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The Effect of Javanese Krama Alus Language Habituation on the Moral Intelligence of Children Aged 5-6 Years with Polite Language Behavior as a Mediator Variable

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of Javanese language habituation on the moral intelligence of children aged 5–6 years with language politeness behavior as a mediator variable. Previous studies have only explained the relationship between regional languages and character formation in general, but have not comprehensively studied the influence of Javanese habituation on moral intelligence based on the framework of moral intelligence and the mediation mechanism of polite language behavior. This research is based on Michele Borba's theory of moral intelligence which explains that children's moral development is built through the seven main virtues, as well as behavioristic which emphasizes the importance of habituation in shaping behavior. This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design involving 250 preschool-age children in the Madiun Residency area, East Java, Indonesia. Data was collected through questionnaires filled out by parents, then analyzed using mediation analysis in the JASP app. The results showed that the habituation of Javanese good krama had a positive and significant influence directly on children's moral intelligence ($\beta = 0.104$; $p = 0.005$). In addition, the habit of Javanese good manners was also shown to have a significant influence on language etiquette ($\beta = 0.370$; $p < 0.001$), while language etiquette had a very strong positive influence on children's moral intelligence ($\beta = 0.797$; $p < 0.001$). The results of the mediation test showed that language politeness significantly mediated the relationship between Javanese language habits and moral intelligence ($\beta = 0.295$; $p < 0.001$), thus indicating the existence of partial mediation. Findings This research makes a theoretical contribution by expanding the study of the relationship between local culture-based language and moral intelligence through the mediation mechanism of language manners, as well as providing practical contributions for teachers and parents in developing early childhood character education through habituation of the use of Javanese krama alus.

Keywords: Javanese; good manners; moral intelligence; polite language behavior; early childhood; caracter education

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1. Introduction

Character education in early childhood aims to develop children's ability to understand, appreciate, and apply moral values in daily life (Salam et al, 2022). According to Thomas Lickona, character formation includes moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behavior that develops through continuous learning experiences (Susanti, 2022). In this study, moral intelligence refers to Borba's theory in research (Pranoto, 2020) which is defined as the ability of individuals to distinguish right and wrong and act in accordance with moral values. The construct is operationalized into seven dimensions, namely empathy, conscience, self-control, respect, kindness, tolerance, and justice.

Politeness is a very basic and important element in the process of socializing with others, manners can be distinguished into two forms, namely politeness in language and politeness in behavior (Putrihapsari & Dimyati, 2021). Politeness in speaking and speaking is the most important part in shaping a person's character (Abidin, 2021). Janeko (2023) states that high and low civilizations in a society are reflected in the way they use language (Janeko dkk., 2023). A person's character can be reflected in the language they speak. If a person uses good, polite, and gentle language, then he tends to be considered a good and virtuous person. On the other hand, the use of disrespectful language can lead to negative judgments of a person. Thus, politeness in language can be used as one of the indicators in assessing a person's character (Khotimah & Hidayat, 2021).

In the context of Javanese culture, uploading in Javanese is a rule that applies in Javanese society in speaking and behaving, taking into account who is speaking, to whom the speech is delivered, and the situation behind it. The goal is to maintain politeness, so as to create an attitude of mutual respect and appreciation between individuals (Arfianingrum, 2020). In Javanese grammar, krama alus is a variety of language used as a form of respect for an older person or respected. Its use not only serves as a communication tool, but also as a medium for internalizing the values of manners, respect, and social ethics from an early age (Arfianingrum, 2020)

However, the reality in the field shows that the use of Javanese good krama in early childhood is increasingly rare (Fira, 2022). Children today are more familiar with non-formal Indonesian, foreign languages, and digital slang that tend to ignore local wisdom values (Stuart et al., 2025). Politeness in language is reflected in the use of good and appropriate words, not speaking in a high tone, and not shouting. Politeness in language is reflected in the use of good and appropriate words, not speaking in a high tone, and not shouting. Politeness in behavior is seen through respect and respect for others, not underestimating, and always being humble (Syahriyah & Habibah, 2023). In these cases, polite language behavior is seen as a factor that moderates the relationship between manners habits and moral intelligence. This means how strongly language habituation influences moral intelligence can be influenced by children's level of polite behavior in language. Children who consistently exhibit polite behavior in language are likely to show a stronger influence of language habituation on their moral intelligence.

