

THE PRINCIPAL'S STRATEGY IN CULTIVATING STUDENTS' DISCIPLINE CHARACTER AT THE INDONESIAN SCHOOL IN KUALA LUMPUR MALAYSIA

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis berbagai strategi yang digunakan oleh kepala sekolah dalam menumbuhkan karakter disiplin siswa di sekolah-sekolah Indonesia di Kuala Lumpur. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah studi kualitatif dengan melakukan wawancara dan observasi terhadap beberapa guru dan kepala sekolah di sekolah-sekolah Indonesia di Kuala Lumpur. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ada beberapa strategi yang umum digunakan, antara lain menetapkan aturan sekolah yang jelas, penerapan sanksi dan penghargaan yang konsisten, melibatkan orang tua dalam membangun karakter siswa, dan menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang mendukung. Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah peran penting kepala sekolah dalam membentuk karakter disiplin siswa dan perlunya implementasi strategi yang komprehensif dan konsisten. Diharapkan penelitian ini dapat berkontribusi dalam pengembangan pendidikan karakter di sekolah-sekolah Indonesia di Kuala Lumpur. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepala sekolah memiliki peran yang sangat penting dalam menumbuhkan karakter disiplin siswa di sekolah. Mereka menggunakan berbagai strategi, termasuk menetapkan aturan sekolah yang jelas, penerapan sanksi dan penghargaan yang konsisten, melibatkan orang tua, dan menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang mendukung. Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah pentingnya peran kepala sekolah dan perlunya menerapkan strategi yang komprehensif dan konsisten dalam membentuk karakter disiplin siswa.

Kata Kunci: Strategi Kepala Sekolah, Sekolah Indonesia di Kuala Lumpur, Karakter Disiplin.

ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze various strategies used by school principals in cultivating students' disciplined character in Indonesian schools in Kuala Lumpur. The research method used was a qualitative study by conducting interviews and observations of several school teachers and principals at Indonesian schools in

Kuala Lumpur. The research results show that there are several strategies that are commonly used, including establishing clear school rules, consistent application of sanctions and rewards, involving parents in building student character, and creating a supportive learning environment. The implication of this research is the important role of school principals in shaping students' disciplinary character and the need for comprehensive and consistent implementation of strategies. It is hoped that this research can contribute to the development of character education in Indonesian schools in Kuala Lumpur. The research results show that the principal has a very important role in cultivating the disciplined character of students at school. They use a variety of strategies, including establishing clear school rules, consistent application of sanctions and rewards, involving parents, and creating a supportive learning environment. The implication of this research is the importance of the role of the school principal and the need to implement comprehensive and consistent strategies in shaping students' disciplinary character.

Keywords: *Principal Strategy, Indonesian School in Kuala Lumpur, Discipline Character.*

INTRODUCTION

In the context of education, discipline character is one of the most important aspects in shaping quality and integrity in students. The principal plays a central role in designing and implementing effective strategies to cultivate discipline character in students. Through visionary and strategic leadership, the principal can create a conducive learning environment and build a school culture that values discipline.¹

Discipline character is one of the fundamental aspects in shaping students' personalities, serving as an entry point for the development of other characters.² The formation of disciplined character in students is a shared responsibility among all components of education, with the principal as the leader who plays a strategic role in nurturing and developing these character values. Discipline is not only related to obedience to rules, but more broadly concerns students' behavior that demonstrates adherence to norms and regulations in the school environment.³ Through strong discipline, it is hoped that other values such as responsibility,

¹ Thomas Lickona, "Character Matters: How to Help Our Children Develop Good Judgment, Integrity, and Other Essential Virtues," *Angle Orthodontist* 78, no. 4 (2004), <https://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/999956127802121>.

² A. Mufliha, I., Syawal, D. I., & Setiawan, "Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter Thomas Lickona Dengan Pendekatan Kelompok Psikoedukasi Melalui Program Edutrans.," *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* 8, no. 2 (2024): 32960–32967, <https://jptam.org/index.php/jptam/article/view/18510>.

