



Sixth-Grade Students' Behavior Toward School Discipline: A Case Study from an Educational Management Perspective

Nur Agus Salim*, Annisa Qomariah, Cindy Dyah Prihatiningsih

Universitas Widya Gama Mahakam Samarinda, Indonesia

Email : nuragussalim@uwgm.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

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*Corresponding Author

This study aims to describe sixth-grade students' behavior toward school discipline and to identify factors influencing disciplinary behavior from an educational management perspective. A qualitative approach with a case study design was employed. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis involving sixth-grade students, classroom teachers, and the school principal. The findings reveal that students' disciplinary behavior can be classified into three levels: high, moderate, and low. While some students demonstrate consistent discipline, such as punctual attendance and compliance with school regulations, others exhibit indiscipline, including tardiness and neglect of cleanliness rules. Factors influencing disciplinary behavior include self-awareness, motivation, mindset, peer influence, family environment, and the effectiveness of school management practices, particularly leadership, rule enforcement, and school culture. The study implies that fostering student discipline cannot rely solely on punitive sanctions but requires systematic educational management strategies, including positive habituation, role modeling by teachers and school leaders, and collaborative partnerships between schools and parents. Strengthening managerial planning and supervision is essential to support sustainable disciplinary development in elementary education.

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INTRODUCTION

Discipline is a fundamental pillar of education that plays a vital role in shaping students' character and preparing them to function responsibly in society. Beyond mere compliance with rules, discipline reflects students' self-regulation, moral awareness, and sense of responsibility, which are essential competencies for lifelong learning and civic engagement (Kusumawati et al., 2025; Syafiih, 2025). In contemporary societies facing increasing challenges

related to youth behavior, school discipline has become a critical concern, as schools are expected to cultivate not only academic achievement but also ethical and social values. Evidence from character education research indicates that disciplined behavior developed in early schooling strongly predicts students' future academic engagement and social conduct (Putra et al., 2020). Therefore, discipline is not an isolated educational objective but a societal necessity that supports social order and human development (Fauzi et al., 2025; Mulyadi & Sutiah, 2025). From this perspective, strengthening school discipline at the elementary level is essential, as it forms the foundation for sustainable character development and contributes to the creation of responsible and self-directed citizens.

Despite its recognized importance, the implementation of school discipline remains a persistent problem in many educational systems, particularly at the elementary level (Azizi et al., 2025; Zaini & Maulidi, 2025). Schools often struggle to balance academic demands with effective character education, resulting in disciplinary practices that are reactive rather than preventive. Weak supervision, inconsistent rule enforcement, and limited integration of discipline within school management systems frequently undermine efforts to cultivate disciplined behavior (Abas & Kholidah, 2025; Rahmatillah & Andayani, 2025). Moreover, disciplinary issues are often treated as individual student problems rather than as indicators of broader managerial and organizational shortcomings within schools. Previous studies have shown that when school discipline is not supported by clear policies, leadership commitment, and systematic monitoring, disciplinary problems tend to persist and even escalate (Adilla & Lestari, 2024). This situation highlights a structural problem in educational management, where discipline is addressed through sanctions rather than through strategic planning, school culture development, and stakeholder collaboration.

Empirical observations in elementary schools reveal that disciplinary violations remain common in daily school life. Students frequently arrive late, fail to wear complete uniforms, talk during formal activities, bring food into classrooms, and neglect cleanliness rules. These behaviors disrupt instructional processes and reflect students' limited understanding of discipline as an integral part of organized school life (Ghozali, 2024; Samsi, 2025). Such phenomena indicate that disciplinary rules are often perceived as external obligations rather than internalized values. From a management perspective, these issues suggest gaps in the implementation of school discipline systems, including insufficient supervision, weak communication of expectations, and limited consistency in enforcement (Afifah, 2025; Mukarromah & Manshur, 2025). When disciplinary

routines are not supported by effective school leadership and structured management practices, students receive mixed messages regarding acceptable behavior. Consequently, discipline becomes situational and dependent on teacher presence rather than embedded within the school culture as a shared value.

