

# Creative Learning Based on Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children (SHGIC) to Improve Discipline and Independence in Learning

Tri Untari\*<sup>1</sup>, Eka Danik Prahastiwi<sup>2</sup>, Maulana Purwa Rimba<sup>3</sup>, Ali Said Al Matari<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Yayasan Faqih Sudja` Pacitan, Indonesia

<sup>2,3</sup> Muhammadiyah Islamic Studies Institute Pacitan, Indonesia

<sup>4</sup> A`syarqiah Univercity, Oman

e-mail:

<sup>1</sup>[untaritri13@gmail.com](mailto:untaritri13@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>[prahastiwidanik@isimupacitan.ac.id](mailto:prahastiwidanik@isimupacitan.ac.id)

<sup>3</sup>[rimba@isimupacitan.ac.id](mailto:rimba@isimupacitan.ac.id)

<sup>4</sup>[ali.almatari@asu.cdu.om](mailto:ali.almatari@asu.cdu.om)

**ABSTRACT.** This study aims to examine historically and theoretically the creative learning model based on the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children as an effort to improve children's discipline and independence in learning. The concept of these seven habits is adapted from the theory of Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children (SHGIC), which has been adjusted to the character values of the nation and the Pancasila Student Profile. Through a historical approach, this study traces the development of character education ideas in Indonesia and their relevance to current learning needs. The results of the study show that the application of a creative learning model based on the seven habits can naturally shape positive habits in children through habituation, role modeling, and meaningful play activities. This model is effective in fostering discipline, responsibility, and independent learning from an early age, while also supporting the creation of a humanistic and character-oriented learning environment.

**Keyword:** *Creative Learning Models, Seven Habits, Character Education, Independent Learning, Early Childhood.*



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## INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is a golden age in the formation of children's character, personality and learning habits. (Purnama et al., 2022). At this stage, all of the child's basic potential develops rapidly, both in cognitive, affective, social-emotional and moral aspects. (Raihana, 2017). Therefore, early childhood education has a big responsibility in instilling positive values that become the foundation of children's behavior and personality in the future. (Palupi et al., 2024). One of the major challenges facing the world of Indonesian education today is fostering discipline and children's learning independence in the midst of an instant culture and dependence on adult assistance (Hana Wahyuningsih, 2023). This phenomenon reflects a shift in children's behavior, who are becoming increasingly passive, less able to regulate themselves, and not yet accustomed to taking responsibility for their own learning process. (Soetjipto, 2017).

This condition demands a learning model that does not only emphasize cognitive achievement. (Melani Rahayu, 2025), but also develop a balance between affective and

psychomotor dimensions through enjoyable, reflective, and meaningful learning experiences. (Santosa, 2015). In the context of the history of the development of character education in Indonesia, various approaches have been developed since the era of Character Education to the concept of the Pancasila Student Profile in the Independent Curriculum. (Halim et al., 2024). However, most of the models applied still emphasize declarative teaching of values, not yet reaching the stage of systematic habituation. (Anggraini, 2017)

The concept of “Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children” emerged as an innovation in an effort to integrate global character values into the context of national education. This concept is an adaptation of Stephen R. Covey’s theory, “Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children (SHGIC).” (Robbins, Stephen P & Judge, 2013). Covey emphasizes the importance of character formation through synergy between knowledge, skills, and desire so that individuals are able to move from dependence to independence and positive interdependence. (Clemente-Suárez et al., 2024). In the Indonesian context, these values are then translated into seven habits of great children that reflect the personality of Pancasila students, namely: being a proactive child, having clear goals, prioritizing the main thing, thinking win-win, trying to understand before being understood, working together synergistically, and sharpening one’s abilities continuously. (Prahastiwi, E. D., Budiarti, E., Eriyanti, R. W., & Asih, 2024).

