

Teacher Strategies for Fostering Discipline Character among Fifth-Grade Elementary School Students

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ABSTRACT : Fostering discipline is an essential component of elementary education because it supports effective learning, personal responsibility, and the development of positive character. Nevertheless, schools continue to encounter challenges in developing students' discipline, including inconsistent compliance with school regulations, tardiness, limited responsibility in completing assignments, and inadequate awareness of maintaining order in the learning environment. This study aimed to examine the strategies employed by teachers to foster discipline among fifth-grade students and to describe the changes in students' disciplinary behavior resulting from the implementation of these strategies. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation involving the principal, the fifth-grade teacher, and students as research informants and data sources. Data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while data credibility was established through source and methodological triangulation. The findings revealed that teachers fostered student discipline through habituation in daily routines, role modeling, guidance and advice, supervision, positive reinforcement, and consistent implementation of school rules. These strategies contributed to the development of students' disciplinary behavior, as reflected in improved punctuality, greater compliance with school and classroom regulations, increased responsibility for completing assignments, and greater awareness of cleanliness and order in the school environment. The study concludes that teacher strategies implemented consistently, continuously, and through an integrated approach can support the development and internalization of discipline as an important character value among elementary school students.

Keywords: Teacher Strategies, Student Discipline, Character Development, Elementary School Students, Character Education.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a systematic and purposeful process designed to develop students' intellectual, spiritual, personal, social, and moral capacities. At the elementary school level, education is not limited to the transmission of academic knowledge but also encompasses the development of character and the formation of behaviors that enable students to participate responsibly in family, school, and community life. Accordingly, character education constitutes an essential component of elementary education because it supports the development of students who are not only academically competent but also responsible, ethical, and capable of regulating their behavior in accordance with social values (Hanifa et al., 2024).

Discipline is one of the fundamental character values that should be cultivated from an early age. Discipline is reflected in students' ability to comply with established rules, manage time, complete responsibilities, maintain order, and demonstrate consistency in carrying out learning activities. The development of discipline is closely related to students' academic and social development because disciplined behavior can support learning engagement, responsibility, and the effective achievement of educational goals. Conversely, inadequate discipline may be manifested in tardiness, failure to complete assignments, lack of attention during learning, and disregard for classroom and school regulations (Anandari, 2022). Therefore, discipline should not be developed through occasional corrective measures alone but through continuous, consistent, and educationally appropriate strategies.

The development of student discipline is closely related to the social environment in which students learn. From a social-psychological perspective, students' cognitive and social development is shaped through interaction with teachers, peers, family, and the broader learning environment. These interactions influence the development of students' attitudes, habits, behavioral patterns, and ability to regulate themselves (Saputra & Parisu, 2025). Consequently, teachers play a strategic role in fostering discipline because they function not only as instructors but also as role models, mentors, facilitators, and managers of the classroom environment.

Teacher strategies for developing discipline may include habituation, role modeling, clear rule-setting, supervision, positive reinforcement, corrective guidance, and the implementation of consistent consequences. The effectiveness of these strategies depends on the teacher's ability to create educational interactions that encourage students to understand the importance of discipline rather than merely comply with rules because of external pressure. In this context, character development should be integrated into the learning process and students' daily experiences. Parisu et al. (2025) emphasize the importance of integrating character education into learning activities so that character values are not treated as separate concepts but are developed through meaningful learning experiences and daily behavior.

The development of discipline is also influenced by changes in the learning environment and the transformation of educational practices. The development of learning media and educational technology has transformed the ways in which teachers design learning experiences and interact with students (Kasmawati et al., 2025). Although digital and innovative media can support student engagement, their effectiveness remains dependent on appropriate teacher guidance, classroom management, and the development of responsible learning behaviors. Thus, the use

of learning resources, including technology-based media, should be accompanied by strategies that strengthen students' responsibility, self-regulation, and discipline. Previous research has also demonstrated that innovative learning media can support more interactive learning environments when integrated with appropriate pedagogical strategies (Kasmawati et al., 2023).

Teachers' role as models is particularly important in the development of discipline. Students learn not only through explicit instruction but also through observing and imitating the behavior of significant adults in their environment. Teachers who demonstrate punctuality, consistency, responsibility, fairness, and compliance with established rules provide concrete examples of disciplined behavior. Through repeated interaction and habituation, these behaviors can gradually become internalized as part of students' character. This process is consistent with the view that students' social and behavioral development is influenced by the quality of their interactions and the social environment in which learning occurs (Saputra & Parisu, 2025).