Previous research has extensively examined student discipline from psychological and behavioral perspectives, emphasizing internal factors such as self-awareness, motivation, and mindset (Burhan et al., 2025). Other studies have highlighted external influences, including family environment, parenting styles, peer interaction, and socio-cultural context (Kintani & Maftuh, 2024; Wahyuni et al., 2025). Additionally, research on teacher roles emphasizes that teachers' exemplary behavior significantly influences students' disciplinary attitudes (Marthasari & Kurniawan, 2022). While these studies provide valuable insights, most focus primarily on individual or interpersonal dimensions of discipline. Limited attention has been given to discipline as a product of educational management systems, including policy formulation, leadership practices, school culture management, and organizational consistency. As a result, discipline is often discussed as a behavioral outcome rather than as a managerial process shaped by institutional practices and decision-making structures.

The existing literature reveals a clear research gap in integrating student disciplinary behavior with educational management perspectives. Few studies have examined how school management practices—such as leadership style, policy consistency, supervision mechanisms, and collaboration with parents—systematically influence the formation of student discipline at the elementary level. Moreover, previous studies tend to isolate discipline from broader school management functions, overlooking how planning, implementation, and evaluation processes contribute to sustainable character development. This gap is significant because discipline cannot be effectively developed through isolated interventions or punitive approaches alone. Without a coherent management framework, disciplinary programs risk becoming fragmented and ineffective. Therefore, there is a pressing need for research that positions student discipline within the broader context of educational management, highlighting the role of schools as organizations responsible for shaping behavioral norms through structured and intentional practices.

This study offers novelty by examining sixth-grade students' disciplinary behavior through an educational management lens, integrating behavioral analysis with school leadership, policy implementation, and cultural management. Unlike previous studies that emphasize sanctions or individual motivation, this research conceptualizes discipline as an outcome of systematic management processes involving teachers, school leaders, and parents. The state-

of-the-art contribution lies in framing discipline as a shared responsibility embedded within school governance, rather than as a reactive response to student misconduct. By exploring how disciplinary habits are formed through role modeling, positive habituation, and collaborative management strategies, this study advances current discourse on character education. Addressing this issue is crucial, as sustainable discipline requires not only student compliance but also institutional commitment and coherent management practices that support value internalization.

Based on these considerations, this study addresses the following research problems: how do sixth-grade students demonstrate disciplinary behavior, what factors influence this behavior, and how are disciplinary practices managed within the school environment? The central argument of this study is that student discipline is shaped not only by individual characteristics but also by the effectiveness of educational management practices. It is hypothesized that consistent leadership, clear policies, teacher role modeling, and collaboration with parents significantly contribute to the development of disciplined behavior. This study contributes theoretically by enriching the discourse on discipline through an educational management framework and practically by providing evidence-based recommendations for schools to design more effective discipline management strategies. Ultimately, this research seeks to support schools in fostering disciplined, responsible, and self-regulated learners through sustainable and well-managed educational practices.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is able to provide an in-depth understanding of social phenomena in a natural context, namely regarding student behavior towards school discipline in the environment of SDN 003 Sungai Kunjang. The case study was chosen because the focus of the research is directed at a single object in depth, namely sixth-grade students in the context of disciplinary behavior at school. According to Aulia, S. P., & Ismail, I. (2024), case studies allow researchers to describe in detail and comprehensively a real case in the field that cannot be achieved only with numbers or statistics. The subjects in this study were sixth-grade students, teachers, and the principal at SDN 003 Sungai Kunjang. The selection of informants was carried out using a purposive sampling technique, namely a deliberate selection based on certain considerations so that the data obtained is relevant and represents the variation of student behavior from the high, medium, to low discipline categories. In addition, class teachers and the principal were chosen as informants because their roles are very close to the process of fostering student discipline at school.

The data collection techniques used consisted of three main techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to directly observe student behavior inside and outside the classroom, such as punctual attendance, adherence to rules, and interactions during school activities. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with students, teachers, and the principal to obtain in-depth information regarding the experiences, perceptions, and strategies implemented by the school in fostering student discipline. Documentation was used to obtain secondary data such as school regulations, violation records, and the school's activity agenda related to character development and discipline. The primary instrument in this study was the researcher herself (human instrument), supported by interview guidelines, observation guidelines, and documentation records. The researcher, as the primary instrument, played a role in designing, implementing, and interpreting the research results according to the context being studied. This is in line with the opinion of Ardiansyah et al. (2023) who stated that in qualitative research, the researcher's presence and sensitivity in interpreting social meaning are the main keys to research success.