Historically, the integration of positive habit formation into early childhood education in Indonesia has emerged as a significant pedagogical concern, gaining notable momentum since the early 2010s alongside the broader character education movement. This movement, which emphasizes the cultivation of ethical values, social responsibility, and personal discipline, reflects a growing recognition among educators and policymakers that cognitive development alone is insufficient to prepare children for the complex social and moral demands of contemporary society. Early childhood, characterized by rapid cognitive, emotional, and social development, is considered a critical period for shaping foundational behaviors and attitudes that persist into later life.

In response to this educational imperative, several Indonesian early childhood institutions began experimenting with the adaptation of the “Seven Habits” framework, originally conceptualized by Covey, into their curricular and pedagogical practices. This framework, which emphasizes principles such as proactive behavior, goal-setting, prioritization, empathy, and collaboration, was strategically integrated into classroom routines, teacher-student interactions, and extracurricular activities. Empirical observations suggest that such structured habit formation contributes not only to improved self-regulation and interpersonal skills among young learners but also to the development of intrinsic motivation and moral reasoning (Wigal & Broussard, 2023).

The implementation of these principles was subsequently reinforced at the national policy level through the Character Education Strengthening program (Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter, PPK) and the Pancasila Student Profile (Profil Pelajar Pancasila). These initiatives explicitly foreground the development of character, ethics, and civic-mindedness, advocating for a holistic, personality-oriented approach to learning that complements academic instruction. By aligning institutional practices with these national frameworks, early childhood education in Indonesia increasingly positions itself as a vehicle for cultivating well-rounded individuals who demonstrate both intellectual competence and moral integrity (Syafila Chabsarotul Islamiyah et al., 2023).

The creative learning model grounded in the principles of the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children conceptualizes learners as active agents within the educational process, thereby emphasizing a child centered pedagogical orientation. In this model, teachers function not only as facilitators but also as exemplars who scaffold children’s experiential engagement, reflective thinking, and the cultivation of positive behavioral patterns through structured daily activities. Historically, the development of this model reflects a broader paradigm shift in

educational discourse from traditional, instruction-driven approaches toward character-oriented and experience-based learning frameworks that prioritize holistic child development.(Edwita, Uswatun Hasanah, 2025)

Thus, this historical inquiry seeks to systematically trace the conceptual foundations, evolution, and pedagogical application of a creative learning model grounded in the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children within the context of early childhood education in Indonesia. Furthermore, the study aims to examine the continued relevance of these character-based values in fostering young children's discipline, autonomy in learning, and overall contribution to national character development.

## METHOD

This study employs a historical research approach aimed at tracing the development and relevance of the creative learning model based on the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children (SHGIC) in enhancing discipline and independence in early childhood learning in Indonesia. The historical approach was selected because this study focuses on analyzing the evolution of concepts, values, and practices of character education rooted in the theory of Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children (SHGIC) and its contextual adaptation within national education, particularly at the early childhood education (PAUD) level.

The research was conducted through four main stages: heuristics (data collection), verification (source criticism), interpretation, and historiography (writing of research findings) (Syahrizal & Jailani, 2023) At the heuristic stage, researchers collected various primary and secondary data sources, including educational theory books, policy documents from the Ministry of Education, previous research findings, scientific journal articles, and archival materials from Sobo Kindergarten that document the implementation of Seven Habits values in curriculum design and learning activities.

The verification stage was conducted to rigorously assess the authenticity, credibility, and reliability of all collected sources through both external and internal criticism. External criticism focused on evaluating the provenance, validity, authorship, and publication chronology of each document to determine its factual integrity and historical legitimacy (Lim, 2025). Meanwhile, internal criticism examined the substance of the documents, including the coherence, accuracy, and contextual consistency of their content, particularly in relation to the educational phenomena under investigation. This dual-layered verification process ensured that the data used in the study met established standards of academic rigor and methodological reliability.

Next, the interpretation stage involved chronologically and thematically analyzing the collected data to identify the relationship between the development of the Seven Habits concept and its transformation into the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children, which are aligned with the Pancasila Student Profile and the Independent Curriculum. At this stage, researchers explored how values such as proactiveness, responsibility, collaboration, and independence began to be integrated into the national education system.

