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A Phenomenological Study of Value Internalization: The TATA Program as a Model for Building Environmental School Culture

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Abstract

Environmental character education plays a crucial role in fostering sustainable behavior within elementary school culture. However, prior studies largely emphasize measurable outcomes, leaving the experiential process of value internalization underexamined, while students' behavior often remains situational and dependent on supervision. This study aims to explore the internalization of environmental care values through the TATA (*Tertib, Aman, Terkendali,* and *Asri*) Program by examining the lived experiences of school community members. A qualitative phenomenological approach was employed, involving the principal, teachers, students, and supporting stakeholders at SD Negeri Sidareja 06 Cilacap. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, and analyzed using phenomenological procedures, including bracketing, horizonalization, and thematic development. The findings reveal that value internalization occurs gradually through habituation, social interaction, and reflective experiences, transforming students' behavior from externally driven compliance into internally motivated awareness and action. This transformation is supported by the cyclical interaction of TATA values, integrating moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. The cyclical interaction of clear behavioral boundaries and a supportive psychological climate fosters students' independent self-regulation, which is emotionally reinforced by the pride of experiencing a sustainable environment. The study contributes theoretically by offering a phenomenological perspective on value internalization and practically by providing a contextual model for sustainable, culture-based character education.

Keywords: Character Education, Environmental Care, School Culture, TATA Program

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Abstrak

Pendidikan karakter lingkungan memainkan peran penting dalam menumbuhkan perilaku berkelanjutan dalam budaya sekolah dasar. Namun, penelitian-penelitian sebelumnya sebagian besar menekankan pada hasil yang dapat diukur, sehingga proses pengalaman internalisasi nilai kurang mendapat perhatian, sementara perilaku siswa sering kali bersifat situasional dan bergantung pada pengawasan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji proses internalisasi nilai kepedulian lingkungan melalui Program TATA (Tertib, Aman, Terkendali, dan Asri) dengan menelaah pengalaman hidup (lived experiences) anggota komunitas sekolah. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode fenomenologi, yang melibatkan kepala sekolah, guru, siswa, serta pemangku kepentingan terkait di SD Negeri Sidareja 06 Cilacap. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan tahapan fenomenologis yang meliputi bracketing, horizonalization, dan pengembangan tema. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa internalisasi nilai berlangsung secara bertahap melalui proses pembiasaan, interaksi sosial, dan pengalaman reflektif, yang mendorong perubahan perilaku siswa dari kepatuhan yang didasarkan pada kontrol eksternal menuju kesadaran dan tindakan yang bersumber dari dorongan internal. Proses ini didukung oleh interaksi siklik nilai-nilai TATA yang mengintegrasikan dimensi moral knowing, moral feeling, dan moral action. Interaksi yang saling melengkapi antara batasan perilaku yang jelas dan iklim psikologis yang mendukung mendorong kemampuan siswa untuk mengatur diri secara mandiri, yang diperkuat secara emosional oleh rasa bangga karena berada dalam lingkungan yang berkelanjutan. Secara teoretis, penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi berupa perspektif fenomenologis dalam memahami internalisasi nilai, serta secara praktis menawarkan model kontekstual pendidikan karakter berbasis budaya yang berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Karakter, Kepedulian Lingkungan, Budaya Sekolah, Program TATA

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INTRODUCTION

Education plays a strategic role in shaping the quality of human resources that are not only intellectually excellent but also possess strong, sustainable character. In the context of primary education, the learning process is directed not only toward mastering knowledge but also toward developing values and attitudes that serve as the foundation for learners' behavior in everyday life. As Lickona mentioned *in Educating For Character: How Our School Can Teach Respect and Responsibility, character education is therefore an essential component of the education system, as it serves as the basis for building a generation that is socially and morally responsible*. Along with the increasing urgency of environmental issues, strengthening environmental care character within the school culture has become increasingly relevant, particularly as a preventive effort to ensure environmental sustainability from an early age (Fathurrahman et al., 2022).

Environmental care character refers to an individual's attitude and behavior that reflects concern for environmental sustainability through concrete actions, such as maintaining cleanliness, upholding orderliness, and supporting environmental continuity. This character is not limited to cognitive aspects but also encompasses affective and behavioral dimensions, which are manifested in daily habits (Wardani, 2020). Therefore, the development of environmental care character requires a comprehensive, continuous approach that integrates formal learning and habituation into school life (Sitorus & Lasso, 2021).