³ Mahmudi, *Ilmu Pendidikan Mengupas Komponen Pendidikan* (Yogyakarta: Cv Budi Utama, 2022).

honesty, and social concern will grow, which are important assets for students in facing global challenges.⁴

Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur (SIKL), as one of the Indonesian schools abroad, holds a unique and strategic position in maintaining and strengthening the national identity of Indonesian students studying in Malaysia.⁵ As an educational institution located in a foreign country, SIKL not only serves as a place for the transfer of knowledge but also as a second home for the formation of character and Indonesian values among its students.⁶ Nevertheless, the multicultural conditions and local environmental influences present unique challenges in the effort to cultivate a disciplined character that aligns with the values of Indonesian national education.⁷

Research on school principals' strategies to improve student discipline has been widely conducted in the context of domestic schools.⁸ Some commonly applied strategies include setting an example, providing motivation, and fostering good cooperation with school members.⁹ However, there is still a significant research gap regarding how school principals' strategies in fostering discipline character in the context of Indonesian schools abroad, which have different characteristics and challenges compared to domestic schools. The uniqueness of SIKL, situated in the multicultural environment of Malaysia with various external influences that could potentially erode national identity values, gives this research a specificity that has not been extensively explored in previous studies.

⁴ Muchammad Ibnu Muzakir, "IMPLEMENTASI KURIKULUM OUTCOME BASED EDUCATION (OBE) DALAM SISTEM PENDIDIKAN TINGGI DI ERA REVOLUSI INDUSTRI 4.0," *Edukasiana: Journal*, vol. 2, 2023, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.61159/edukasiana.v2i1.86>.

⁵ Tiara Sevi Nurmanita et al., "PENDIDIKAN MULTIKULTURAL DALAM MENGUATKAN IDENTITAS NASIONAL SISWA DI LUAR NEGERI: PERSPEKTIF GURU DAN SISWA DI SEKOLAH INDONESIA MALAYSIA DAN SINGAPURA INFO ARTIKEL ABSTRAK" 15, no. 4 (2024): 329–39, <https://doi.org/10.31764>.

⁶ Muchammad Ibnu Muzakir et al., "Peran Guru Sebagai Motivator Belajar Dan Menanamkan Jiwa Nasionalisme Peserta Didik Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur (SIKL)," *Indo-MathEdu Intellectuals Journal* 5, no. 2 (April 30, 2024): 1903–15, <https://doi.org/10.54373/imeij.v5i2.894>.

⁷ Uun Fitriyani et al., "Strategi Pembelajaran Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur (SIKL) Di Era New Normal," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Dasar* 8, no. 1 (2021): 75–82, <http://ejournal.radenintan.ac.id/index.php/terampil/index>.

⁸ Fitriani Prilia Sofyan, Alwi dan Wardani, "Pengembangan Disiplin Sekolah Berbasis Karakter," *Seminar Nasional Pendidikan Dan Kewirausahaan (SNPK 2020)* 01, no. 2620–9284 (2016): 1–23; Sidik Sahril, "Strategi Kepala Sekolah Dalam Menumbuhkan Kedisiplinan Siswa Di SMPN 1 Tanjung Tiga Kecamatan Semende Darat Ulu Kabupaten Muara Enim," 2022, 1–23.

⁹ W Zamroh, S Mustar, and D P Putri, "Strategi Kepala Sekolah Dalam Meningkatkan Disiplin Kerja Guru Pada SDN 85 Lebong, Kec. Pinang Belapis, Kab. Lebong," *Skripsi* (2020), http://e-theses.iaincurup.ac.id/id/eprint/2489%0Ahttp://e-theses.iaincurup.ac.id/2489/1/skripsi_walia_zamroh.pdf.

