

Strategies for Building Student Discipline Through Congregational Prayer

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the strategies used to foster disciplinary character through the implementation of congregational prayers at SMK Boarding School Brebes. The phenomenon of low student discipline presents a challenge that must be addressed seriously by educational institutions. Schools possess significant potential to cultivate discipline through religious activities, one of which is congregational prayer. Congregational prayer is not merely a worship ritual but also a means of character formation that emphasizes punctuality, obedience, and responsibility. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach with data collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The research informants include the school principal, Islamic education teachers, homeroom teachers, and students. Data analysis was carried out through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, with triangulation techniques used to ensure data validity. The findings show that there are five strategies used in fostering students' disciplinary character through congregational prayer, namely: (1) providing understanding, (2) teacher role-modelling, (3) student mentoring, (4) supervision, and (5) reward and punishment.

Keywords: Coaching Strategies; Disciplinary Character; Congregational Prayer; Character Education; Boarding School.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan strategi pembinaan karakter disiplin melalui pelaksanaan sholat berjamaah di SMK Boarding School Brebes. Fenomena

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rendahnya kedisiplinan menjadi tantangan yang harus diantisipasi secara serius oleh lembaga pendidikan. Sekolah memiliki potensi besar dalam menumbuhkan karakter disiplin melalui aktivitas keagamaan, salah satunya adalah sholat berjamaah. Sholat berjamaah bukan hanya sekadar ritual ibadah tetapi juga sarana pembentukan karakter yang menekankan ketepatan waktu, ketaatan dan tanggung jawab. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam dan dokumentasi. Informan penelitian meliputi kepala sekolah, guru pendidikan agama Islam, wali kelas dan siswa. Analisis data dilakukan melalui tahapan reduksi data, penyajian data dan penarikan kesimpulan dengan teknik triangulasi untuk menjamin keabsahan data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat lima strategi dalam pembinaan karakter disiplin siswa melalui sholat berjamaah, yaitu: (1) pemberian pemahaman (2) keteladanan guru (3) pendampingan siswa (4) pengawasan, (5) reward and punishment.

Kata Kunci: Strategi Pembinaan; Karakter Disiplin; Sholat Berjamaah; Pendidikan Karakter; Sekolah Boarding.

A. Introduction

Education in essence is not only tasked with transferring knowledge, but also with shaping the character of students so that they can become individuals with noble character (Gunawan, 2017). Reality shows that the challenges of moral degradation and student discipline are becoming more apparent with the development of technology and culture, which tend to weaken teenagers' self-control in carrying out their obligations (Muslich,

2018). Schools, as formal educational institutions, have a strategic role in fostering positive character traits that will prepare students for their future lives (Samani & Hariyanto, 2017).

The implementation of character education has become the focus of the national curriculum, especially after the emergence of various student behaviors that reflect weak moral control, such as tardiness, violations of rules, and low commitment to carrying out obligations. The Ministry of Education and Culture

of the Republic of Indonesia emphasizes that character education must be integrated into every school activity, including through religious programs as a form of moral formation for students (Kemendikbud, 2017). In the Islamic perspective, worship is not only interpreted as a ritual but also a means of character building, as stated in QS. Al-Ankabut verse 45, which states that prayer can prevent evil and immoral deeds.

SMK Boarding School Brebes is an educational institution that implements a character building system through religious activities such as congregational prayer as a mandatory daily activity for all students. Congregational prayer is not only a form of implementing religious values but also an effective strategy in shaping time discipline, obedience to rules, and responsibility (Majid & Andayani, 2018).

Observations show that the implementation of congregational prayer at SMK Boarding School Brebes has been running well and consistently, although there are still students who do not fully understand the meaning of

discipline in worship, resulting in behaviors such as tardiness, disorderliness, and irresponsibility. This condition requires a systematic, focused, and continuous guidance strategy so that the goal of character education in discipline can be achieved optimally.

B. Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. A qualitative approach was chosen because the focus of the study is to understand character building through congregational prayer based on experiences and processes that occur in the school environment. Qualitative research aims to understand phenomena through direct interaction with the research object (Sugiyono, 2019).