One approach considered effective in shaping character is strengthening school culture. School culture reflects a system of values, norms, and practices that develop within educational settings and serve as a reference for how all members of the school community behave. A conducive, consistent school environment that promotes positive values can facilitate the internalization of values among learners (Haul et al., 2021). Accordingly, developing a school culture that prioritizes environmental care is an important strategy for character education, particularly at the primary school level.

In practice, schools often develop culture-based programs to habituate character values. The TATA Program (Tertib, Aman, Terkendali, and Asri) is one example of an initiative designed to create an orderly, safe, and comfortable school environment while fostering students' awareness of the importance of maintaining the environment. This program emphasizes the habituation of positive behaviors through routine activities, role modeling, and the active involvement of all members of the school community (Aminah et al., 2022). Thus, the program not only functions as a set of rules but also serves as a medium for the internalization of values, which is expected to shape learners' character sustainably.

However, field realities indicate that implementing school culture-based programs has not consistently or sustainably produced behavioral change. Based on initial observations at SD Negeri Sidareja 06 Cilacap, students were still found disposing of food wrappers carelessly in classrooms and surrounding areas, particularly during break time. These observations, recorded over two weeks, revealed that such behaviors occurred in the absence of teacher supervision. This condition suggests that the values promoted through the program have not been fully internalized, but instead remain situational and dependent on external control.

Previous studies have also shown that implementing character education in primary schools faces several challenges. Limitations in facilities and supporting resources are among the factors affecting the success of character education programs (Izzati et al., 2019). In addition, inconsistent implementation and the lack of continuous reinforcement create obstacles to the internalization of values (Purwanti, 2017). Other research indicates that character education programs are often

not fully integrated into school culture, resulting in limited impact on learners' behavioral changes (Aminah et al., 2022).

Most previous studies on character education, particularly those related to environmental awareness, have predominantly employed quantitative approaches that focus on measurable outcomes such as attitude scores, levels of awareness, or program effectiveness. While these studies provide valuable insights into observable changes, they tend to emphasize what changes occur rather than how students experience and interpret them in their daily lives. Previous research in environmental education also highlights a strong focus on behavioral outcomes and program evaluation, with less attention to experiential processes and the construction of personal meaning (Ardoin et al., 2020; Yang & Xiu, 2023). Consequently, the subjective meaning-making process, emotional engagement, and social interactions through which environmental values are internalized receive less attention in existing literature. This tendency suggests that understanding character education solely through numerical indicators may provide a limited perspective on students' environmental awareness. In this context, exploring students' lived experiences becomes essential to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how environmental values are internalized within school culture.

However, previous studies have not sufficiently explored how environmental care values are experienced, interpreted, and internalized through students' lived experiences within school culture. In particular, the dynamic processes through which habituation, social interaction, and reflective experiences contribute to value internalization remain underexamined. This limitation indicates the need for a deeper exploration of the experiential dimension of character education beyond measurable outcomes. To address this gap, a phenomenological approach is considered relevant, as it allows for an in-depth exploration of individuals' lived experiences, perceptions, and meanings in the process of value internalization. Through this approach, the implementation of the TATA program can be examined more comprehensively, not only in terms of its outcomes but also in relation to the subjective experiences underlying the formation of environmental care character.

There is an urge for a novel contribution by employing a phenomenological approach to capture the lived experiences and meaning-making processes of school community members in the internalization of environmental care values. Furthermore, it proposes a dynamic interaction model of TATA values, offering a more integrative explanation of how school culture facilitates sustainable character formation. Accordingly, this study aims to explore how environmental care values are internalized through lived experiences within the TATA Program in developing an environmental school culture at SD Negeri Sidareja 06 Cilacap. It also seeks to uncover the dynamic processes underlying the transformation of students' behavior from externally driven compliance into internally motivated awareness and action.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative, phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences and meanings constructed by members of the school community during the implementation of the TATA program to develop environmental care character. A qualitative approach was chosen to enable an in-depth exploration of participants' subjective experiences within their natural context (Fadli, 2021). The phenomenological method was used to uncover the essence of individuals' lived experiences related to the phenomenon under study (Moustakas, 2011).