Previous studies have examined character education, habituation, teacher role modeling, and classroom management as important components in developing student discipline. However, many studies have focused on the general implementation of character education or the effectiveness of particular habituation programs without examining comprehensively the strategies used by teachers, the challenges encountered during implementation, and the solutions developed within a specific elementary school context. A more contextual understanding is therefore needed to explain how discipline is fostered through the interaction between teacher strategies, students' behavioral characteristics, classroom conditions, and the broader school environment.

Preliminary observations at an elementary school indicated that some fifth-grade students continued to demonstrate disciplinary problems, including arriving late, paying insufficient attention to teachers' explanations, failing to complete assignments on time, and showing limited awareness of cleanliness and order in the school environment. Some students also demonstrated limited responsibility during learning activities and group work. These conditions suggest that the development of discipline remains an ongoing educational challenge and requires systematic, consistent, and contextually appropriate teacher strategies.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to describe the strategies used by teachers to foster discipline among fifth-grade elementary school students, identify the challenges encountered in implementing these strategies, and analyze the efforts undertaken to address such challenges. The study is expected to contribute to the development of character education research by providing a contextual account of

teacher strategies for fostering discipline in elementary education. Practically, the findings may provide insights for teachers and schools in designing consistent, sustainable, and student-centered approaches to strengthening discipline as an essential component of students' character development.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to obtain an in-depth understanding of the strategies used by teachers to foster discipline among fifth-grade elementary school students. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study focused on exploring and describing educational practices, experiences, interactions, and challenges within their natural context without manipulating the research setting. This approach enabled the researcher to examine how discipline-building strategies were implemented and understood by the participants involved in the educational process.

The study was conducted at SD Negeri 03 Ranomeeto Barat, located in Jati Bali Village, Ranomeeto Barat District, South Konawe Regency. The research involved informants selected through purposive sampling based on their knowledge and direct involvement in the implementation of student discipline. The informants consisted of the school principal, the fifth-grade classroom teacher as the primary informant, and several fifth-grade students who participated in discipline-building activities. The selection of these informants was intended to obtain diverse perspectives regarding teacher strategies, the implementation of disciplinary practices, the challenges encountered, and the responses developed within the school context.

Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Passive-participant observation was conducted to examine directly the implementation of teacher strategies for fostering student discipline during classroom instruction and other school activities. The observation focused on students' disciplinary behaviors, including punctuality, compliance with classroom rules, responsibility for learning tasks, participation in classroom activities, and maintenance of cleanliness and order. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principal, the fifth-grade teacher, and selected students to obtain detailed information regarding the strategies implemented, the challenges faced, and the efforts undertaken to strengthen student discipline. Documentation was used as complementary evidence and included school regulations, discipline-related habituation programs, photographs of activities, and other relevant records related to character education and student discipline.

The data were analyzed using an interactive qualitative analysis process consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During the data

reduction stage, information obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation was selected, organized, focused, and simplified according to the research objectives. The reduced data were then displayed in a systematic narrative form to facilitate the identification of patterns, relationships, and meanings related to teacher strategies for fostering discipline. Conclusions were subsequently drawn based on the emerging findings and continuously verified throughout the research process by examining the consistency of the data and their relevance to the research focus.

The credibility of the research findings was established through source, method, and time triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from the principal, teacher, and students. Method triangulation involved comparing data obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. Time triangulation was conducted by collecting and comparing data at different times and in different situations to examine the consistency of the information. These procedures were implemented to strengthen the credibility, consistency, and trustworthiness of the research findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

A. Preliminary Observation of Students' Discipline

Preliminary observations were conducted using ten indicators of student discipline, including understanding of school rules, awareness of the importance of discipline, understanding of the consequences of violations, responsibility for assignments, punctuality, compliance with school and classroom regulations, and classroom orderliness. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Preliminary Observation of Student Discipline Indicators

Discipline Indicator	Observation Findings
Understanding school rules	Most students understood the school regulations and were familiar with the rules applied in the school environment.
Understanding the importance of discipline	Students had begun to understand the importance of discipline, although this awareness was not yet consistent.
Understanding the consequences of violations	Most students understood the consequences or sanctions associated with violating school rules.
Awareness of the need for discipline	Students' awareness of the importance of discipline remained limited and required continuous guidance.
Feeling guilty after	Most students demonstrated feelings of discomfort or

violating rules	guilt after violating school rules.
Taking responsibility for assignments	Several students still required motivation and supervision to complete their assignments responsibly.
Arriving on time	Most students arrived on time, although some students were still occasionally late.
Completing assignments on time	Some students tended to postpone assignments and consequently submitted them after the established deadline.
Complying with school and classroom rules	Although students generally knew the rules, minor violations, such as talking during lessons, still occurred.
Maintaining classroom order	The classroom environment was not always fully conducive because some students engaged in conversations unrelated to the learning activities.

