

Strategies to Cope With Students' Discipline Problems in Senior High School

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Abstract

The article deals with the strategies implemented by teachers in facilitating the students to comply with the rules. The study aims at identifying the discipline problems faced by teachers and describing the strategies they employ to cope with the discipline problems. The study employed qualitative approach in which the researchers used questionnaire and interview to collect the data. The participants were high school teachers and students of 10 schools in Central Java, Indonesia from various backgrounds: public, private, Islam-based public, Islam-affiliated private, Islam-based dormitory. The interview script became the primary source for interpreting and analyzing data. The findings revealed that the most common discipline problems faced by the teachers were noisy classroom, wrong/incomplete attributes and unpunctuality. The strategies applied by the teachers to cope with the students were corrective, assertive, and preventive disciplines. The teachers should improve the quality in maintaining the classroom discipline by creating a conducive classroom and involving the students in setting the classroom rules, such as attendance, learning participation, students and teacher actions, and assessment.

Keywords: classroom, discipline problem, strategies

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1. Introduction

Maintaining students' discipline in the classroom is an important aspect to create conducive classroom as students' discipline problems affect learning (Kambuga, 2017). Teachers' strategies to manage the discipline serve as motivation in learning (Muller, Katz, & Dance, 1999), assistance to achieve goals, expectation and responsibility (Woods, 1990), and influential factor to improve academic performance (Gitome, Katola, & Nyabwari, 2013). Being an influential factor to students' success in learning, the teachers' strategies to manage students discipline is discussed in this article. Previous studies show that teachers' styles and strategies to manage

students' misbehavior can affect their students either negatively or positively.

The first study demonstrated that teachers who applied positive feedback to their students in the classroom developed supportive relationships to both students and teacher, while those who employed negative feedback developed conflictual relationships (Pankonin & Myers, 2017). A study by Banfield, Richmond, & McCroskey (2006) stated that learning would be affected negatively when teachers adopted punitive discipline strategies, which was confirmed by another study (Sava, 2002), demonstrating that punitive discipline strategies resulted in more psychological and somatic complaints.

On the one hand, discipline strategies caused complicated teachers' role in classroom as they were exposed to persistent behavior problems embodying a significant source of job stress and burnout (Lewis, 1995). On the other hand, teachers' feedback influenced the students' outcomes, including their academic engagement and aspects of their self-perceptions (Matheson & Shriver, 2005; Dobbs & David H. Arnold, 2009).

One of the strategies that teachers exercise to cope with the problem of the students' discipline is positive discipline, a model of instruction that facilitates children to develop character, responsibility, self-control and obedience to rules (Savage & Savage, 2010) by emphasizing the positive points of behavior (Nelsen & Lott, 2012). The new model was developed based on the new discipline paradigm, in which school discipline was achieved through enhancing the connectedness of students to school, instead of by punishing and criminalizing students (Dupper, 2010).

Discipline problems are context-bound, per under the existing rules and the criteria of violating them. The discipline problems in Cameroon, for example, speaking pidgin English, chewing gum in class, examination malpractice, wearing dirty and wrong uniform, fighting, drug abuse, and drinking alcohol (Ngwokabuenui, 2015). In Kenya, indiscipline cases were such things as noise making, bullying, fighting, failing to complete assignments, drug abuse, sexual deviance, sneaking out of school, stealing other students' property and general defiance of school authority and rules (Ndaita, 2016). In Indonesia, the cases belonging to disciplinary violations included incomplete attributes, various types of truant behavior, not doing assignments, going out of class, using e-cigarettes and fighting (Fiara, Nurhasanah, & Bustamam, 2019).

To maintain good classroom management and reduce discipline problems, a teacher ought to act as a leader rather than a boss in terms of engaging the students in decision-making, communicating clear expectations to students, and listening to the students. Discipline strategies were commonly classified into three categories, namely: preventative discipline (i.e.: teachers explain clearly what behavior is expected), supportive discipline (i.e.: teachers give suggestions and options for correcting misbehavior), and corrective discipline (i.e.: teachers give consequences for misbehavior) (Wahlig, 2020).