The data analysis in this study used interactive analysis techniques, which include three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The data reduction process was carried out by selecting relevant data from observations, interviews, and documentation. Next, the data were presented in descriptive narrative form to illustrate behavioral patterns and the factors that influence them. Finally, conclusions were drawn inductively based on consistent patterns and findings in the field. To ensure data validity, the researcher conducted source triangulation, namely comparing data from various sources (students, teachers, and principals) using different collection techniques, such as observation, interviews, and documentation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Student Behavior Towards School Discipline

The results of the study indicate that the behavior of sixth-grade students at SDN 003 Sungai Kunjang regarding school discipline still shows various variations. Some students have demonstrated behavior that complies with regulations, such as arriving on time, wearing complete uniforms, and attending flag ceremonies in an orderly manner. However, several behaviors were still found that reflected non-compliance with school rules, including arriving late, not wearing complete attributes during ceremonies, talking during activities, and bringing food from the canteen into the classroom. From the results of interviews with the principal and class teachers, it was discovered that although school rules have been established in writing and socialized to students, their implementation

still faces challenges. The principal revealed that some students lack self-awareness to comply with the rules, especially when there is no direct supervision from teachers. The sixth-grade teacher also stated that less intensive supervision during breaks or before class hours contributes to disciplinary violations by students.

Field observations indicate that undisciplined behavior is more common among students who are less active in class activities and are not strongly involved in school organizations such as the duty squad or extracurricular activities. This aligns with Bandura's (2021) theory in Social Learning Theory, which states that a person's behavior is influenced by observations of social models around them. Students who are not actively involved tend not to have consistent models of disciplined behavior, thus tending to imitate negative behavior from their peers. Furthermore, documentation shows that the school has fairly detailed rules, such as mandatory attendance before the bell, a prohibition on bringing food to class, and a dress code. However, the implementation of these rules is still not optimal because it is not accompanied by a consistent evaluation system or the imposition of consequences. Some students who violate the rules are only given verbal warnings without any clear follow-up. This condition results in students not feeling there are real consequences for their indisciplinary behavior.

It can be concluded that sixth-grade students' behavior toward school discipline remains moderate. Although some students have demonstrated compliance with the rules, many still require further guidance. An approach that involves more than just sanctions is needed, but also includes habituation and role modeling from teachers, as well as increased communication with parents. This strategy can foster students' internal awareness of the importance of discipline as part of personal character and social responsibility.

Factors Influencing Student Behavior Towards School Discipline

The results of the study indicate that student discipline at SDN 003 Sungai Kunjang is influenced by two broad categories: internal and external factors. Internal factors include self-awareness, motivation, interest, mindset, and innate character. Several students with a high awareness of the importance of school discipline exhibited more disciplined behavior than other students. They arrived on time, wore the required uniform, and followed school rules diligently. This demonstrates that awareness and intrinsic motivation play a significant role in shaping disciplined behavior. Students with high learning motivation tend to be more easily guided and adapt more quickly to school regulations. This finding supports Maslow's theory of self-actualization, where highly motivated individuals strive to meet positive social standards, including discipline.

Conversely, students without a strong learning drive tend to exhibit indisciplined behavior because they do not understand the urgency and benefits of complying with regulations.

Meanwhile, external factors include the family environment, school culture, school policies, and peer influence. Interviews with sixth-grade teachers revealed that students from families with firm and attentive parenting styles tended to be more disciplined at school. Conversely, students from families with low supervision or permissive behavior were more likely to violate school rules. This suggests that the development of disciplined behavior at school is inseparable from the role of parents at home. School culture is also a crucial factor. At SDN 003 Sungai Kunjang, a comprehensive set of school rules is in place, displayed in classrooms and common areas. However, the implementation of a culture of discipline has not yet fully permeated all elements of the school community. Teachers admitted to a lack of consistency in imposing sanctions or rewards for student behavior. Consistent rule implementation and habituation are crucial factors in establishing an effective culture of discipline (Yani et al., 2020).