The research location was at SMK Boarding School, Brebes District, Brebes Regency, Central Java. The research subjects consisted of the principal, Islamic education teachers, homeroom teachers, and students selected based on purposive sampling, namely the selection of informants who were considered capable of providing information relevant to the focus of the

research. The selection of informants took into account their direct involvement in the implementation of congregational prayer and the process of fostering student discipline.

Data were collected through three main techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to directly observe the implementation of congregational prayers, student discipline activities, and the guidance strategies applied by teachers. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore the guidance strategies applied. Documentation was obtained through photographs of activities and other supporting documents. The main instrument in this study was the researcher himself (Arikunto, 2018).

The data analysis technique followed the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data reduction was carried out by sorting important information according to the research focus, then the data was presented in the form of descriptive narratives. Conclusions were drawn by

ensuring that the findings were consistent with the field findings. The triangulation technique was used to ensure data validity through cross-checking between observation data, interviews, and documentation. This study followed research ethics by requesting permission from the school. The entire research process was conducted objectively and systematically (Miles & Huberman, 2014; Sudjana, 2019).

C. Result and Discussion

The strategy for building student discipline through congregational prayer at SMK Boarding School Brebes is as follows:

1. Providing Understanding

Research shows that providing understanding to students is a strategy in character building through congregational prayer. The understanding provided is educational and reflective so that students are able to understand the meaning, purpose, and values of discipline contained in congregational prayer. This process is carried out so that the internalization of disciplinary values can be deeply embedded in students.

Teachers and counselors provide understanding to students through socialization, guidance, and habituation activities that are integrated into daily school activities. The initial understanding provided relates to the urgency of congregational prayer as a religious obligation and a means of character building. Students are explained that congregational prayer requires punctuality, obedience to the imam, and awareness to be present on time. Praying in congregation is not just a routine act of worship but also a medium for character education that is rich in the value of discipline.



Picture 1. Interview with Student

The results of the interviews show that most students begin to understand that discipline in praying in congregation is directly related to discipline in daily life. Students realize that arriving late at the mosque, disorder in the rows, and lack of preparation before prayer are

forms of disciplinary violations that affect the quality of worship. This understanding encourages students to be more responsible for time and applicable rules. This is in line with Lickona's (2013) view that understanding values is the main foundation before those values are manifested in real behavior (Lickona, 2013).



Picture 2. Providing understanding and training in prayer to students

2. Role Modeling

Role modeling is one strategy that has a significant influence on fostering student discipline through congregational prayer. The role modeling demonstrated by teachers and school leaders is a driving factor that shapes students' awareness to be disciplined without always having to be accompanied by strict instructions or supervision. This role modeling is reflected in the direct involvement of educators in the implementation of congregational prayer. Teachers and

counselors serve as role models who tangibly demonstrate the values of discipline. Students tend to imitate the disciplined behavior they see directly in their daily school environment.

The findings also show that role models have a more effective moral force than written rules alone. When students see teachers and school leaders consistently performing congregational prayers with full awareness, the internalization of discipline values occurs naturally. Discipline is no longer understood as a compulsory obligation but as a necessity and part of one's identity. This is in line with Lickona's (2012) opinion, which emphasizes that character education will be effective if moral values are embodied in the actions of educators, not just conveyed through verbal advice (Lickona, 2012).

The example set in congregational prayers is also evident in the attitude of teachers in maintaining order and solemnity during worship. This attitude indirectly shapes students' habits to follow worship rules more orderly and responsibly. This habit supports the formation of sustainable personal discipline. Exemplary behavior is at the

core of character education because it touches the affective aspects of students.

Exemplary behavior not only has an impact on worship discipline but also has implications for discipline in other aspects of school life. Students who are accustomed to seeing and following the example of teachers in congregational prayer tend to show changes in attitude in terms of punctuality in entering the classroom, obedience to school rules, and responsibility in completing tasks. This reinforces the view that the value of discipline instilled through congregational worship is transformative and extends to the realm of student behavior (Zubaedi, 2015).

Role modeling is an essential strategy for character building in the context of congregational prayer at school. Consistent, authentic, and sustainable role modeling can create a religious environment that supports the deep internalization of disciplinary values. This strategy shows that character building cannot rely solely on regulations and sanctions, but requires educators who can serve as living examples for students in practicing

disciplinary values through daily worship practices.