The preliminary observation findings indicate that students generally possessed an adequate understanding of school rules and the consequences of violations. This was reflected in their relatively positive understanding of school regulations and sanctions. However, knowledge of rules had not always been translated into consistent disciplinary behavior. Several aspects, particularly awareness of the importance of discipline, responsibility for assignments, timely completion of tasks, compliance with classroom regulations, and maintenance of classroom order, still required improvement.

These findings indicate a gap between students' cognitive understanding of discipline and their actual implementation of disciplined behavior in everyday school activities. Therefore, continuous teacher intervention through habituation, role modeling, motivation, guidance, and supervision remains necessary to support the internalization of discipline as a character value.

B. Teacher Strategies for Fostering Student Discipline

The findings revealed that teachers implemented several interconnected strategies to foster discipline among Grade 5 students. The dominant strategy was habituation, which was integrated into daily academic and non-academic activities. The routines included arriving at school on time, participating in morning activities, praying before lessons, carrying out classroom duties, maintaining cleanliness, submitting assignments according to deadlines, and complying with school regulations.

The implementation of habituation demonstrated that discipline was not developed solely through verbal instruction. Rather, students were provided with repeated opportunities to practice disciplined behavior in authentic school situations.

Through consistent repetition, these behaviors gradually became part of students' daily routines. Observations showed that most students had become accustomed to participating in routine activities, maintaining classroom cleanliness, and following established procedures, although some students still required regular reminders and supervision.

In addition to habituation, teachers applied role modeling as an important strategy. Teachers demonstrated punctuality, neatness, politeness, responsibility, and compliance with school regulations. Such behavior provided students with concrete examples of disciplined conduct. This finding reinforces the importance of the teacher as a model in character education, as students at the elementary level frequently learn through observation and imitation.

Teachers also used advice, motivation, and constructive guidance to strengthen students' awareness of discipline. When students violated rules, teachers explained the consequences of the behavior and emphasized the benefits of discipline in learning and everyday life. This approach indicates that the development of discipline was oriented not only toward behavioral compliance but also toward the formation of students' internal awareness and responsibility.

The use of interactive and innovative learning approaches may also support the development of student discipline by increasing students' engagement and participation in learning activities. The integration of appropriate learning media can create a more meaningful learning environment and encourage students to participate more actively in classroom activities (Kasmawati et al., 2025). In this context, discipline is not separated from the learning process but can be strengthened through learning experiences that are structured, engaging, and responsive to students' characteristics.

C. Challenges Encountered in Fostering Student Discipline

Despite the implementation of various strategies, teachers continued to encounter several challenges. The findings identified three major factors: family conditions, students' limited internal awareness, and environmental influences. These factors were interrelated and affected the consistency of students' disciplinary behavior.

Family-related factors represented one of the most significant challenges. Some students received limited supervision and attention in developing disciplined habits at home. This condition influenced their behavior at school, particularly in relation to punctuality, preparation for school, and compliance with established routines. The findings suggest that discipline development cannot be regarded solely as the responsibility of the school because the family represents the child's primary social and educational environment.

Another challenge involved students' limited internal awareness. Several students continued to require reminders to arrive on time, complete assignments, maintain classroom order, and pay attention during lessons. Although students generally understood the rules, some had not yet developed sufficient self-regulation to consistently practice disciplined behavior without external supervision.

Environmental influences also contributed to the challenges encountered by teachers. Elementary school students are still developing socially and tend to observe and imitate behaviors demonstrated by people around them. Consequently, an environment characterized by poor discipline may reinforce undisciplined behavior, whereas a supportive and consistent environment may strengthen the development of positive habits.

The findings further indicated that teachers experienced difficulties in modifying habits that students had developed within their families and communities. Some students continued to arrive late, engage in unrelated activities during lessons, or demonstrate limited responsibility for assigned tasks despite the consistent implementation of school-based discipline programs. This condition highlights that character development is a gradual and long-term process that requires consistency across educational environments.

