

ENHANCING TEACHER ATTENDANCE DISCIPLINE THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REWARD AND PUNISHMENT SYSTEMS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract. Teacher discipline plays a pivotal role in maintaining instructional quality and professional integrity within educational institutions. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of applying reward and punishment systems in improving teachers' attendance discipline during classroom teaching activities at SD Negeri Cibalagung 2, Bogor City. The research utilized a School Action Research (SAR) design, conducted in two cycles involving ten elementary teachers. Data were collected through observation sheets, attendance records, and documentation, then analyzed descriptively to assess behavioral improvement. The findings revealed a significant increase in teacher punctuality and classroom presence, with the rate of delayed attendance (>15 minutes) decreasing from 47.83% in the first cycle to 0% in the second. The implementation of clear incentives and corrective sanctions not only enhanced compliance but also fostered accountability and motivation among teachers. These results suggest that a well-structured reward and punishment mechanism can effectively strengthen organizational discipline, improve teaching consistency, and support the creation of a positive school culture oriented toward quality education.

Keywords: teacher discipline; reward and punishment; school culture; attendance; elementary education

I. INTRODUCTION

Effective teacher discipline, particularly in terms of attendance and punctuality, constitutes a critical component of maintaining instructional quality and fostering a positive school climate. Multiple studies have demonstrated a significant correlation between teacher presence in class and student academic outcomes, as consistent instructor availability contributes to classroom stability, continuity in lesson delivery, and student engagement [1]–[3]. However, in many educational settings especially in developing countries—teacher absenteeism or tardiness remains a persistent challenge undermining instructional effectiveness [4], [5]. Discipline in the context of teacher attendance can be conceptualized not only as compliance with institutional expectations but also as a manifestation of professionalism, responsibility, and work ethic [6]. From a behavioral perspective, the use of contingent reinforcement specifically reward and punishment systems has been proposed to shape and sustain desired behaviors, drawing upon principles of operant conditioning [7], [8]. In educational research, applying rewards (e.g., recognition, incentives) for consistent performance and sanctions (e.g., warnings, loss of privileges) for noncompliant behavior has been explored as a mechanism to enhance teacher discipline [9], [10]. Recent empirical investigations in school contexts have shown mixed but promising results regarding such systems' effectiveness. For instance, a school action research conducted in SDN 019

Tanjung Sawit [4] found that implementing a reward–punishment scheme led to observable improvement in teachers' attendance discipline across two cycles [11]. Similarly, in Bandulan 1, a study revealed that delays late in entering class dropped substantially after the introduction of structured incentives and corrective measures [12]. These findings align with broader organizational behavior literature indicating that explicit reinforcement protocols can strengthen accountability and motivate compliance [13].

Nevertheless, the implementation of reward and punishment models in educational settings is not without criticism. Some scholars caution that excessive reliance on external motivators may undermine intrinsic motivation, especially when teachers perceive the system as rigid or unfair [14], [15]. Moreover, the contextual factors—such as school leadership support, clarity of policy, transparency, and fairness in distribution—play pivotal roles in determining success [16]. Given these mixed perspectives, more rigorous empirical study is required to evaluate the balance between extrinsic motivators and sustained professional commitment. In the Indonesian context, limited studies have focused specifically on elementary school teachers' attendance discipline through structured reward–punishment systems. To address this gap, the present study investigates the application of a reward and punishment mechanism aimed at enhancing teacher attendance discipline during classroom teaching at SD Negeri Cibalagung 2, Bogor City. The research seeks to answer: Does the implementation of a well-designed reward

and punishment system significantly improve teacher classroom attendance discipline? and What behavioral changes emerge in response to the system across iterative cycles? By employing a school action research (SAR) design, this study intends to contribute empirical evidence on the practicality, effectiveness, and sustainability of contingent reinforcement strategies in primary education settings. The results are expected to yield insights for educational administrators, policymakers, and school leaders on designing incentive systems that promote discipline while preserving teacher motivation and professionalism.

