an early childhood education setting.

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