Various studies show that the use of regional languages and local cultures contributes to character formation and early childhood moral development. Habituation of the Madurese language, integration of local culture in kindergartens, parenting based on local wisdom, and the use of Javanese language in the family are consistently reported to be able to increase children's politeness, proportional behavior, and moral values (Diana & Khotimah, 2021; Syafitri & Musayyadah, 2024; Utama & Dea, 2023; Febriani et al., 2025)

However, conceptually and methodologically, these studies still leave considerable room to study. First, the moral constructs used tend to be general and normative, and do not refer to the theoretical framework of structured moral intelligence. Morality is more often reduced to certain indicators of manners or social behavior, so it does not reflect the complexity of the moral dimension of children. Second, no research has been found that operationalizes the Javanese good manners as an independent variable that is quantitatively tested on all aspects of moral intelligence. Third, the integration between culture-based linguistic practices and modern moral intelligence theories is still relatively limited.

Based on this study, it can be emphasized that there has been no research that has thoroughly examined the influence of Javanese language habits on early childhood moral intelligence based on seven aspects of moral intelligence. Thus, this study fills the literature gap by integrating local culture-based linguistic practices into the theoretical framework of multidimensional moral intelligence and testing it through a measurable quantitative approach. The contribution of this research is expected not only to enrich the study of culture-based early childhood education, but also to expand the understanding of local languages as an instrument for the development of moral intelligence as a whole. Based on this description, this study examines the influence of Javanese language habits on the moral intelligence of children aged 5-6 years with language etiquette behavior as a mediator variable.

In this study, the purposive sampling technique was chosen because this study requires respondents who have certain characteristics in accordance with the research objectives. The sample was determined based on the criteria of children aged 5-6 years eleven months who live in the Madiun residency area and received parental assistance as respondents filling out the questionnaire. Therefore, this study proposes four hypotheses, namely: (H1) the habituation of the Javanese language krama alus has a positive effect on the moral intelligence of early childhood; (H2) the habituation of Javanese krama alus has a positive effect on language manners; (H3) language manners have a positive effect on

the moral intelligence of early childhood; and (H4) language manners me diated the influence of Javanese language habituation on early childhood moral intelligence. The results of this study are expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of early childhood character education studies and become a practical reference for educators in implementing local culture-based language habits.

2. Methodology

The research design used by the authors in this study is explanatory research. Explanatory research in quantitative research is a type of research that aims to explain the cause and effect relationship, or causality, between one variable and another. Creswell (2014) stated that quantitative research that is explanatory aims to test theories by examining the relationships between variables through numerical data collection and statistical analysis. This design was considered appropriate because the study did not merely intend to describe the phenomenon of Javanese language habituation and children's moral intelligence, but sought to explain how and why one variable influences the other through a structured, testable model. This study aims to test whether there is a direct influence of Javanese language habituation on the moral intelligence of children aged 5 to 6 years, as well as whether this influence occurs indirectly through the behavior of language manners as a mediating variable in these relationships.

To test the research hypothesis, the researcher used a statistical test. Prior to hypothesis testing, the instrument was first tested for validity and reliability to ensure that each statement item was suitable for use as a measuring tool, with the analysis conducted through SPSS 24.0. Validity testing was carried out to determine whether each item in the instrument was genuinely capable of measuring the construct it was intended to measure, so that items which did not meet the required correlation threshold could be identified before the data were used for further analysis. The reliability of the instrument was then tested using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, a widely used measure of internal consistency among items. An instrument is declared reliable if it produces a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.60 or higher, and only an instrument meeting this threshold was considered suitable for research data collection in this study.