Teacher discipline reflects an individual's internalized values, commitment, and professional ethics in performing their duties responsibly within an educational organization [17]. A disciplined teacher exhibits punctuality, consistency, and adherence to institutional regulations, all of which contribute to the overall effectiveness of the teaching-learning process [18]. Several studies underscore that discipline directly correlates with teaching quality and student performance outcomes, as consistent attendance and preparedness ensure continuity and classroom stability [19], [20]. In educational management theory, discipline also functions as a form of organizational behavior control a mechanism through which school leaders align teachers' performance with institutional objectives [21]. Consequently, building and maintaining discipline require systematic approaches involving supervision, communication, and reinforcement mechanisms [22].

Reward and punishment mechanisms originate from behaviorist learning theory, particularly Skinner's operant conditioning, which posits that behaviors followed by positive consequences are likely to be repeated, while those followed by negative outcomes tend to diminish [23]. In the educational workplace, rewards can take various forms, such as recognition, incentives, or professional advancement, while punishments may include verbal warnings, reduced privileges, or corrective feedback [24]. The balanced use of both strategies promotes accountability and shapes desirable professional conduct among teachers [25]. Recent empirical research has validated the effectiveness of reinforcement based strategies in improving teacher attendance, work commitment, and instructional discipline. For instance, Yuniarti et al. (2022) reported that combining performance based rewards with clear sanctions increased teachers' punctuality and classroom engagement by more than 40% in Indonesian public schools [26]. Similarly, Okorie and Uche (2021) emphasized that the use of transparent, fair, and consistently applied disciplinary policies enhances teachers' intrinsic motivation and sense of belonging [27].

The implementation of reward and punishment systems must be supported by strong instructional leadership. Principals play a strategic role as role models who cultivate discipline through example, guidance, and fair enforcement of school rules [28]. Research in school management demonstrates that when leaders demonstrate fairness and accountability, teachers are more likely to internalize organizational norms and sustain disciplined behavior. Moreover, the literature highlights that reward and punishment policies are most effective when embedded

within a collaborative and participative school culture, where teachers are involved in decision making processes concerning disciplinary policies [27], [28]. Although numerous studies have explored reward and punishment frameworks in corporate and secondary education contexts, relatively few have investigated their application in elementary schools, particularly concerning teacher attendance discipline. Most prior studies emphasize student behavior modification, overlooking how reinforcement systems affect educators' professional routines. Therefore, this study contributes to filling the existing gap by empirically analyzing how structured reward and punishment mechanisms influence teacher discipline in classroom attendance within Indonesian elementary schools.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a School Action Research (SAR) design aimed at improving teachers' discipline in classroom attendance through the implementation of a structured reward and punishment system. School Action Research, adapted from Classroom Action Research (CAR), is an iterative and reflective approach designed to enhance the quality of teaching and school management practices [29]. The research was conducted at SD Negeri Cibalagung 2 in Bogor City, Indonesia, involving ten teachers across seven learning groups. The study was organized into two intervention cycles, each comprising four key stages: (1) planning, (2) action implementation, (3) observation, and (4) reflection following the model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart. The first cycle focused on identifying existing disciplinary patterns and testing an initial reward-punishment framework, while the second cycle refined the approach based on reflective feedback and performance outcomes.

Data collection utilized three complementary instruments: teacher attendance records, structured observation checklists, and reflective journals from school leaders. Quantitative data on attendance punctuality were analyzed descriptively to assess behavioral change between cycles, whereas qualitative notes from observations and reflections were interpreted thematically to capture shifts in motivation, collaboration, and compliance. Ethical principles were maintained throughout the research, ensuring transparency and professional consent among participants. The validity of the findings was strengthened through triangulation of multiple data sources and peer debriefing. This methodological design ensured both empirical rigor and contextual relevance, allowing for a practical understanding of how reward and punishment strategies affect teacher discipline and professional accountability in elementary education settings [30].