2. Method

The study used a qualitative approach and aimed at describing the participants' perceptions of school discipline practices. Qualitative research was conducted to find answers of how particular social situation developed and was experienced (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The participants were high school teachers and students of 10 schools in Central Java, Indonesia. The participants were from schools with different backgrounds: public, private, Islam-based public, Islam-affiliated private, Islam-based dormitory private. Questionnaire was given to 30 students and 30 teachers. To maximize the results of the research, an interview was used to clarify the questionnaire they wrote. The interviews text and the questions became the primary source for interpreting and analyzing data. To be trustworthy, qualitative studies must satisfy the constructs of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To ensure trustworthiness, the items in the questionnaire were discussed with teachers and students to determine if questions were appropriate. All interviews were transcribed.

Data was analyzed by using general qualitative analyses techniques. First level of

coding was conducted by a colleague who had a Bachelor degree in Psychology and teaching experiences. Semantically similar words, phrases, and/or sentences that formed meaningful units in each conclusion at the raw response level were grouped whereas semantically different data were divided. Further checking and second levels of coding and categorization were conducted by the first author, in which similar codes were grouped to reflect higher-order categories of theme. The coding and categorization were finalized with consensus among the coders and further checked by a colleague with a Bachelor degree in Psychology and professional counseling training.

3. Result and Discussion

a. Discipline Problems Faced by Teachers

Based on the questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion, it was found that discipline problems in the most Senior High classrooms included (1) noise, (2) not listening or not paying attention in lessons, (3) coloring hair, (4) students sitting at the back row talking to their friends, (5) loitering, (6) (7) lateness, (8) not doing homework, (9) truancy, (10) eating, (11) not bringing workbooks, (12) using electronic device (games, music, etc.), (13) wearing unsuitable clothes for school, and (14) not joining morning assembly. Out of the 14 discipline problems, noisy classroom, chatting/not paying attention to teachers and lateness were the most common problems faced by the teachers. The sample of the data was as follows.

Data 01/1

Saya pernah dihukum karena telat masuk jam Matematika 2 menit

[I was punished because I was late for Mathematics class for 2 minutes].

Data 04/1

Saya pernah, karena satu kelas saya ribut di jam pelajaran

[I have, because the class was noisy].

Data 06/1, 09/1, 11/1

Saya dihukum karena saya terlambat.

[I was punished because I came late to school].

Data 07/1

Saya pernah dihukum karena telat mengikuti upacara bendera hari Senin.

[I got punishment because I was late joining morning essembly].

Data 08/1

...karena saya waktu jam belajar dimulai saya masih di kantin.

[...because when the class began I was still at school canteen].

Data 12/1

Alasannya yaitu salah satu teman saya mengerjakan tugas selain mapel komputer akuntansi, sedangkan waktu itu mapel komputer akuntansi.

[That one of my friends was doing assignment from different class, while we were in Accounting Computer class].

To compare, making noise, wrong/bad attribute, and unpunctuality were similar discipline problems found in many classrooms. Ngwokabuenui (2015), for example, also mentioned wearing dirty and wrong uniform as the common indiscipline problems found in Cameroon. He categorized the indiscipline problem as the cases related to poor habits. In addition, Mehmet Ali, et al. (2012) found making noise and dress as the common discipline problems found in classroom besides bad language, walking around in the classroom, interrupting and talking without permission problems in Turkey. Ndaita (2016) found that noise making was one of the problems faced by teachers in Kenya. Bataineh (2014) found at least 24 papers and reports reviewed regarding lateness behavior from 1991 to 2013.

In contrast, doing task from the other class was the discipline problem which was not found in the previous findings.

b. Strategies to Cope with the Discipline Problems

The results of the investigation show that teachers applied three discipline strategies to cope with the discipline problems in the classroom as mentioned by Wahlig (2020), namely preventative discipline, supportive discipline, and corrective discipline.

1) Corrective Discipline

This kind of strategy refers to action applied to correct any behavior which might cause disruption. Based on the findings, the teachers applied corporal punishment and rote discipline as the strategies to stop students doing the same mistakes.

2) Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment was done in many schools in Indonesia. This is done actually because of the unpunctuality. Mostly, students were punished by compulsory cleaning:

Sebab saya dihukum adalah telat mengikuti upacara bendera hari Senin.

[I was punished for being late for the Monday morning assembly].

Menyapu ruang guru ,karena telat masuk sekolah.

[Sweeping the teacher's room, because I was late for school].

Sudah ketika itu saya tidak mengerjakan tugas dan guru menyuruh saya untuk berdiri di depan kelas sampai pelajaran selesai

[I already did. When I was not doing the assignment and the teacher told me to stand in front of the class until the class ended].

Saya pernah disuruh memungut sampah dan juga pernah disuruh menyanyikan lagu Indonesia Raya karena datang terlambat. Selain itu juga mendapat poin negative, karena sekolah saya menerapkan system poin tersebut.

[I was told to pick up trash and was also told to sing Indonesia Raya because I was late. It also got negative points, because my school implemented the point system].

Pernah namun jarang. Saya termasuk siswa yg cukup teladan di sekolah. Saya pernah dihukum membersihkan toilet karena terlambat. Namun hanya sekali

[Never but rarely. I am among students who are quite exemplary in school. I have been sentenced to clean toilets for being late. But only once].

Pernah. Saya tidak mengumpulkan tugas. Saya dihukum untuk menulis kembali tugas tersebut

[Never. I did not collect the assignments. I was sentenced to rewrite the assignments]

Data 01/2

Ya Saya pernah dihukum. Hukuman yang saya terima membereskan dan membersihkan kelasdi karenakan saya melanggar disiplin yaitu memakai sepatu bercorak putih yang seharusnya tidak boleh dipakai di sekolah.

[Yes, I have been punished before. The punishment that I received was tidying and cleaning the class. It was because I broke the rule; I wore white-patterned shoes that should not be worn at school].

Data 02/2

Pernah, saya harus membawa pot bunga karena telat masuk kelas

[I had. I had to bring a flower pot because I was late joining the class].

Data 03/2

Saya dihukum untuk membersihkan area sekitar masjid.

[I was punished to clean the area around the mosque].

Data 04/2

Ya, pernah. Memungut sampah dan mencabut rumput liar yang ada disekolah. Hukuman itu diberikan karena saya terlambat datang ke sekolah

[Yes, I have. Picking up trash and uprooting wild weeds at school. The punishment was given because I was late for school].

Similar strategies were also applied by teachers in SMA 4 Sungai Raya. Meyanti (2013) in her article entitled *Peran Guru Dalam Penerapan Disiplin Siswa SMA* found that the teachers asked the students who break the school rules by cleaning toilets and floor, parking, carrying water, put the rubbish into

the bin, and watering plants. Badi'ah (2016) mentioned pushing up 10 times and singing songs as the punishment applied by teachers in disciplining the students.

The strategies of disciplining students through corporal punishment should not be done by teachers since they affect students' mentality. Akhtar & Awan (2018) found that corporal punishment put negative impacts on the physical and mental development of the students. The punishment should not deprive the students' rights to learn. Asking the students to clean the school garden only lost the students' time to learn a lesson.

3) Rote Learning

Rote discipline in this case is done by writing the verses of Holy Qur'an so that the students internalize the rules and the wrongdoings. The following is the data.

Data 01/2

Pernah. Menulis kata "astagfirullahaladzim saya terlambat" sebanyak 100 kali"

Dikarenakan saya terlambat sekolah

Ever

Once, I was punished for writing one of the verses of the Koran because I was late for class

Write the word "astagfirullahaladzim I am late" 100 times "

Because I'm late for school

Pernah, mengaji satu ruku', telat

Once, recite one ruku', late

4) Preventive discipline

Besides applying corporal punishment and corrective discipline, the teachers also applied preventive discipline. This was done by discussing the rules with the students at the beginning of every semester in the form of contract learning. When asking whether their teachers discussed the rules with them, all of the students said that their teachers did it in the beginning of each semester. This shows that the students had understood the

consequence they received as they broke the school rules.

Data 10/3

Menetapkan peraturan sekolah yang harus di patuhi dan ditaati oleh semua murid dan memberikan sanksi kepada murid yang melanggar peraturan tersebut.