Once the instrument had been confirmed as both valid and reliable, hypothesis testing was carried out using an appropriate statistical procedure. Because the research hypothesis involved a mediator variable, the data were analyzed using Mediation Analysis in the JASP application, which allowed the researcher to examine the direct influence, the indirect influence, and the mediating role of language manners within a single integrated model. This approach made it possible to determine not only whether Javanese language habituation influenced moral intelligence on its own, but also the extent to which this influence was channeled through children's polite language behavior. The significance level used throughout this study was set at 0.05, consistent with the conventional threshold applied in social science research for determining statistically meaningful relationships among variables.

2.1. Samples

The sampling technique used is purposive sampling so that the data obtained is in accordance with the characteristics of the target population and relevant to test the relationship between the variables being studied. The research sample is determined through purposive sampling techniques by referring to the criteria that have been set in accordance with the research objectives. Children aged 5–6 years were chosen because at this stage of development language skills and moral intelligence have developed so that they are in accordance with the focus of the research. The sample in this study involved parents of 250 children from eleven preschool institutions in the districts of Ponorogo and

Magetan to fill out a questionnaire from the researcher. The number of samples in this study was 250 children (112 males and 138 females), samples taken between March and April 2026.

The sample was in accordance with the inclusion criteria, namely children aged 5-6 years, children with Javanese cultural backgrounds, children living in the East Java region, especially in the Madiun residence, children who were registered as students in preschool institutions, parents who lived in the same house as children and had intensive interaction with children. The exclusion criteria in this study were children who were outside the age range of 5-6 years, children who did not have a Javanese cultural background, children who were not exposed to the Javanese language in daily life, parents who rarely interacted with children

2.2. Institutions

The data collection technique was carried out through the distribution of questionnaires to students' parents. The questionnaire was compiled by the researcher in the form of a Google Form and distributed online in carrying out this research, all procedures were carried out in compliance with the applicable research code of ethics. The researcher ensured that the participation of each informant was based on voluntariness through filling out an informed consent form at the beginning of the session. In order to protect privacy and maintain confidentiality, the informant's real identity has been changed to an initial code in this article's report. Parents are asked to fill out a questionnaire based on the results of observations of children's behavior in daily life. The use of parents as respondents is based on the consideration that parents have a high intensity of interaction with children so that they can provide a more accurate assessment of children's language habits and moral behavior.

2.3. Javanese language instrument Krama alus

The research instrument consisted of three questionnaires, namely Javanese habituation, good manners, language manners, and moral intelligence. The Javanese krama alus habituation questionnaire is a tool adapted from research (Arfianingrum, 2020). I This instrument aims to measure the extent to which children are accustomed to using Javanese good manners in daily interactions, especially when communicating with older people or respected people. This indicator is used to reflect the habit of using the Javanese language in various situations where before being used, the instrument is reviewed by experts to assess the suitability of the item with variable indicators, language clarity, and content relevance. Input from validators is used as a basis for improving the redaction and substance of the instrument items. After testing through SPSS software with a sample of 90 children with a total of 9 items, an Alpha Cronbach value of 0.612 with a reliability value of 0.60 was obtained and there were two items that were declared invalid. It was found that two items died because they were invalid after the adaptation of the instrument, so the researchers used 7 valid items. The reliability value of 0.612 was maintained because it was still above the minimum limit of 0.60 declared sufficient for research at the exploratory stage or adapted instruments.

2.4. Instruments of Moral Intelligence

The scale of measuring moral intelligence is adapted from an instrument developed by (Pranoto et al., 2021) which is based on the seven dimensions of moral intelligence according to Borba. This instrument is used to measure the level of children's ability to understand and apply moral values in daily life. Moral intelligence in this study is operationalized into seven main aspects, namely empathy, conscience, self-control, respect, kindness, tolerance, and justice. Each aspect is described in several behavioral indicators that correspond to the characteristics of early childhood, which have previously been tested for validity by child psychologists and early childhood education experts. After a trial with a sample of 90 children, an Alfa Cronbach value of 0.875 with a reliability value of 0.60 was obtained. Of the original 14 items, 1 item was found to be invalid so the researchers used 13 valid items.