Peer influence is also significant. Students who associate with groups that adhere to rules tend to exhibit similar disciplined behavior. Conversely, students who associate more with groups that frequently violate school rules show a similar tendency. This supports Bandura's (2021) view that social learning processes through observation and imitation play a significant role in shaping a person's behavior. Therefore, it is important for schools to foster a positive social environment for students through group activities and strengthening the role of peers as agents of change in the school environment.

Behavioral Patterns of Grade VI Students in Following School Rules and Regulations

Based on observations and interviews, it can be concluded that the behavioral patterns of sixth-grade students in following school rules and regulations at SDN 003 Sungai Kunjang show diverse dynamics. Some students are able to demonstrate positive and consistent behavioral patterns, such as arriving on time, wearing complete uniforms, and following teacher instructions during learning activities and routine school activities such as ceremonies and community service. However, there are still some students who display inconsistent behavioral patterns, tending to violate rules in certain situations, especially when teacher supervision is reduced. Positive behavioral patterns are generally seen in students who are actively involved in school, such as being class president, a member of the duty squad, or actively participating in extracurricular activities. Students in this category show a tendency to be role

models for their peers and feel responsible for the continuity of class rules. According to Bandura's (2021) social learning theory, individuals learn through observation and social interaction. Therefore, involvement in the school's social structure also strengthens the formation of behavioral patterns that are in accordance with applicable norms and regulations.

In contrast, behavioral patterns that tend toward indiscipline emerge from students who lack active participation or involvement in the school's social structure. They tend to ignore rules, such as sitting carelessly during ceremonies, making noise during lessons, or bringing cutlery from the cafeteria into the classroom. This pattern is reinforced by students' habits of associating with peers who also exhibit similar behavior. This lack of involvement and lack of reinforcement from the social environment, as well as the minimal consequences for rule violations, make these indiscipline patterns difficult to change without a specific approach. A unique pattern exists where students are able to demonstrate discipline only in certain situations, such as when the class teacher is present or during a flag ceremony, but tend to violate rules when there is no direct supervision. This pattern indicates that students' disciplinary behavior has not yet fully formed as an internal awareness, but is still situational and dependent on external factors such as the presence of authority or social pressure. This demonstrates the need for long-term development that emphasizes the formation of discipline based on awareness, not simply on fear of sanctions.

To address these inconsistent behavioral patterns, schools can integrate character education into all aspects of school activities. As Kintani & Maftuh (2024) dan Wahyuni et al. (2025) noted, discipline, as part of character education, must be fostered through habituation, role modeling, and an educational system of rewards and sanctions. This way, students will understand not only the importance of discipline as an obligation but also as a moral value that needs to be applied in their daily lives.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that sixth-grade students' behavior toward school discipline remains varied. While some students consistently follow school regulations, such as punctual attendance, wearing complete uniforms, and participating orderly in school activities, others continue to display undisciplined behaviors, including tardiness, speaking during ceremonies, bringing food into classrooms, and littering. Disciplinary behavior is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include self-awareness, interest, motivation, and mindset, with highly motivated and aware students demonstrating greater compliance. External factors encompass family environment, teacher supervision, school culture, and peer influence. Parental

support and teacher role modeling play a significant role in shaping students' disciplinary habits. However, the behavioral patterns observed suggest that discipline has not yet become an internalized value; compliance often occurs only under supervision, indicating that current approaches relying primarily on sanctions are insufficient for fostering comprehensive character development through habituation and positive role models.

This study contributes to the academic discourse by highlighting the intersection of student behavior and educational management, demonstrating that sustainable discipline requires a combination of internal motivation and structured school management practices. Its strength lies in providing detailed qualitative insights into the factors influencing elementary students' discipline, offering practical implications for teachers, school leaders, and parents. Nevertheless, this research is limited by its focus on a single school and a specific grade level, which may affect generalizability. Future studies could expand the scope to multiple schools or explore intervention-based approaches to evaluate the effectiveness of management strategies and character-building programs in enhancing student discipline across diverse educational contexts.

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