D. Measures Taken to Address the Challenges

To address these challenges, teachers implemented several complementary measures, including individual guidance, parental collaboration, motivation, and consistent habituation.

First, teachers provided advice and educational guidance to students who violated school rules. Rather than relying exclusively on punishment, teachers explained the importance of discipline and helped students understand the consequences of their behavior. This approach was intended to develop students' internal awareness and responsibility.

Second, teachers strengthened communication and collaboration with parents. Parents were involved in monitoring students' disciplinary development outside school and reinforcing the habits established in the classroom. This collaboration was considered important because inconsistent expectations between home and school may reduce the effectiveness of discipline-building efforts.

Third, teachers used an individualized approach for students who frequently demonstrated undisciplined behavior. Teachers provided additional attention, listened to students' explanations, and offered persuasive guidance. This approach allowed teachers to understand the factors underlying students' behavior and develop more appropriate responses.

Fourth, teachers consistently provided motivation and positive reinforcement. Students were reminded that discipline contributes not only to successful learning but also to the development of responsibility and preparation for future life. The provision of motivation was therefore directed toward strengthening students' understanding of the long-term benefits of disciplined behavior.

Finally, teachers maintained the consistent implementation of daily routines. These routines included arriving on time, participating in morning activities, completing assignments according to deadlines, maintaining classroom order, and complying with school regulations. Repeated practice enabled students to gradually develop disciplinary habits.

Observations showed that when students arrived late, teachers applied corrective procedures combined with educational guidance. Students were required to report before entering the classroom and were subsequently reminded of the importance of punctuality and responsibility. This practice demonstrates that disciplinary measures were implemented not merely as sanctions but as opportunities for reflection and behavioral improvement.

Overall, the findings indicate that the teacher's approach to fostering discipline was multidimensional. Habituation formed the foundation of daily discipline development, while role modeling, motivation, individualized guidance, supervision, and parental collaboration functioned as complementary strategies. The combination of these strategies enabled discipline to be developed as a continuous character-building process rather than merely as compliance with school rules.

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that the dominant strategies used by teachers to foster discipline among fifth-grade students were habituation and role modeling. Habituation was implemented through consistent daily routines, including arriving at school on time, praying before lessons, maintaining classroom cleanliness, completing assignments according to established deadlines, and complying with school regulations. These findings indicate that discipline was developed through repeated practice in students' daily activities rather than through verbal instruction alone. The consistent repetition of disciplined behaviors provided students with opportunities to gradually internalize discipline as part of their everyday character.

The use of role modeling further strengthened the implementation of habituation. Teachers demonstrated punctuality, responsibility, neatness, politeness, and compliance with school regulations in their daily activities. This finding confirms that teachers play an important role in character formation because students learn not only through direct instruction but also through observing the behavior of

significant adults in their environment. In this regard, the teacher functions as a model whose behavior can provide concrete examples of disciplined conduct for students.

Another important strategy identified in this study was the use of classroom agreements or shared classroom commitments. Through this approach, students were involved in establishing expectations regarding classroom behavior and learning activities. Student participation in developing classroom commitments can strengthen their sense of ownership and responsibility toward the rules that have been collectively established. Consequently, discipline is not merely experienced as an external obligation imposed by the teacher but as a shared commitment that requires collective responsibility.

The findings are consistent with the view that character development should be integrated into students' learning experiences and daily interactions. Parisu et al. (2025) emphasize the importance of integrating character education into the learning process so that character values can be developed through meaningful educational experiences. In the context of discipline, this means that values such as responsibility, punctuality, orderliness, and commitment need to be practiced continuously through classroom routines and school activities. Thus, the development of discipline should not be separated from the broader educational process but should become an integral part of students' learning experiences.

The development of discipline is also closely related to students' social interactions and surrounding environment. Saputra and Parisu (2025) explain that individual cognitive and social development is influenced by interaction with the social environment. This perspective is relevant to the present findings, which show that family conditions and environmental influences affected the consistency of students' disciplinary behavior. Students who receive inconsistent guidance or supervision at home may experience difficulties in maintaining disciplined habits at school. Similarly, social environments that do not consistently model disciplined behavior may make it more difficult for students to internalize the values promoted by teachers.

The study also identified students' limited internal awareness as an important challenge. Although most students understood school rules and the consequences of violations, some students were not yet able to consistently regulate their own behavior. This finding suggests that knowledge of rules does not automatically result in disciplined behavior. Therefore, teacher strategies should gradually move beyond external supervision toward the development of self-awareness and self-regulation. Advice, motivation, reflection, individualized guidance, and positive reinforcement can help students understand the personal and social benefits of disciplined behavior.