2.3 Language politeness behavior instruments

The measurement scale of language politeness behavior was developed based on indicators of language politeness relevant to the characteristics of early childhood using research instruments from (Suratiyah et al., 2024) and then expertly validated by child psychologists and early childhood education experts. After testing with a sample of 90 children, Alfa Cronbach was obtained at 0.813 with a reliability value of 0.60 and no invalid items were found, so the researchers used 6 items as the original version.

Data analysis was carried out using JASP software with the Mediation Analysis method to test whether language politeness plays a mediator variable in the relationship between Javanese habituation and moral intelligence of children aged 5–6 years. The analysis model was prepared by determining the habituation of Javanese krama alus as an independent variable (X), language politeness as a mediator variable (M), and moral intelligence as a dependent variable (Y). Parameter estimation is carried out based on standardized path coefficients with a confidence interval of 95%. Furthermore, the test focused on the identification of direct effects, indirect effects, and determination of the mediating role of mediator variables using a significance level of 0.05.

3. Results

Based on the results of the data analysis, before testing the hypothesis, the instrument is tested for validity and reliability to ensure that each statement item is suitable for use as a measuring tool through SPSS 24.0. A validity test is a test used to determine whether a question and statement that needs to be examined is valid. An item is declared valid if r is calculated > r table, whereas if r is calculated < r table, then the item is invalid. In this study with 250 respondents, the sample was declared valid, meaning every statement item in the instrument met the required correlation threshold and could be retained for further analysis without any item needing to be dropped or revised.

Once validity was confirmed, the instrument was subjected to a reliability test to assess the internal consistency of the items in measuring the intended construct. This test relied on the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, where a value above 0.60 is generally considered acceptable and a value approaching or exceeding 0.70 indicates good reliability. The analysis produced a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.738 across 7 items, drawn from a complete dataset of 250 respondents with no cases excluded through listwise deletion. This figure places the instrument comfortably within the reliable category, suggesting that respondents interpreted and responded to the statements in a consistent manner and that the instrument can be trusted to produce stable measurements if administered again under similar conditions.

Table 1
Instrument Reliability Test Results

Number of Respondents	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Remarks
250	7	0.738	Reliable

Based on the mediation analysis through the JASP application, several findings were obtained that explained the relationship between Javanese language habits, polite language behavior, and moral intelligence of children aged 5–6 years.

3.2. The Influence of Javanese Krama Alus Language Habituation on the Moral Intelligence of Children Aged 5-6 Years

To further examine these relationships, a path analysis was conducted to estimate the strength and significance of the direct effects among the three variables under study, namely Javanese krama alus language habituation, polite language behavior, and moral intelligence. This analysis produced standardized path coefficients along with their standard errors, z-values, p-values, and 95% confidence

intervals, which together indicate both the magnitude and the statistical significance of each hypothesized relationship. The complete results of this path analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Path Coefficients

Path	Std. Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Santun Berbahasa → Kecerdasan Moral	0.797	0.025	31.540	< .001	0.748	0.847
Pemb. BJ → Kecerdasan Moral	0.104	0.037	2.803	.005	0.031	0.176
Pemb. BJ → Santun Berbahasa	0.370	0.055	6.776	< .001	0.263	0.478

Based on the mapping in the first table, Habituation of Javanese Krama Alus on children's moral intelligence, the results of the analysis of the direc t effects on JASP, show that the habituation of Javanese krama alus has a direct positive influence on children's moral intelligence. This is indicated by the standard coefficient value of 0.104 with a significance value of 0.005. In addition, the 95% confidence interval was in the range of 0.031 to 0.176, suggesting that the influence was statistically significant. These findings show that the higher the habit of using Javanese good manners, the greater the moral intelligence of children tends to increase.