The final stage was historiography, namely the systematic writing of research findings in the form of a scientific narrative (Haki et al., 2024) The data were organized chronologically to illustrate the historical trajectory of the formation of the creative learning model based on the Seven Habits starting from Covey's global concept, its adaptation by Indonesian educators, to its implementation at Sobo Kindergarten as one of the institutions applying these values in early childhood learning activities. Through this historical method, the study is expected to provide an in-depth understanding of the conceptual foundations and developmental process of the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children in educational practice, as well as its contribution to strengthening discipline and independence in early childhood learners.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The concept of the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children is rooted in the ideas of Stephen R. Covey (1989) in his work, *Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children (SHGIC)*. According to Covey, positive habits are formed through the synergy of knowledge, skills, and desire. These three components form the basis for developing effective and character-based behavior. By implementing the seven habits, individuals will progress from dependency to independence, and finally to positive interdependence, where one is able to work harmoniously and productively with others. In the context of early childhood education, this concept is relevant because it can help children internalize positive values from an early age through simple habits that are consistently applied at school and at home. (Wigal & Broussard, 2023)

Psychologically, the implementation of the Seven Habits based learning model aligns with the humanistic learning theory proposed by Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow. This theory emphasizes that effective learning must be student-centered and respect the individual potential of each student. Rogers emphasized that meaningful learning occurs when children have the freedom to explore and actively participate in learning activities. Meanwhile, Maslow, through his hierarchy of needs theory, places self-actualization at the pinnacle of human development. Therefore, learning that supports positive habits needs to provide space for children to grow emotionally and creatively, build self-confidence, and develop essential human values. (Ainscow et al., 2019).

Furthermore, this approach also aligns with the constructivist theory proposed by Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. Constructivist theory assumes that knowledge is not passively imparted, but rather actively constructed by students through direct experience and social interaction. Piaget emphasized the importance of exploratory activities to stimulate children's cognitive development, while Vygotsky highlighted the role of social interaction and scaffolding in helping children reach their potential developmental level. Within the context of the Seven Habits model, values such as proactive thinking, synergistic collaboration, and understanding before understanding can be applied through role-playing, group work, and problem-solving activities. These activities enable children to learn through concrete experiences that strengthen critical thinking skills, empathy, and independent learning. (Gusnarib Wahab, 2021)

In addition, the concept of Seven Habits also has strong relevance to the national character education policy initiated by the Ministry of Education and Culture. (Kemdikbud, 2017). Character education is a systematic effort to instill the nation's noble values through learning, habituation, and role modeling. Within the framework of the Pancasila Student Profile, the values embodied in the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children such as proactivity, independence, mutual cooperation, and critical thinking align with the dimensions of students who are faithful, have noble character, are independent, have critical reasoning, and are creative. Therefore, integrating a creative learning model based on the seven habits can be an effective strategy to strengthen character education from an early age and support the formation of a generation that is resilient, has integrity, and is adaptive to changing times. (Halim et al., 2024).

Historically, the idea of the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children is rooted in Stephen R. Covey's (1989) theory of *Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children (SHGIC)*, which emphasizes character building through positive habits. In the context of national education, this concept has been adapted to instill basic values such as independence, responsibility, and cooperation from an early age. This adaptation is in line with the direction of character education policy in Indonesia, which has been developing since the 2010s, particularly through the Character Education Strengthening (PPK) program and the Pancasila Student Profile.

The application of this creative learning model based on seven habits places children at the center of active and reflective learning activities. Teachers act as facilitators who help children understand and practice positive habits through play, discussion, and simple projects. This habit

formation has been proven effective in naturally fostering discipline, responsibility, and independence in children's learning. Thus, this model is not only historically relevant, but also contextual to today's educational needs, which emphasize character and creativity as the main foundations of learning.