Guru selalu menjelaskan peraturan-peraturan dan segala jenis sanksi yang akan didapatkan di awal semester, bahkan guru menjelaskan tentang peraturan dan sanksi 3 sampai 4 kali dalam satu tahun.

[Establishing school rules that must be obeyed and obeyed by all students and impose sanctions on students who violate these rules. Teachers always explain the rules and all types of sanctions that will be obtained at the beginning of the semester, even teachers explain about rules and sanctions 3 to 4 times a year].

Data 11/4

Pernah, karena lupa tidak memasang bet kelas. hukuman yg saya terima berupa point.

[Once, because I forgot not to put the class bet. The penalty I received was in the form of points].

Data 12/4

Iya, sekolah saya juga sudah membagikan lembar peraturan saat awal masuk. Dan juga menempel lembar peraturan tersebut di setiap dinding kelas.

[Yes, my school also distributed the copies of the rules on the first day of schooling. They also put a poster of the rules in every class].

5) Supportive Discipline

This strategy was applied to avoid harassment. The teacher did the following ways to apply this strategy.

a) Reprimanding

Three teachers applied this strategy by

Data 01/4b

Menegur dengan cara halus.

[Rebuke in a smooth manner].

b) Applying credit points

Applying credit points was applied in Indonesian schools to avoid corporal punishment. This was done by making agreement with the students and their parents about the number of points for every misbehavior. For example, if a school applied 100 points limit, students who collected 100 points of wrongdoing would be expelled from school.

Data 01/4a

Pernah, karena lupa tidak memasang bet kelas. hukuman yg saya terima berupa point
[Once, because I forgot not to put the class bet. the penalty I received was in the form of points].

Data 02/4a

Mengingatkan agar datang tepat waktu, seragam sekolah dimasukkan dengan rapi, dan masih banyak lainnya. Ya dijelaskan sanksinya apabila poin sampai 100 orang tua akan dipanggil ke sekolah dan apabila 200 bisa dikeluarkan
[Reminding to arrive on time, school uniforms are neatly put, and many others. Yes the sanctions are explained if points up to 100 parents will be called to school and if 200 can be issued]

From the findings, it can be seen that teachers had tried to avoid punishment. They used preventive and assertive strategies to cope with students' disciplining problems. However, since students repeatedly broke the school rules, the teachers used corporal punishment. There are several things which might explain the reasons. First, the students were not involved in setting the rule. The teachers only read and explained the rules.

Data 01/5

Ya pada pertemuan awal semua tata tertib dibacakan yang bertujuan agar para siswa mengetahui apa hal yang seharusnya dilakukan dan mana yang seharusnya tidak boleh dilakukan.
[Yes, at the beginning of the meeting all the rules were read out in order the students know that things should be done and which should not be done].

When asking whether the students were involved in setting the rules, they said "no". As stated by Amoah, Owusu-Mensah, Laryea, and Gyamera (2015), teachers should cultivate the habit of involving students in rule setting to promote ownership of the rules and to encourage them to take more responsibility for their own behavior. It implies that the teachers should improve the students' participation to avoid corporal punishment.

The second, it is found that the students were punished because they were late to school and chatting with their friends. Students might be late to attend a class because of many reasons. One of them could be lack of interest. Chatting to their friends and noise were common negative behaviors showing that students did not pay attention to the lesson. To avoid the negative behavior, the teachers should create fun and conducive learning so that the students actively engaged the students to learn. "The more opportunities students have to respond in class, the more likely they are to learn well" (Goss, Sonnemann, & Griffiths, 2017, p 23).

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, similar discipline problems often faced by teachers are noisy classrooms, wrong/incomplete attributes and unpunctuality. To cope with the discipline problems, teachers applied both positive and negative disciplines. The later applied by teachers, such as corporal punishment and rote discipline deprive the students' rights to learning. Teachers can prevent students from doing bad habits and avoid giving punishment by creating a conducive classroom and involving students in setting the school rules attendance, learning participation, students and teacher actions, and assessment in order that they have ownership of the rules so that they have responsibility for their behavior.

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