3.3. The Influence of Javanese Language Habituation Krama Alus on Language Politeness Behavior

Habituation Habituation of Krama Alus Jawa towards Polite Behavior, the results of the JASP analysis show that the Habituation of Krama Alus Jawa has a positive and significant effect on Polite Behavior. The standard coefficient value is 0.370, with a p value < 0.001. The value of the 95% confidence interval is in the range of 0.263 to 0.478, which does not go past zero. This means that the higher the Javanese Krama alus custom that is applied, the higher the polite behavior of children. Thus, the custom of Javanese good manners has been proven to have a significant influence on language procedures.

3.4. The Influence of Language Behavior on the Moral Intelligence of Children Aged 5-6 Years

Polite Behavior in Language to Moral Intelligence. From the analysis, it is shown that Language Etiquette has a positive and significant influence on Moral Intelligence. The value of the standard path coefficient is 0. 797, with z = 31.540 and p < 0.001. The value of the 95% confidence interval is in the range of 0.748 to 0.847, which does not go past zero. This means that the higher the child's polite behavior in language, the higher the child's moral intelligence. Thus, grammar has been shown to make a very strong contribution to the improvement of moral intelligence.

Table 3
Indirect Effects

Path	Std. Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Pemb. BJ → Santun Berbahasa → Kecerdasan Moral	0.295	0.044	6.672	< .001	0.209	0.382

The results of the indirect effects analysis in Table 3 show that Javanese krama alus habituation also significantly influences children's moral intelligence through polite language behavior as a mediating variable. This indirect pathway produced a standardized coefficient of 0.295, z = 6.672, p < .001, with a 95% confidence interval of 0.209 to 0.382 that did not cross zero, confirming a statistically significant mediation effect. Together with the direct effects reported earlier, these findings indicate that

polite language behavior partially mediates the relationship between language habituation and moral intelligence, meaning habituation shapes children's moral intelligence both directly and through the politeness it cultivates.

3.5. The Effect of Habituation of Javanese Language Krama Alus on the Moral Intelligence of Children Aged 5-6 Years through Polite Language Behavior

The results of the indirect effect analysis show that the habituation of the Javanese language from Krama Alus has a significant indirect influence on Moral Intelligence through Language Procedures. There is an indirect influence through the mediator variable, namely language etiquette. The value of the indirect influence coefficient was 0.295 with a significance of $p < 0.001$ and a 95% confidence interval in the range of 0.209 to 0.382. This shows that language politeness significantly mediates the relationship between Javanese language habits and children's moral intelligence. In other words, language habituation not only has a direct impact, but also works through the formation of polite behavior in language. These findings suggest that language manners act as a partial mediator in the relationship between Javanese language habits and moral intelligence. This means that the influence of language habituation on moral intelligence is not entirely through mediators, but also has a direct path of influence.

Based on the results of the data analysis, before testing the hypothesis, the instrument is tested for validity and reliability to ensure that each statement item is suitable for use as a measuring tool through SPSS 24.0. A validity test is a test used to determine whether a question and statement that needs to be examined is valid. An item is declared valid if r is calculated > r table, whereas if r is calculated < r table, then the item is invalid. In this study with 250 respondents, the sample was declared valid. Based on the mediation analysis through the JASP application, several findings were obtained that explained the relationship between Javanese language habits, polite language behavior, and moral intelligence of children aged 5–6 years.