An interesting phenomenon at SIKL is how the school strives to maintain and cultivate the character of student discipline amidst various local cultural influences. The principal of SIKL has initiated various strategies, such as making members of the Paskibra and Scouts pioneers of school discipline.¹⁰ However, as explained in previous research findings, efforts to improve students' discipline character are always faced with challenges such as the lack of self-awareness among the students themselves and the less supportive external environmental factors.¹¹ This situation becomes even more complex considering that the students at SIKL are in an environment where the values and culture do not always align with the discipline values that the school aims to instill.

The urgency of conducting this research lies in the need to identify and analyze effective strategies of school principals in fostering student discipline character in the context of Indonesian schools abroad, particularly SIKL. The findings of this research are expected to serve as a reference for the development of student discipline enhancement models in other Indonesian schools abroad with similar characteristics. Furthermore, this research holds strategic value in supporting the development of character education that aligns with Pancasila values amidst the currents of globalization and multiculturalism.¹²

Based on that background, this study aims to analyze the principal's strategies in fostering student discipline character at Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur. More specifically, the objectives of this research are: (1) to identify the strategies implemented by the principal of SIKL in fostering students' discipline character; (2) to analyze the implementation of the principal's strategies in fostering students' discipline character; and (3) to evaluate the effectiveness of the principal's strategies in fostering students' discipline character at SIKL. Through this research, it is expected that a comprehensive and applicable model of school principal strategies can be formulated to foster student discipline character in the context of Indonesian schools abroad.

¹⁰ sekolahindonesia.edu.my, "Kepsek: Anggota Paskibra Dan Pramuka Menjadi Pelopor Disiplin Sekolah," n.d., <https://sekolahindonesia.edu.my/web2/kepsek-anggota-paskibra-dan-pramuka-menjadi-pelopor-disiplin-sekolah/>.

¹¹ Djuanita Lius Pinta and Universitas Cokroaminoto Palopo, "Analisis Faktor Penyebab Rendahnya Karakter Disiplin Pada Siswa Kelas III UPT SD Negeri 010 Rante Bone Kabupaten Luwu Utara" 5 (2024), <http://prosiding.unipma.ac.id/index.php/KID>.

¹² Fitriyani et al., "Strategi Pembelajaran Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur (SIKL) Di Era New Normal."

METHOD

The research method uses qualitative research by comprehensively describing the implementation of the mu'adalah curriculum through interviews, observations, and documentation activities. Descriptive research is a type of research aimed at explaining a depiction of existing events, whether natural occurrences or human-made events.¹³ Qualitative research can be described as an activity structured to capture the interpretive practices of respondents and informants regarding the world. Creswell explains that the general purpose of qualitative research includes information about the main phenomena explored in the study, research participants, and research locations.¹⁴ The method used in data collection for this research is through data triangulation as follows: (observation, interviews, and documentation).¹⁵

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research results show that the principal at the Indonesian School in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, implements various effective strategies in fostering students' discipline character. These strategies include:

Consistent Implementation of Rules and Policies

The implementation of consistent rules and policies has become one of the main pillars in fostering students' disciplined character. The principal has implemented clear and consistent school rules and policies related to student discipline. This includes regulations on tardiness, uniforms, classroom conduct, and other disciplinary actions. Even the principal always monitors every activity that takes place at the school, such as overseeing the program to welcome students at the front of the school as an appreciation for those who arrive on time, and the principal also sets an example for other teachers to arrive early to ensure this discipline is upheld. So that the students feel appreciated for arriving on time at school.

For example, the principal plays a role in controlling and supervising the welcoming activities for students in front of the school as a form of appreciation for those who arrive on time. This is not just a form of appreciation for student discipline, but also a way to instill the importance of punctuality as part of the discipline values that every student needs to possess. The leadership of the principal in this matter is very significant, as they set a direct example for all staff, especially

¹³ I Made Indra and Ika Cahyaningrum, *Cara Mudah Memahami Metodologi Penelitian* (Yogyakarta: Deepublish, 2019).