Phenomenological analysis was conducted through several stages, including bracketing (epoche), horizonalization, theme clustering, and the development of an essence description. In this study, bracketing was carried out through continuous self-reflection and the use of reflective notes to minimize the researcher's assumptions. Significant statements were extracted from interview transcripts and field notes, then coded and grouped into meaning units and thematic clusters. These were further developed into textural descriptions (what was experienced) and structural descriptions (how it was experienced), which were finally synthesized to construct the essence of the value internalization process within the TATA program (Moustakas, 2011).

As the primary instrument, the researcher maintained reflexivity through self-reflection and reflective notes to minimize bias and ensure that interpretations remained grounded in participants' lived experiences (Olmos-Vega et al., 2022). To enhance the credibility of the data, triangulation was conducted through both source and technique triangulation. Source triangulation involved comparing data obtained from different participants, including the principal, teachers, and students. Technique triangulation was carried out by cross-checking interview findings with observational data and supporting documentation. For instance, students' statements regarding their environmental care behavior were verified through direct observations of their daily practices and supported by school documentation related to the TATA program. Member checking was also conducted to confirm the accuracy of interpretations with participants.

The research was conducted at SD Negeri Sidareja 06 Cilacap during the even semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. The site was selected purposively because the school has implemented the program as part of its school culture. Participants in this study included the principal, teachers, students, and other relevant stakeholders who were directly involved in the program. They were selected through purposive sampling to ensure the data reflected rich, relevant experiences (Palinkas et al., 2015). To ensure ethical research practices, all participants were informed of the study's purpose and provided consent before data collection. Participants' identities were kept confidential through anonymization, and the research was conducted with the school's official permission.

The data in this study consisted primarily of participants' lived experiences, supported by relevant documents. Primary data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, observations, and documentation (Fadli, 2021). The interviews were designed to explore participants' experiences and the meanings they constructed regarding the implementation of the TATA program. Observations were conducted to capture natural interactions and contextual situations that reflect how environmental care values are practiced in everyday school life (Hasanah, 2016). Documentation was used as supporting data to enrich the understanding of the phenomenon, including school records and program-related materials (Sari & Wulandari, 2022).

Data collection and analysis were conducted iteratively, accompanied by continuous reflection to deepen the understanding of participants' lived experiences and constructed meanings. This iterative process allowed continuous comparison between emerging themes and field data, enabling the researcher to refine interpretations and ensure that the findings accurately reflected participants' lived experiences. To guide the exploration of participants' lived experiences, a set of thematic categories was developed as a flexible framework for the semi-structured interviews. These themes were not intended as rigid indicators, but rather as exploratory focuses to facilitate an in-depth understanding of how participants experience and interpret the implementation of the TATA program. The thematic categories are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Thematic Categories and Guiding Focus of Interview

Interview Theme	Guiding Focus
Moral Knowing (Understanding of Values)	Understanding the purpose and background of the TATA Program, as well as the environmental care values contained within it.
Moral Feeling (Attitude and Concern)	Attitudes, concern, and emotional responses toward the condition of the school environment, including participation in activities to maintain cleanliness and order.
Moral Action (Real Actions)	The implementation of real actions to maintain the school environment through routine activities, habituation practices, and efforts involving reflection and follow-up in fostering environmental care character.
Teachers' Role in Implementing the TATA Program	Teachers' strategies for instilling environmental care values, forms of guidance, and observations of changes in students' behavior.
Students' Responses and Participation	Students' level of understanding, experiences, and involvement in maintaining cleanliness and order in the school environment.
Reflection of the TATA Program	Participants' experience of the TATA Program in shaping students' environmental care character.
Follow-Up Plan	Hopes and efforts to develop the program to improve the sustainability of the environmental care school culture.