Table 4
Results Research findings

No.	Variable Relationships	Results	Conclusion
1	Habituation of Javanese Krama Alus → Moral intelligence	β = 0,104; p = 0.005	It has a positive and significant effect. The higher the habituation of the Javanese language of good manners, the higher the moral intelligence of the child
2	Habituation of Javanese Language Krama Alus → Polite Language Behavior	β = 0,370; p < 0.001	It has a positive and significant effect. Habituation of Javanese language krama alus increases children's language manners
3	Language Manners → Moral Intelligence	β = 0,797; p < 0.001	Positive and significant influence with the strongest influence on moral intelligence
4	Javanese Language Habituation Krama Alus → Polite Language Behavior → Moral Intelligence	β = 0,295; p < 0.001	Language politeness behavior partially mediates the relationship between Javanese habituation krama alus and children's moral intelligence

Based on the mapping in the table 4, Habituation of Javanese Krama Alus on children's moral intelligence, the results of the analysis of the direct effects on JASP, show that the habituation of Javanese krama alus has a direct positive influence on children's moral intelligence. This is indicated by the standard coefficient value of 0.104 with a significance value of 0.005. In addition, the 95%

confidence interval was in the range of 0.031 to 0.176, These findings show that the habituation of using Javanese krama alus functions as a medium for internalizing moral values, not just as a means of communication. The use of good manners for children to consider their age, social status, and relationship with the opponent before speaking. This process trains the ability to take other people's perspectives, control impulses in communication, and show respect consistently. Thus, repeated language habits not only form linguistic competence, but also develop aspects of moral intelligence such as empathy, respect, and self-control.

Habituation of Krama Alus Jawa towards Polite Behavior, the results of the JASP analysis show that the Habituation of Krama Alus Jawa has a positive and significant effect on Polite Behavior. The standard coefficient value is 0.370, with a p value < 0.001. The value of the 95% confidence interval is in the range of 0.263 to 0.478, which does not go past zero. This means that the higher the Javanese Krama alus custom that is applied, the higher the polite behavior of children. Thus, the custom of Javanese good manners has been proven to have a significant influence on language procedures.

Polite Behavior in Language to Moral Intelligence. From the analysis, it is shown that Language Etiquette has a positive and significant influence on Moral Intelligence. The value of the standard path coefficient is 0.797, with z = 31.540 and p < 0.001. The value of the 95% confidence interval is in the range of 0.748 to 0.847, which does not go past zero. The large coefficient of the path shows that language behavior is the closest behavioral indicator to the implementation of moral intelligence. This indicates that moral values in children are not enough to be possessed only as knowledge, but must be seen in real actions when interacting with others. Children who are able to choose words politely, respect the person they are talking to, and control how they speak show that the values of empathy, respect, and self-control have been internalized in everyday behavior. Therefore, linguistic manners can be seen as a concrete manifestation of moral intelligence.

The results of the indirect effect analysis show that the habituation of the Javanese language from Krama Alus has a significant indirect influence on Moral Intelligence through Language Procedures. There is an indirect influence through the mediator variable, namely language etiquette. The value of the indirect influence coefficient was 0.295 with a significance of p < 0.001 and a 95% confidence interval in the range of 0.209 to 0.382. This shows that language politeness significantly mediates the relationship between Javanese language habits and children's moral intelligence. In other words, language habituation not only has a direct impact, but also works through the formation of polite behavior in language. These findings suggest that language manners act as a partial mediator in the relationship between Javanese language habits a nd moral intelligence. This shows that the habituation of using the Javanese language does not directly result in an increase in children's moral intelligence. This influence is first manifested through the formation of polite behavior in language, which then contributes to the development of moral intelligence. Thus, language manners act as a mechanism that connects the process of internalizing cultural values with the manifestation of moral behavior. This result indicates that the effectiveness of language habituation is not only determined by the frequency of the use of good manners, but also by the consistency of children in applying the values of politeness to every social interaction. Therefore, if habituation only focuses on mastering the form of language without being followed by the implementation of respect, appreciation, and empathy for others, then its contribution to the formation of moral intelligence becomes less than optimal.

The dominance of indirect influence over direct influence shows that changes in children's moral intelligence are more influenced by the process of internalizing values reflected in behavior than simply habituation of language use. These findings indicate that the Javanese language is good and functions as a means to instill the values of politeness, while the polite behavior of language is a tangible manifestation of these values in social interaction. Thus, moral intelligence develops when children are not only accustomed to using good manners, but are also able to apply the values of

respect, empathy, and self-control in daily life. This explains why the indirect influence through the behavior of language politeness is greater than the direct influence of the habituation of the Javanese language krama alus on moral intelligence.