Picture 3. Interview with Islamic religious education teacher

3. Guidance

The results of the study show that providing guidance to students is one strategy for character building through the implementation of congregational prayer at school. Through guidance, students are directed to understand the meaning of congregational prayer as a religious obligation and a means of forming a disciplined attitude in daily life.

Guidance is provided by teachers and homeroom teachers by giving directions before the implementation of congregational prayer. At this stage, students are reminded of the importance of punctuality, neatness of rows, and the correctness of prayer procedures in accordance with the proper guidance. This guidance process serves to reinforce students' readiness to be disciplined

before the activity takes place. This finding is in line with Lickona's (2013) opinion that character building requires direct guidance and consistent role modeling in the educational environment (Lickona, 2013).

During congregational prayer, guidance is manifested in the form of the active presence of teachers and counselors among the students. Teachers serve as role models in performing prayers in an orderly and solemn manner. The presence of mentors who set a real example has been proven to influence student behavior. This reinforces Bandura's (2001) view that social learning occurs through observation and imitation of the behavior of models who are considered to have authority or exemplary qualities (Bandura, 2001).

Guidance for students is also provided after congregational prayer through reflection and evaluation activities. Teachers give advice, reinforcement, and educational reprimands to students who have not shown optimal discipline. Reprimands are not given in the form of physical punishment, but through a persuasive

and dialogical approach so that students realize their mistakes and are encouraged to improve their behavior.

Guidance is also directed at fostering students' internal awareness. The results of the study show that over time, students began to perform congregational prayers without always having to be reminded. This change indicates that consistent guidance is able to shift students' motivation from external to internal. Students are no longer disciplined because they fear sanctions, but because of their awareness of their responsibilities as individuals of faith and part of the school community. This finding is in line with Hidayatullah's (2010) opinion that the main objective of character education is to shape the awareness and will of students from within (Hidayatullah, 2010).

Guidance for students in congregational prayer activities is a planned and meaningful pedagogical strategy. Continuous guidance accompanied by exemplary behavior, direction, and educational evaluation has been proven to strengthen students'

disciplinary character. Through congregational prayer, students are trained to value time, obey rules, and be responsible for obligations that must be carried out together. Guidance for students is a strategic element in integrating religious values and discipline into school life.



Picture 4. Assistance in carrying out congregational prayers

4. Supervision

Supervision is a strategy in fostering student discipline through the implementation of congregational prayers. Supervision is not only carried out formally by the school but also takes place in stages and continuously. This supervision involves the principal, teachers, homeroom teachers, and religious advisors who directly or indirectly monitor student attendance, punctuality, neatness, and order during congregational prayers.

Supervision is carried out from the preparation stage of prayer, when the call to prayer is sounded, until the students leave for the place of prayer. Teachers and counselors are tasked with ensuring that students immediately leave other activities and head to the school mosque or prayer room without delay. This supervision has an impact on increasing students' awareness of the importance of punctuality and compliance with the rules set by the school.



Picture 5. Supervision of students by teachers

The school also implements supervision through recording attendance at congregational prayers. This attendance data is used as evaluation material and forms part of the assessment of student discipline. With this recording system in place, students feel a moral responsibility to always attend and participate in congregational prayers in an orderly manner. This

situation shows that systematic supervision can gradually form habits of discipline.

Supervision in character building through congregational prayers has preventive and educational functions. The preventive function can be seen in the effort to prevent students from violating rules such as being late or not participating in congregational prayers without a clear reason. The educational function is evident in the consistent process of habit formation so that discipline is no longer understood as coercion but as a personal need of students.

These findings are in line with Mulyasa's (2018) opinion that supervision is an important part of educational management because it serves to ensure that activities run according to the objectives that have been set. In the context of congregational prayer, supervision helps maintain consistency in the implementation of activities while strengthening the values of discipline that are to be instilled in students (Mulyasa, 2018).