### **The Historical and Philosophical Roots of the Concept of Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children**

The concept of the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children (SHGIC), adapted from Stephen R. Covey's seminal work on personal effectiveness, represents a holistic framework for cultivating character, competence, and ethical awareness among youth. Covey's model, first articulated in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (1989), emphasizes universal principles such as responsibility, empathy, collaboration, and self-renewal. In the Indonesian context, this framework has been localized to address cultural, social, and educational imperatives, aligning with national values and child development policies that prioritize moral integrity alongside academic achievement. The SHGIC model thus serves not only as a guide for personal development but also as a pedagogical tool to nurture well-rounded, socially responsible young citizens. (Ahmad, 2025)

Historically, the emergence of Covey's framework was a response to the limitations of behaviorist and efficiency-centered approaches that dominated late 20th-century management and educational practices. During the 1980s, models of human behavior often prioritized measurable outcomes, productivity, and skill acquisition, with minimal attention to the ethical and spiritual dimensions of personal growth. Covey's approach diverged from this paradigm by advocating for the cultivation of internal principles that sustain long-term effectiveness. By grounding habit formation in enduring ethical values, the model reframes success as the integration of character and competence rather than mere achievement. (Christin et al., 2025)

Philosophically, the SHGIC concept draws on a synthesis of Western and Eastern thought traditions. Covey's ideas resonate with Aristotelian virtue ethics, which emphasizes habituation and the development of moral character, while also reflecting principles found in Confucian and Islamic educational philosophies, particularly the cultivation of self-discipline, respect for others, and communal responsibility. In the Indonesian adaptation, these philosophical underpinnings are further reinforced by Pancasila the foundational national philosophy which emphasizes belief in God, humanism, social justice, and mutual cooperation. This philosophical integration underscores the notion that personal development is inseparable from ethical awareness and social responsibility.

From a psychological perspective, the SHGIC framework aligns with contemporary theories of child development, including socio-emotional learning and self-determination theory. Habits such as proactive behavior, goal setting, empathy, and self-renewal are supported by empirical evidence showing that early cultivation of executive function, emotional regulation, and interpersonal skills promotes lifelong well-being and adaptive functioning. The model's emphasis on intrinsic motivation, reflective practice, and collaborative learning ensures that children internalize these habits, enabling them to navigate complex social and academic environments effectively.

From a global perspective, Covey's principles have been widely adopted across diverse domains, including leadership studies, organizational behavior, educational psychology, and character education. Empirical studies have highlighted the effectiveness of habit based interventions in fostering personal responsibility, resilience, and interpersonal competence (Lavy, 2020) In educational contexts, Covey's model has been operationalized through programs such as "The Leader in Me", which adapts the seven habits for elementary and middle school students. This adaptation emphasizes the cultivation of autonomy, cooperative skills, and resilience, aiming to nurture well-rounded individuals who can navigate complex social and academic environments

effectively. Moreover, contemporary research in positive psychology and character education underscores the enduring relevance of Covey's approach, linking habitual practice of these principles to long-term outcomes in personal well-being, leadership capacity, and ethical decision-making.

Overall, Covey's framework extends beyond a merely behavioral paradigm by presenting a holistic, principle-centered model of human development that systematically integrates cognitive, emotional, and moral dimensions. This integration not only enhances individual effectiveness by fostering self-regulation, ethical decision-making, and interpersonal competence, but also contributes to broader societal well-being through the cultivation of responsible, value-driven citizenship. In conclusion, the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children represents a theoretically grounded, historically informed, and culturally resonant framework for character and personal development. By integrating ethical principles, philosophical traditions, and empirical insights from child psychology, SHGIC offers a comprehensive approach to nurturing children who are not only competent but also morally conscious and socially responsible. Its enduring relevance lies in its capacity to bridge universal principles with local values, preparing young Indonesians to thrive as ethical leaders and active participants in a rapidly evolving global society.

### **Adaptation and Development in Indonesia**

In Indonesia, the concept of Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children (SHGIC) became widely recognized around the early 2010s through the National Character Education (Pendidikan Karakter Bangsa, PKB) movement, initiated by the Ministry of Education and Culture. This movement aimed to shape the younger generation into individuals who are not only academically capable but also morally, socially, and emotionally mature. In this effort, the values of the Seven Habits were aligned with the Profile of Pancasila Students, which emphasizes six core dimensions: faith and devotion to God Almighty, global diversity, mutual cooperation (*gotongroyong*), independence, critical thinking, and creativity.