4. Discussion

The results of the study show that the habit of using Javanese good manners affects the moral intelligence of early childhood, both directly and through language. The results of the study showed that the habituation of Javanese good manners had a positive and significant effect on moral intelligence in early childhood with a coefficient value of $\beta = 0.104$ and $p = 0.005$. These findings show that language is not only used as a means of communication, but also acts as a medium to instill cultural and moral values in children's daily lives. (Diana & Khotimah, 2021).

These findings show that language not only serves as a means of communication, but also as a medium to internalize cultural and moral values in children's daily lives. In the context of Javanese culture, the use of krama alus contains the values of respect, self-control, and social ethics that gradually shape children's behavior patterns (Arfianingrum, 2020). In theory, these findings can be explained through behavioristic and sociocultural approaches. The habit of using repeated polite language allows children to form specific behavioral responses through the conditioning process. Early childhood is at an artificial stage so that the language patterns used in the family and school environment are easily absorbed and reproduced in everyday social interactions. In addition, the sociocultural approach views that children's moral development is formed through social interactions that occur in a particular cultural environment (Pranoto et al., 2021). Krama alus Javanese as part of local culture is a means to convey social values such as respect, politeness, and appreciation for others(Putrihapsari & Dimyati, 2021).

The results of the mediation analysis showed that Javanese language habituation had a significant indirect influence on the moral intelligence of children aged 5–6 years through polite behavior in the β language = 0.295; Std.E = 0.044; z-value = 6.672; $p < 0.001$ with a 95% Confidence Interval in the range of 0.209 to 0.382. Because trust intervals do not include zero, language etiquette has been shown to play an important r ole in the relationship.

The magnitude of the indirect influence of 0.295 which exceeds the direct influence of 0.104 indicates that most of the influence of Javanese habituation on moral intelligence occurs through the formation of polite language behavior. These findings confirm that the habit of using Javanese good manners not only improves children's language skills, but also forms polite communication behaviors. In Javanese culture, the language of manners contains the values of upload-ungguh, respect, andhap asor, and empathy for the interlocutor. According to Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, children's moral development is formed through social interaction and repeated internalization of culturally accepted values. Thus, when children become accustomed to using respectful language, they gradually internalize the moral values contained in it (Vygotsky, 1978)

Polite behavior in language that develops through these habits then contributes to the increase in moral intelligence. The moral intelligence theory proposed by Michele Borba explains that moral intelligence includes the ability to understand and apply universal virtues such as empathy, respect, tolerance, and self-control. Children who are used to speaking politely tend to be more able to respect others, control emotions, and act according to social norms (Pranoto, 2020).

The results of this study are also in line with Albert Bandura's social learning theory which states that children learn behavior through the process of observation, imitation, and reinforcement. When teachers and parents consistently provide examples of the use of good manners, children will imitate these communication patterns and develop them into behavioral habits that reflect moral values. Thus, language politeness behavior functions as a psychological mechanism that bridges the influence of Javanese language habits on children's moral intelligence (Bandura, 1977)

The direct influence of Javanese habituation on moral intelligence was found to be relatively small compared to the indirect influence through polite language behavior. This suggests that the use of good manners does not always automatically form moral intelligence if it is not accompanied by supportive social experiences. Children may be accustomed to using polite language, but they may not yet fully understand the moral meaning of the use of such language. Thus, the internalization of moral values does not stop at the ability to use language, but needs to be realized in real social behavior (Susanti, 2022).