¹⁴ Ajat Rukajat, *Pendekatan Penelitian Kualitatif* (Sleman: Deepublish, 2018).

¹⁵ Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif Dan R&D* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2010).

teachers, to arrive early. This aims to cultivate a culture of discipline that is not only applied to students but also demonstrated by all members of the school community, including educators.

Character and Ethics Development

The principal at SIKL not only focuses on discipline within the context of rigid rules but also develops a more holistic character and ethics development program for students. This program includes a good approach in both the formal curriculum and extracurricular activities. Through character building, students are not only taught the importance of discipline but also deeper ethical values such as responsibility, integrity, hard work, and respect for differences.

One form of character building that is carried out is through the integration of discipline values in various subjects, where students are not only taught academic knowledge but also how to manage their time, complete tasks on time, and respect the rights of others. Extracurricular activities, which are often conducted outside of formal class hours, also serve as an effective means to strengthen the values of discipline and ethics within students. Through these activities, students learn to cooperate, respect rules, and face challenges with a positive and responsible attitude.

Collaboration with Teachers and Parents

The formation of disciplined character cannot be done solely by the school without involving the role of parents and the surrounding community. The principal at SIKL views the importance of close collaboration between teachers, parents, and all related parties in order to build consistency in the application of disciplinary values. Therefore, the principal always encourages the creation of open communication between the school and parents. Through regular meetings, discussions, and good cooperation between both parties, students' disciplinary behavior patterns can be consistently maintained both at school and at home.

In addition, the principal also recognizes the importance of constructive feedback from parents regarding the development of their children's discipline. This allows for adjustments and evaluations of the approaches used in the school, so that the students' discipline character can develop optimally. This collaboration also creates synergy that strengthens the formation of disciplined character outside the school environment.

Exemplary and Effective Leadership

Equally important in the strategy of cultivating disciplined character is the role of the principal as a role model for students and all school members. An effective principal not only gives commands or instructions but also demonstrates attitudes and behaviors that align with the discipline values they want to instill in

the students. For example, the principal at SIKL is committed to always arriving on time, as well as supervising and ensuring that every activity at the school runs according to the established rules.

The effective leadership of the principal provides clear directions to teachers and school staff in carrying out their duties. In this way, the principal can create an environment that supports the development of students' disciplined character. This strong leadership not only applies at the managerial level but also in creating a school culture that supports the comprehensive implementation of discipline. This creates a school atmosphere filled with a sense of responsibility and mutual respect, which is very important for the character development of students.

The strategies implemented by the principal at Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur have proven effective in fostering students' discipline. The consistent implementation of rules and policies helps create a structured and predictable learning environment for students. Character and ethics development programs also provide students with the opportunity to develop understanding and skills related to discipline.

Strong collaboration between school principals, teachers, and parents reinforces efforts to instill discipline values in students. Open communication and close cooperation help ensure consistency in the approach to discipline across various contexts of students' lives.

Moreover, the role of the principal as a role model and an effective leader is crucial in shaping a school culture that promotes disciplined character. The attitude and behavior demonstrated by the principal provide a strong example for the students and inspire them to follow in the same footsteps.

The strategies implemented by the principal in fostering student discipline at Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur not only involve creating a conducive learning environment but also help students prepare to face future challenges with integrity and steadfast character.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that the strategies implemented by the principal at Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur (SIKL) in fostering student discipline are very effective and have successfully created a structured and conducive learning environment. The consistent implementation of rules and policies, ongoing character and ethics development, and close collaboration between the principal, teachers, and parents are key factors in creating a strong culture of discipline among students.

The leadership of the principal, who serves as a role model by providing a concrete example of time and behavior discipline, also plays a crucial role in shaping the students' disciplined character. Moreover, character-building programs that integrate discipline values into the formal curriculum and extracurricular activities provide students with the opportunity to develop attitudes of responsibility, integrity, and hard work.

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