Similarly, observation was conducted using thematic categories to capture natural behaviors and contextual interactions related to the implementation of the TATA program. These observational focuses are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Thematic Categories and Guiding Focus of Observation

Observation Theme	Guiding Focus
A. Observation of Students' Behavior	
Orderly Behavior (Moral Knowing)	Students' behavior in maintaining order, such as disposing of trash properly and complying with basic rules for maintaining environmental cleanliness.
Safe Behavior (Moral Feeling)	Students' attitudes in maintaining safety and comfort in the school environment, including not creating disturbances and showing concern for collective order.
Self-Regulated Behavior (Moral Knowing & Action)	Students' ability to control themselves, comply with school rules, and demonstrate discipline in daily activities.
Environmentally Friendly Behavior (Moral Action)	Students' active participation in creating a clean and comfortable environment, such as participating in cleanliness activities, caring for plants, and maintaining neatness in the school environment.
B. Observation of the Implementation of the TATA Program	
Implementation of the TATA Program: *Tertib* (Orderly)	Activities reflecting the value of orderliness, such as ceremonies, students lining up, and classroom time arrangement.
Implementation of the TATA Program: *Aman* (Safe)	Activities that support safety and order in the school environment, such as class pickets (piket) and the application of school rules.
Implementation of the TATA Program: *Terkendali* (Self-Regulated)	Implementation of discipline during learning activities and students' compliance in maintaining school facilities.
Implementation of the TATA Program: *Asri* (Clean and Green/Environmentally Friendly)	Activities related to cleanliness and greening, such as community service (working together), plant/garden maintenance, and classroom cleanliness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Initial Experience of Students' Environmental Care Character

Before the implementation of the TATA Program, students' experiences reflected that environmental care had not yet become a meaningful part of their daily behavior. Observations in the school environment showed that some students disposed of waste carelessly and paid limited attention to classroom cleanliness and tidiness. From the students' perspective, these behaviors were often carried out without a strong sense of awareness or personal responsibility. Maintaining cleanliness was generally perceived as a situational activity, performed only under certain conditions, rather than as a value that guided their everyday actions. This indicates that environmental care had not yet been fully internalized, remaining at the level of routine compliance rather than personal meaning.

Moral Knowing Aspect

From a moral perspective, students generally demonstrated awareness that maintaining environmental cleanliness is an important value. Many students said that improperly disposing of waste was considered inappropriate behavior. However, this understanding tended to remain at a normative level, shaped by rules and instructions rather than by a deeper personal awareness. Some students acknowledged that although they knew the importance of cleanliness, they did not always act accordingly, especially when supervision was absent.

Moral Feeling Aspect

From a moral perspective, students' experiences indicated that emotional sensitivity toward the school environment had not yet fully developed. Several students appeared to perceive environmental conditions, such as litter or untidy classrooms, as ordinary and not particularly disturbing. This suggests that the school environment had not yet been experienced as a shared space that required emotional care and personal attachment. Some students expressed that they only became aware of environmental conditions when teachers directly reminded them or when specific activities were conducted. In everyday situations, however, feelings of concern or discomfort toward environmental issues were not consistently present. This indicates that environmental care values had not yet been internalized at the affective level, as they were not accompanied by strong emotional engagement.

Moral Action Aspect

In terms of moral action, students' behaviors were largely shaped by external structures such as rules, instructions, and teacher supervision. Participation in cleaning activities was often carried out in response to directives rather than as an expression of personal initiative. Students tended to engage in environmental care practices when guided, but these behaviors were not consistently maintained in the absence of supervision. Further observations revealed that some students were aware of proper environmental practices, yet did not always act accordingly. This gap between understanding and action reflects a lack of internalized motivation. In several cases, students admitted that their actions were influenced by situational factors, such as the presence of teachers or peers' behavior. These patterns indicate that students' environmental care behaviors remained externally driven rather than emerging from internal awareness. As a result, environmental care had not yet become a consistent and self-initiated practice in students' daily lives, but remained dependent on contextual conditions and external reinforcement.

The Role of the TATA Program in Shaping School Culture

Building upon these initial experiences, the implementation of the TATA Program provided a context in which students' perceptions and behaviors began to evolve. Students'

experiences also highlight the role of the TATA Program within the school culture that supports the internalization of environmental care values. The program was experienced not merely as a formal structure, but as a set of daily practices embedded in school life. Routine activities, consistent expectations, and shared participation created an environment that encouraged students to engage in environmental care behaviors continuously. Teachers played an important role in this process by acting as role models.

One teacher stated, "*Students tend to follow what we do. When we consistently show good habits, they slowly adopt them*." This suggests that students' experiences are shaped not only by instruction but also by direct observation and imitation in daily interactions. Students reported that observing teachers' involvement in maintaining cleanliness influenced their own attitudes and behaviors. Through these interactions, students were able to experience environmental care not only as instruction but also as a value practiced collectively within the school community. Overall, students experienced the TATA Program as a process that gradually shaped their habits, emotions, and awareness. This process reflects how structured habituation within a supportive school culture can contribute to the internalization of environmental care values in a more meaningful and sustainable way.