The politeness of language in this study was shown to make a very strong contribution to children's moral intelligence. These findings suggest that politeness in language is a concrete form of applying moral values in everyday life. Children who are used to speaking politely tend to be better able to show respect to others, control emotions, and maintain harmonious social relationships. In this case, language etiquette not only represents communication skills, but also reflects children's ability to apply the values of empathy, respect, and self-control (Nuraini, 2021; Suratiyah et al., 2024). The magnitude of the influence of language behavior on moral intelligence shows that early childhood moral development is more effectively formed through real behavioral experiences than abstract moral learning. Language politeness is a form of applying moral values in communication because it reflects respect, ethics, and respect for others. Therefore, language politeness is seen as one of the important indicators in the development of children's character (Wardhana & Noermanzah, 2021).

This study also emphasizes that the effectiveness of moral character formation does not only depend on verbal delivery of moral knowledge, but is more determined by habituation that provides direct experience to children. Through these concrete experiences, children are more likely to internalize, understand, and internalize moral values so that they are reflected in their behavior in daily lifeChildren from an early age tend to understand moral values through actions and habits that are repeated in daily social interactions, not just through verbal explanations of the concepts of right and wrong (Gusmayanti, 2021). The effectiveness of character education in early childhood depends on the sustainability of positive behavior habits that are consistently applied by teachers and parents. Through this process, children gain a foundation to develop honest, responsible, and social behaviors that reflect moral values in social life (Whardana & Noermanzah, 2021)

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The role of language behavior as a partial mediator shows that language habituation works through the process of internalizing values before finally forming the child's moral intelligence. This means that the habituation of Javanese good manners will be more effective if followed by polite communication practices that are carried out consistently in daily interactions. These findings reinforce the view that moral education in early childhood is not enough just through verbal knowledge or habituation, but requires real application in social behavior (Borba, 2021; Susanti, 2022). The findings of this study also show that local languages have great potential as a means of culture-based character education. Krama alus Javanese not only teaches linguistic structure, but also contains social ethical values that are relevant to the moral development of early childhood (Syafitri & Musayyadah, 2024). Therefore, the habituation of using regional languages in the family environment and educational

institutions can be a strategy to strengthen the formation of children's character while preserving local culture.

The study expands on the results of previous research that stated that the use of regional languages contributes to the formation of moral values and character in early childhood (Diana & Khotimah, 2021). However, this study makes a new contribution by showing that the influence of language habituation on moral intelligence occurs through the mechanism of language habits. Thus, the study expands the study of the relationship between language, culture, and early childhood moral development. In addition, this study also has limitations in the Javanese krama alus habituation instrument which shows a reliability value of Cronbach's Alpha of 0.612, so it is marginal even though it still meets the minimum limit of reliability used in this study. Therefore, the results of the measurement of these variables need to be interpreted carefully and further research is recommended to develop and improve the instrument to obtain a higher level of reliability.

Overall, the results of this study confirm that Javanese language habituation can be an effective strategy in the development of moral intelligence in early childhood if accompanied by the formation of consistent language procedures. These findings show that PAUD teachers and parents can utilize the habituation of Javanese good manners as a contextual character education strategy, by emphasizing the practice of polite communication consistently in daily interactions. Local language in this case not only functions as a means of communication, but also as a medium for character formation and internalization of moral values based on local culture.

5. Conclusion

This study shows that the habituation of using Javanese krama alus affects the moral intelligence of children aged 5-6 years, either directly or through polite language behavior. The findings of the study show that polite behavior in language acts as a partial mediator, so that the habituation of the Javanese language will be more effective in forming moral intelligence if followed by the application of polite behavior in daily life. This shows that the use of Javanese krama alus not only functions as a means of communication, but also as a means to instill moral values in children.

The results of this study provide the implication that parents and teachers need to get used to the consistent use of Javanese krama allah, accompanied by providing examples of polite behavior in various situations. Thus, children are not only accustomed to using polite language, but also able to apply the values of respect, appreciation, and empathy in social interactions. This study still has limitations because it only involves children aged 5-6 years in the Madiun Residency area. Therefore, further research can be carried out in a wider area by involving more diverse characteristics of respondents. In addition, subsequent research can examine other factors that are suspected to affect children's moral intelligence, such as parenting patterns, school culture, and social environment, so as to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the development of moral intelligence in early childhood.

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