Teachers not only act as supervisors but also as role models in

worship discipline. The example set by teachers in participating in congregational prayer with students has a positive influence on students' attitudes. This is in line with

Bandura's (2011) view emphasizes that social learning occurs through the process of imitating the behavior of figures who are considered significant. Consistent supervision also reinforces the internalization of disciplinary values in students. Initially, students participated in congregational prayers because of supervision and school rules. Over time, this habit developed into internal awareness. This process is in line with Lickona's (2013) opinion, which states that character building requires repetition, exemplary behavior, and continuous reinforcement so that moral values can be instilled. Planned, continuous supervision accompanied by exemplary behavior can shape students' disciplinary character more effectively and sustainably (Bandura, 2011; Lickona, 2013).

5. Reward and Punishment

The application of reward and punishment strategies is an important

instrument in building students' disciplinary character through congregational prayer activities. This strategy is used as a form of behavior reinforcement. The application of reward and punishment is not repressive but educational and oriented towards the habit of continuous discipline.

Rewards are given to students who consistently show discipline in participating in congregational prayers. The rewards are not always material but can also take the form of praise, positive attitude assessments, recording of disciplinary achievements, and the trust to become prayer leaders. Giving these rewards can increase students' motivation to perform congregational prayers without coercion.

The results of the study show that the rewards given can foster students' awareness of the importance of discipline as a necessity, not just an obligation. Students become more responsible for time and rules because they feel that their positive behavior is appreciated. This reinforces Lickona's (2012) view that educational rewards can help internalize character values in students (Lickona, 2012).

Punishment is applied as a consequence for disciplinary violations in the implementation of congregational prayer. The punishment applied Educational and gradual in nature, in the form of verbal warnings, special guidance, religious tasks, or the obligation to perform additional sunnah prayers and dhikr. This approach aims to provide a deterrent effect while fostering moral awareness in students, rather than imposing physical or humiliating punishment.

Punishment accompanied by explanation and guidance can help students understand their mistakes and encourage behavioral change towards greater discipline. Punishment serves not only as a control tool but also as a medium for religious-based character education.

The balance between rewards and punishment is key to the success of a disciplined character building strategy. Rewards serve to reinforce positive behavior, while punishment serves to control negative behavior. When both strategies are applied, students tend to show a change in attitude.

These findings are in line with Mulyasa's (2018) research, which states that the application of rewards and punishment in character education will be effective if done proportionally, not excessively, and adjusted to the psychological development of students. This strategy becomes even more relevant because the values of discipline instilled through congregational prayer not only have an impact on worship behavior but also on student discipline in other aspects of school life (Mulyasa, 2018).

The results and discussion of this study confirm that the reward and punishment strategy through congregational prayer is an effective approach in fostering student discipline. This strategy contributes to the formation of internal, sustainable discipline that is in line with the objectives of character education and religious values developed in schools.

Constraints

The implementation of the strategy of fostering student discipline through congregational prayer has not been fully optimized due to various internal and external constraints. These constraints

have affected the consistency and effectiveness of the desired character building.

The obstacle encountered was the low awareness of some students in participating in congregational prayers. Although these activities were scheduled and required by the school, there were still students who participated in congregational prayers solely because they were required to do so, not out of personal awareness. This condition had an impact on the students' lack of discipline, such as arriving late at the mosque and not immediately performing ablution when the call to prayer sounded.

The next obstacle relates to the diverse backgrounds of students, in terms of worship habits, family upbringing, and environment. Some students come from families who are not accustomed to congregational prayers in their daily lives, so when they are in the school environment, they need time to adapt. These differences in background mean that students' acceptance of discipline through congregational prayer is not uniform, so the results achieved also vary.

Another obstacle is the limited supervision and consistent guidance available. The limited number of teachers and counselors is not proportional to the number of students who need to be guided. As a result, there are still students who do not participate in congregational prayers in an orderly manner without being optimally monitored. This condition has an impact on weak disciplinary control.

Another obstacle that has been identified is the synergy between schools and parents in instilling worship discipline. Character building through congregational prayers at school is often not reinforced by the same habits at home. This inconsistency causes the values of discipline instilled at school to not take root in students' daily lives, so that the expected behavioral changes are not yet fully stable.

In terms of facilities and infrastructure, another obstacle is the limited supporting facilities, such as the capacity of places of worship, which is not yet fully adequate. This condition hinders the orderly implementation of congregational prayer and affects

students' discipline in participating in activities in a timely and orderly manner.