Experiences of School Members in Implementing the TATA Program

To gain a deeper understanding of the implementation of the TATA Program at SD Negeri Sidareja 06 Cilacap, interviews were conducted with the principal, teachers, and students. The findings reveal how the program was experienced, interpreted, and given meaning by members of the school community. From the perspective of the principal and teachers, the TATA Program was not merely a formal policy but a continuous process of habituation embedded in daily school life. They emphasized that consistency in routine activities plays an important role in shaping students' character. The program was experienced as something that must be lived repeatedly, rather than simply instructed. Teachers described character formation as gradually occurring through repeated daily practices, which they experienced as a continuous, evolving process rather than an instant outcome.

Teachers also experienced their role as extending beyond instruction, particularly as role models in everyday interactions. They noted that students tend to imitate behaviors they observe directly, which makes teachers' actions an important part of the process of internalizing values. Through these experiences, teachers perceived that environmental care values are more effectively internalized when students are involved in shared practices rather than merely receiving verbal instructions. One teacher also reflected, "*We cannot expect instant change; students need to experience these habits repeatedly before they truly understand their meaning."* However, both the principal and teachers acknowledged that the process was not without challenges. They experienced difficulties in changing students' long-standing habits, especially when these habits were reinforced outside the school environment. In addition, resource limitations and inconsistent reinforcement at home were perceived as factors that influenced the sustainability of students' behavioral changes.

From the students' perspective, the implementation of the TATA Program was experienced in diverse ways. Some students reported that they initially participated in environmental care activities because they were instructed by teachers or influenced by school rules. Over time, however, these experiences began to shape new forms of awareness. Several students reported feeling uncomfortable when the environment was dirty, indicating a shift in their emotional engagement. Other students described a sense of satisfaction and pride when they contributed to

maintaining a clean, orderly environment. This suggests that environmental care was no longer merely an obligation but something personally meaningful. In some cases, students also began to take the initiative, such as reminding their peers to dispose of waste properly, reflecting the emergence of social awareness and shared responsibility.

Experienced Supports and Challenges in the Implementation of the TATA Program

The implementation of the TATA Program at SD Negeri Sidareja 06 Cilacap was influenced by various supporting conditions and challenges that shaped how the program was carried out in daily practice. From the principal's and teachers' perspectives, strong commitment and shared involvement among school members were key factors supporting the program's continuity. They described that when all members of the school community actively participated, the program became easier to implement and more meaningfully integrated into everyday activities. The availability of facilities and a supportive school environment also contributed to creating conditions that enabled students to engage more consistently in environmental care practices.

Students, on the other hand, experienced support through daily routines and interactions with teachers and peers. Consistent habituation and direct examples from teachers helped students gradually understand and practice environmental care behaviors. These experiences suggest that support was not only structural but also relational, emerging through interaction and shared practices within the school environment. However, the implementation process was also found to face several challenges. Teachers and the principal noted that students' previously formed habits were often difficult to change, especially when reinforced outside the school context. They also observed that the lack of continuity between school practices and home environments disrupted the consistency of students' behavior.

Discussions

Based on the research findings, participants' experiences indicate that students' environmental care character at SD Negeri Sidareja 06 Cilacap had not yet reflected a balanced integration of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Although students possessed basic knowledge about environmental care, this understanding had not yet translated into consistent attitudes and behaviors (Darwanti et al., 2025). This finding supports previous studies suggesting that environmental care behavior among elementary school students often remains at a normative level when not reinforced through continuous habituation and environmental support (Fahlevi et al., 2020; Zein & Puspita, 2021). From a social learning perspective, limited opportunities for consistent role modeling and environmental reinforcement may hinder the deeper internalization of environmental values (Ajmain & Marzuki, 2019; Aminah et al., 2022).