To address these challenges, teachers implemented several complementary strategies, including collaboration with parents, individualized approaches,

motivation, supervision, and consistent habituation. Collaboration with parents was particularly important because discipline development requires continuity between school and home. When teachers and parents communicate and apply consistent expectations, students receive stronger reinforcement for developing disciplined habits. This collaboration also helps ensure that the values and behavioral expectations introduced at school are reinforced within the family environment.

The individualized approach used by teachers also demonstrates the importance of understanding students' diverse backgrounds and behavioral characteristics. Students who frequently violate rules may require different forms of guidance from those who only occasionally demonstrate disciplinary problems. By providing personal attention, listening to students' explanations, and offering persuasive guidance, teachers can address behavioral problems in a more educational and responsive manner. This approach is important because discipline development should not be based solely on punishment but should also encourage students to understand the consequences of their behavior and develop personal responsibility.

The findings also highlight the importance of a supportive learning environment. Kasmawati et al. (2025) explain that the transformation of learning media and educational practices requires teachers to adapt learning environments to students' needs and characteristics. Although the present study primarily focused on discipline-building strategies rather than digital media, this perspective remains relevant because an organized, engaging, and well-managed learning environment can support students' participation, responsibility, and self-regulation. A learning environment that is systematically managed can provide clear behavioral expectations and create conditions that support the development of disciplined habits.

Furthermore, the use of innovative learning resources, when appropriately managed, can contribute to the development of more active and meaningful learning experiences (Kasmawati et al., 2023). Although the present study did not specifically examine the effectiveness of Prezi-based media, the findings of Kasmawati et al. (2023) provide an important perspective on the role of innovative learning media in creating interactive and engaging learning environments. In relation to discipline development, engaging learning activities may help students maintain attention, participate actively, and develop responsibility for their learning tasks. Therefore, the development of discipline can also be supported by learning environments that are both structured and responsive to students' learning needs.

The findings demonstrate that fostering student discipline requires a multidimensional approach. Habituation provides the foundation for developing consistent behavior, while role modeling, classroom agreements, motivation, individualized guidance, supervision, and parental collaboration strengthen the

process of character internalization. However, the effectiveness of these strategies continues to be influenced by factors beyond the school, particularly family conditions and the broader social environment. This finding reinforces the importance of viewing character development as a continuous process that occurs through interactions among various educational environments.

Therefore, the development of discipline should be viewed as a shared responsibility involving teachers, schools, families, and communities. Sustainable discipline development requires consistency between the values taught at school and the behaviors modeled in students' home and social environments. The study consequently reinforces the view that character education is most effective when it is implemented continuously, contextually, and collaboratively. Through the integration of habituation, role modeling, individualized guidance, parental collaboration, and a supportive learning environment, teachers can strengthen not only students' compliance with rules but also their awareness, responsibility, and ability to practice discipline independently in everyday life.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, this study concludes that teachers fostered discipline among fifth-grade students primarily through continuous habituation and role modeling integrated into daily school activities. These strategies included arriving at school on time, participating in routine activities, praying before lessons, maintaining classroom cleanliness, carrying out classroom responsibilities, complying with school regulations, and submitting assignments according to established deadlines. The consistent implementation of these routines helped students gradually develop disciplined habits, although some students still required continuous guidance and reinforcement.

The study also identified several challenges in fostering student discipline, including family-related factors, limited student self-awareness, and environmental influences. Differences in parenting practices and insufficient supervision at home affected the consistency of students' disciplinary behavior. In addition, some students had not fully developed the internal awareness and self-regulation necessary to practice discipline independently, while social environments could either support or hinder the development of disciplined habits.

To address these challenges, teachers implemented integrated strategies involving collaboration with parents, individualized guidance, continuous motivation, supervision, role modeling, and consistent habituation. These efforts were directed not only toward ensuring students' compliance with school rules but also toward

developing their awareness, responsibility, and ability to internalize discipline as a character value.

Fostering student discipline requires a continuous, collaborative, and contextual approach. Teacher strategies at school will be more effective when supported by consistent guidance from families and a positive social environment. Therefore, strengthening cooperation among teachers, schools, parents, and the wider community is essential to ensure that discipline is not merely practiced within the school environment but is gradually internalized and reflected in students' everyday lives.

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