The obstacles to the strategy of character building through congregational prayer are a problem. These obstacles do not only originate from the students but also influenced by the coaching system, the role of educators, family support, and the school environment. An approach is needed so that congregational prayer truly becomes an effective means of shaping students' character and discipline.

Solutions

The solutions implemented are aimed at raising awareness, instilling habits, and internalizing the values of discipline in students' lives. Congregational prayer serves as an effective medium for character education when supported by planned and integrated coaching strategies.

Strengthening the habit of congregational prayer is done by clearly scheduling prayer times, arranging technical implementation, and actively involving teachers and educational staff as role models. The findings show that the example set by teachers in arriving on time and performing congregational

prayer with students has an impact on student compliance. This example reinforces the moral message that discipline is a value that is practiced in real life at school.

The next solution is the consistent application of rules and regulations related to the implementation of congregational prayer. The school establishes proportional sanctions and guidance mechanisms for students who violate the rules, such as religious assignments, self-reflection, or special mentoring. The results of the study show that consistency in the application of rules can foster a sense of responsibility and awareness of discipline among students.

Continuous guidance and coaching by teachers and homeroom teachers is not only carried out during congregational prayers but also through personal guidance and intensive communication with students. The research findings show that a persuasive and humanistic approach is more effective in shaping a disciplined character than an approach based solely on punishment. Through continuous dialogue and advice, students are

gradually able to understand the meaning of discipline as part of their personal and religious responsibilities.

Integrating the values of congregational prayer into learning activities and school culture. The values of punctuality, obedience to rules, regularity of movement, and solemnity in prayer are used as analogies in the teaching and learning process. The results of the study show that teachers who incorporate these values into their teaching are able to strengthen the transfer of disciplinary values from the realm of worship to the academic realm. This makes congregational prayer part of the character education ecosystem in schools.

Involvement of parents and the school environment in fostering student discipline. Communication between schools and parents is carried out regularly to align perceptions. The results of the study show that continuity of guidance between schools and homes has a positive effect on the consistency of student disciplinary behavior. When the values of congregational prayer and discipline are applied harmoniously in various environments, the internalization

of character in students becomes stronger.

It can be understood that the solution to character building through congregational prayer is not singular but a combination of habit formation, role modeling, consistent rules, continuous guidance, value integration, and collaboration with parents. This solution strategy is able to overcome various obstacles in fostering student discipline and strengthen the role of congregational prayer as an effective means of character education.

D. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study and analysis of the implementation of the strategy for fostering student discipline through congregational prayer activities, it can be concluded that congregational prayer not only functions as a religious ritual activity but also becomes a strategic instrument in shaping the character of students in a sustainable manner. This activity is able to provide a space for character learning that is applicable, contextual, and internalized through consistent practice in school life. The values of discipline

instilled through congregational prayer arise because students directly experience the process of time management, obedience to rules, regularity of movement and recitation, leadership, and togetherness.

An effective strategy for character building through congregational prayer is demonstrated through the integration of school policies, the exemplary behavior of educators, a system of habit formation, and a mechanism of continuous monitoring and evaluation. This shows that the success of character building does not depend solely on a repressive or instructive approach, but rather on the creation of an educational environment that encourages students' internal awareness.

Discipline character building through congregational prayer also contributes to the formation of religious attitudes, responsibility, and obedience in students. The time discipline built through the regularity of congregational prayer has an impact on student behavior in both academic and non-academic activities. Students become more trained in managing time, adhering to schedules, and showing readiness and orderliness in

participating in the learning process. This confirms that the values of discipline instilled through congregational prayer have an impact on other aspects of school life.

Development strategies that emphasize habituation and exemplary behavior have proven to be more effective in fostering a disciplined character. Teachers' exemplary behavior in participating in congregational prayers is a factor that strengthens the internalization of discipline values in students. When educators are present as role models, the character building process becomes a real and meaningful learning process.

The strategy of building student discipline through congregational prayers can be understood as a holistic and integrative character education model. This model combines spiritual, social, and moral dimensions in a structured and continuous activity. Congregational prayer plays a strategic role in building discipline, which is an important foundation for shaping students' personalities. The application of this strategy should be maintained and

developed as part of character education policy in schools.

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