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of the reward and punishment system led to a notable improvement in teachers' attendance discipline across two research cycles. During the first cycle,

observations revealed that 47.83 % of teachers arrived more than 15 minutes late to class, and only 21.74 % were on time. After introducing formalized reward–punishment mechanisms—such as public acknowledgment for punctual teachers and verbal warnings for repeated tardiness attendance improved moderately, with 56 % of teachers achieving the punctuality standard. However, this did not meet the predefined success indicator of 75 %. In the second cycle, refinements were introduced: transparent communication of attendance results during weekly assemblies, a recognition program for consistent punctuality, and stricter corrective feedback for habitual delays. As a result, the proportion of teachers arriving within 10 minutes of scheduled time increased to 80 %, while no teacher exceeded a 15 minute delay, surpassing the expected performance threshold. These findings confirm that structured reward and punishment interventions produced measurable direct effects on punctuality and classroom attendance, validating similar patterns observed in other educational action research contexts [31].

Qualitative observations highlighted substantial behavioral changes among teachers. Participants demonstrated increased awareness of attendance accountability, greater enthusiasm for teaching preparation, and mutual reinforcement of discipline within the staff community. Teachers reported that the transparent nature of the reward system enhanced intrinsic motivation and reinforced positive peer norms. Conversely, the proportional and fair implementation of punishment minimized resistance, promoting a perception of fairness and shared responsibility findings consistent with previous organizational behavior studies [32]. The second-cycle reflection meetings revealed that discipline improvements extended beyond attendance, influencing broader aspects such as lesson readiness and adherence to school schedules, showing the model's indirect effects on professional conduct.

The overall trend aligns with prior studies asserting that clear performance expectations combined with reinforcement strategies contribute significantly to teacher behavioral change [33]. This outcome also supports the premise of behavioral reinforcement theory, where consistent application of positive and negative consequences fosters sustainable performance improvement [23]. Moreover, the leadership role of the principal as a motivator and role model amplified the intervention's impact, echoing findings from Setyaningsih and Suchyadi (2023) that leadership fairness mediates the success of disciplinary programs [28]. Thus, the present study provides empirical evidence that the reward–punishment framework serves as both a managerial control tool and a motivational driver when implemented transparently and reflectively. These findings demonstrate that fostering discipline in educational institutions requires a combination of accountability mechanisms and supportive leadership practices ensuring that external motivators evolve into internalized professional values over time [34].

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study confirm that the structured implementation of reward and punishment systems significantly enhances teachers' discipline in classroom attendance and punctuality. Through two iterative School Action Research (SAR) cycles, measurable improvements were recorded teacher lateness exceeding 15 minutes dropped from 47.83 % in the first cycle to 0 % in the second, while overall punctuality rose to 80 %. The study demonstrated that the direct effects of the intervention included improved timeliness and compliance, whereas indirect effects emerged in the form of higher motivation, professional responsibility, and stronger peer accountability among teachers. These outcomes support behavioral reinforcement theory, suggesting that consistent and transparent feedback loops encourage sustainable behavioral change within educational institutions . The application of reward and punishment proved most effective when embedded in reflective leadership practices, open communication, and fairness in implementation. This underscores the importance of instructional leadership as a mediating factor that transforms disciplinary enforcement into collaborative professional growth [28]. Consequently, schools that cultivate a balanced culture of appreciation and corrective feedback are more likely to maintain consistent teaching quality, discipline, and teacher engagement. The results of this study hold several implications for educational administrators and policymakers. First, designing a school-wide discipline management system that integrates rewards and sanctions can establish a culture of responsibility and commitment among teachers. Second, leadership training should emphasize participatory supervision and transparent feedback mechanisms to maintain fairness and motivation. Third, future professional development programs should align intrinsic motivation with extrinsic reinforcement to ensure sustainability of teacher discipline practices. For further research, longitudinal and comparative studies across multiple institutions are recommended to explore the long term impact of reward–punishment frameworks on broader indicators of teacher professionalism, job satisfaction, and student achievement. In addition, digitalized monitoring and recognition systems may enhance efficiency and transparency in tracking attendance and performance, aligning with the evolving landscape of data driven educational management.

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