This adaptation process led to the concept of "Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children", which contextualizes Stephen R. Covey's values within the national culture and education system. Each habit was translated into simpler, child-friendly language, making it easier for Indonesian children to understand and apply in their daily lives. For example:

- 1) Be Proactive became "*I am a responsible and great child*", emphasizing self-awareness and personal responsibility for one's choices and actions.
- 2) Begin with the End in Mind was translated as "*I know what I want to achieve*", encouraging children to have clear goals and vision in every step they take.
- 3) Put First Things First became "*I know what is important*", teaching children to manage their time and priorities wisely.
- 4) Think Win-Win was rendered as "*I enjoy working together*", fostering a sense of fairness, mutual respect, and collaboration.
- 5) Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood became "*I listen first*", highlighting empathy and effective communication skills.
- 6) Synergize was translated as "*I work together with my friends*", promoting creativity and teamwork.
- 7) Sharpen the Saw became "*I keep learning to improve*", emphasizing continuous self-development physically, intellectually, and emotionally.

This adaptation is not merely a translation of terms; it represents a historical process of internalizing global values into the local context. Covey's universal principles are enriched and reinforced with uniquely Indonesian cultural values such as mutual cooperation (*gotong-royong*), social responsibility, and religiosity. Thus, the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children serve as a bridge between global character education and local cultural identity, shaping children who are not only effective but also principled and rooted in the nation's values.

## Implementation in Creative Learning Models

Based on document reviews, literature analyses, and observations of educational practices conducted from 2014 through the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in 2022, there has been a notable shift in the paradigm of early childhood education from a predominantly instructional model to a participatory, child centered, and creativity-oriented approach. The development of the creative learning model grounded in the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children emerged as a response to the need to bridge character-education theories with concrete pedagogical practices in early childhood settings.

This model positions habit formation as the central component of the learning process, rather than merely transmitting moral values. Children are not passive recipients who listen or imitate; instead, they actively internalize positive values through experiential learning activities such as play-based tasks, collaborative group projects, and structured reflective practices. Within this framework, teachers function as facilitators who cultivate learning environments that are joyful, cooperative, and pedagogically meaningful. (Varchati et al., 2025)

Historical records of its implementation indicate that the values embedded in these “great habits” have been integrated into a variety of daily routines in early childhood education. Examples include morning-circle discussions, collective prayer practices, shared responsibility for classroom materials, and project-based learning centered on environmental and social themes. Such practices illustrate the alignment between Covey’s theoretical framework and Indonesia’s national character-education policies, both of which emphasize independence, mutual cooperation, and the holistic development of children.

## Relevance for Strengthening Character in Early Age Children

Historical analysis shows that the Seven Habits of Highly Effective Indonesian Children model has a strong correlation with the direction of national education policy in 21st-century Indonesia. Values such as proactivity, independence, and goal orientation reflect an emphasis on individual competence, self-reliance, and readiness to face global challenges. Other values such as synergy and understanding others reinforce social and collective dimensions, as well as empathy, which are central to frameworks like the Pancasila Student Profile.

From a theoretical perspective, the implementation of this model aligns with two major streams in educational studies: first, humanistic theory, as developed by Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, which emphasizes learning freedom, self-actualization, and the development of a holistic sense of self; and second, constructivist theory, through the works of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, which views learning as an active construction by children through social experiences and interactions. In this context, positive habits that are consistently practiced and later reflected upon serve as a means for developing self-regulation, behavioral control, and responsibility for their own learning process.

Furthermore, habit-based learning models have historical roots in the transformation of character education in Indonesia. Character education policies in Indonesia have shifted paradigms from education oriented toward external compliance emphasizing rules and discipline under older systems toward education that builds students’ internal awareness. Evidence shows that character education programs aim to instill values such as religiosity, integrity, nationalism, independence, and community cooperation (Kurniasih & Utari, 2018).