The implementation of the TATA Program demonstrates that a school-culture-based approach can facilitate a more integrated process of character formation. Unlike approaches that treat values as separate components, the findings of this study suggest that the four core values of TATA: *Tertib* (Orderly), *Aman* (Safe), *Terkendali* (Self-regulated), and *Asri* (Environmentally Friendly) interact dynamically in shaping students' environmental care character (Utami & Xiang, 2022). Based on the findings, a conceptual pattern can be proposed in which *Tertib* functions as the initial behavioral structure, providing clear rules and routines; *Aman* creates a psychologically safe and supportive environment that encourages participation; *Terkendali* strengthens students' self-regulation, enabling them to act independently without external supervision; and *Asri* serves as the visible outcome, reinforcing positive emotions such as comfort and pride. These values do

not operate linearly but rather cyclically, in which the experience of a clean and orderly environment (*Asri*) further reinforces students' motivation to maintain order (*Tertib*) and self-regulation (*Terkendali*). This integrative interaction offers a more holistic explanation of how school culture contributes to sustainable character formation.

Overall, the implementation of the TATA Program was experienced as a gradual process involving habituation, social interaction, and personal reflection. These experiences indicate that the internalization of environmental care values is shaped not only by structured activities but also by the meanings individuals construct through their everyday participation in the school environment. These findings align with Zein & Puspita (2021), who state that habituation and role modeling are important factors in the internalization of character values.

This dynamic interaction also explains the transformation observed in students' experiences, particularly the shift from externally driven behavior to internally motivated action. The alignment between moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action indicates that the internalization process occurs progressively through repeated experience, emotional engagement, and social interaction. This finding extends previous studies that emphasize habituation and role modeling (Hakiky et al., 2024; Haul et al., 2021; Sari & Wulandari, 2022) by demonstrating that value internalization is not merely the result of repetition, but a meaning-making process grounded in lived experiences that connect cognition, emotion, and action. This finding is also consistent with the framework of character development proposed by Thomas Lickona, which emphasizes the integration of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action as a unified and interrelated process in character formation (Francisca & Ajisuksmo, 2015).

However, this study also reveals important limitations. The internalization of environmental care values was not fully sustained outside the school context, particularly due to inconsistencies in habit formation within the family and students' pre-existing habits. In addition, limitations in facilities and resources affected the consistency of program implementation. These findings indicate that character education is context-dependent and requires alignment between school and home environments (Tsania & Rigianti, 2023). Therefore, future research is recommended to explore collaborative models between schools and families, as well as longitudinal approaches to examine the sustainability of value internalization over time.

In addition, resource constraints and the absence of structured reinforcement mechanisms were identified as factors influencing the program's sustainability (Yanto et al., 2022). These challenges indicate that the process of internalizing environmental care values is not solely determined by school-based efforts, but is also shaped by broader contextual influences. These findings reflect that the success of character education programs is experienced as a dynamic process, influenced by the interaction between internal school conditions and external environmental factors (Astuti et al., 2025). Rather than being linear, the process of value internalization unfolds through continuous negotiation between support and challenge within students' lived experiences.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature on character education by demonstrating that value internalization is not merely a linear process of habituation but a dynamic, cyclical interaction among structure, emotional engagement, and self-regulation within a cultural context. This extends existing models of character formation by emphasizing the role of lived experiences as a central mechanism in sustaining behavioral change.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the TATA Program contributes to the development of students' environmental care character through a gradual process of value internalization embedded in school culture. Rather than functioning as isolated rules, the values of Tertib (orderly), Aman (safe), Terkendali (self-regulated), and Asri (environmentally friendly) operate as an interconnected system. Tertib provides behavioral structure, Aman creates a supportive environment, Terkendali strengthens students' self-regulation, and Asri reinforces positive emotional experiences. This interaction forms a cyclical process that supports the integration of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action in a more sustainable way. Theoretically, this study shows that value internalization operates as a dynamic, cyclical process within school culture rather than a linear outcome of habituation.

These findings imply that character education programs are more effective when designed as holistic, culture-based practices rather than merely instructional activities. For broader implementation, schools are recommended to adopt structured habituation, strengthen teacher role modeling, and build consistent routines that allow students to experience values directly. In addition, collaboration with families is essential to ensure continuity of value internalization beyond the school environment. However, this study is limited by external factors, particularly the inconsistency of habituation across students' home environments and contextual constraints within a single school setting. Future research is therefore suggested to explore cross-context implementation and strategies for strengthening school-family partnerships to enhance the sustainability of character education outcomes. These findings highlight the importance of integrating culture-based approaches to sustain character education in primary schools.

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