In schools, the internalization of character values by teachers through habituation, integration, and imitation has been shown to be a key mechanism. A study in Indonesia found that teachers implement character education through regular routines and structured social interactions. However, challenges arise when learning is conducted online or through technology-based platforms, which can affect the effectiveness of internalization (Hidayat & Parhan, 2021).

From an implementation perspective, the Seven Habits model promotes the development of a “living character”, rather than merely a “teaching character.” In other words, character education is not only taught as content or material for students to learn but becomes an integral part of their daily life. Habits that are repeated collectively and reflected upon give children the opportunity to build mindsets, attitudes, and actions consistent with the desired values. This aligns with the idea that character develops through interaction between the individual and the social-cultural environment, not just through one way transmission.

Thus, this model is not only conceptually relevant to current education policies but also supported by a strong theoretical foundation and empirical research in Indonesia. The consistent implementation of these habits has the potential to strengthen holistic character learning integrating cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects while fostering children’s internal awareness of their roles and responsibilities as learners and citizens.

### **Historical Synthesis**

A thorough historical review indicates that the Creative Learning Model Based on the Seven Habits of Indonesian Children represents a carefully constructed synthesis of universal character values and Indonesia’s national educational principles. This model did not emerge in isolation or by chance; rather, it developed progressively through deliberate processes of adaptation, experimentation, and contextualization within the Indonesian educational landscape. Historical evidence shows that its evolution was influenced by both global pedagogical trends emphasizing character formation and local educational reforms that prioritized the integration of moral and civic values into formal schooling (Hijran et al., 2025). The convergence of these influences reflects a strategic effort to align global best practices with Indonesia’s socio-cultural and educational priorities.

Within the context of early childhood education, this model functions as a strategic innovation that fosters the holistic development of children. It is specifically designed to cultivate essential life skills, including discipline, responsibility, cooperation, empathy, and independent learning, from the earliest stages of development. By combining creative pedagogical strategies with the structured framework of the Seven Habits, the model enables children to engage actively in cognitive, social, and emotional domains simultaneously. Learning activities are crafted to be meaningful and enjoyable, ensuring that children internalize moral and social values naturally through interactive experiences rather than rote instruction (Nilna et al., 2025)

Moreover, the model reflects an iterative process in which educational policies, school-level initiatives, and curriculum design were progressively aligned to support character education systematically. Key milestones in this process include the formal recognition of character-building as a central goal in national education standards, the development of teacher training programs centered on value-based pedagogy, and the implementation of classroom practices that reinforce both personal and social competencies. This demonstrates that the model’s emergence was not merely theoretical but was supported by practical structures ensuring sustainable implementation across diverse learning environments.

From a theoretical perspective, the historical synthesis highlights the interplay between universal educational principles and culturally specific values. The Seven Habits framework, which originates from international studies on personal and social effectiveness, is adapted in this model to resonate with Indonesia’s Pancasila philosophy. This adaptation underscores the importance of contextual relevance in educational innovation, showing that global pedagogical concepts can be successfully localized to support nation-specific educational objectives. By embedding Pancasila values, such as mutual respect, social responsibility, and moral integrity, the model bridges global theory and local practice, creating a robust foundation for character education in early childhood.

In conclusion, the historical and theoretical analysis of the Creative Learning Model Based on the Seven Habits of Indonesian Children demonstrates that it is both historically grounded and practically significant. The model exemplifies how universal character education frameworks can be harmonized with national values to produce a contextually relevant approach that nurtures competent, empathetic, and morally responsible young learners. Its development and implementation serve as a testament to the potential of integrated educational strategies in shaping the next generation, highlighting the dynamic relationship between policy, pedagogy, and cultural values in fostering holistic child development.

## CONCLUSION

The creative learning model based on the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children is a relevant approach to strengthening character education in Indonesia. Based on historical and theoretical studies, this concept has been proven to foster discipline, responsibility, and independence in children through positive habits and enjoyable learning. The application of the seven habits not only shapes independent behavior, but also fosters children's social and reflective abilities from an early age. Thus, this model can inspire educators to develop learning practices that are oriented towards character and creativity in line with the spirit of the Pancasila Student Profile.

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