

# ENHANCING STUDENTS' LEARNING DISCIPLINE THROUGH REINFORCEMENT TECHNIQUE

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## ABSTRACT

*This two-cycle classroom action research aimed to improve SMPN 1 Salawu students' learning discipline through reinforcement technique. Participants were six 7th-grade students recruited using purposive sampling technique. Data were garnered through observation and interview and analyzed descriptively. The study's result demonstrate students' learning discipline improvement after engaging in the two cycles. The result has also met the process and outcome criteria. Students' learning discipline in SMPN 1 Salawu was improved through reinforcement technique. This result could be used as a reference for school counselors in using reinforcement technique to address issues on students' learning discipline.*

*Keywords:* learning discipline, reinforcement, adolescents.

## INTRODUCTION

School is an organization in which personal and social interactions take place in an organic relationship (Atmodiwiro, 2000:37). It is an institution in which individuals learn and possibly engage in counseling service, serving as the second environment where children learn and develop their personalities (Made Pidarta, 1997).

In this place, students learn to enhance their knowledge and develop character while teachers deliver knowledge and guide students' character. The Government Regulation No. 19 of 2017 on Teacher defines a teacher as a professional educator whose primary duty is to educate, teach, guide, direct

assess, and evaluate students in formal education at early childhood, elementary, and middle levels (PP No 19, 2017). The regulation asserts that a teacher is a professional responsible for transferring knowledge to students while educating, guiding, and directing them to develop good personalities, including disciplined behaviors. It is important for teachers to direct and guide students to develop their discipline behaviors.

Our observation and interview with the school principal, vice principal on students' affairs, school counselor, homeroom teachers, and subject teachers revealed that students in class 7B exhibited poor disciplined behaviors, and six students in this class

violated the school dress code and did not submit their assignments. From 6 January 2022 to 24 January 2022, these students were reported to violate school dress code regulation fourteen times, and only 2 out of 16 school days where they follow the dress code regulation, showing that their average percentage of dressing related- disciplined behavior was 12.5%.

These students were also reported not to submit their assignments in four subjects: Islamic Education, Mathematics, and Natural Science. They only submitted 1 out of 4 assignments in Islamic Education; They even did not submit any assignment out of 4 assignments in Mathematics. In the natural science subject, one student only submitted 1 out of 4 assignments, while the other five students did not submit their assignments at all. The following table presents students' assignment submission behavior submission behavior.

Table 1  
*Assignment Submission Behavior*

No.	Students	Islamic Education	Mathematics	Natural Science	Mean
1	MA	25%	0%	0%	8.3%
2	MD	25%	0%	0%	8.3%
3	NA	25%	0%	0%	8.3%
4	NR	25%	0%	0%	8.3%
5	A	25%	0%	0%	8.3%
6	T	25%	0%	25%	16.7%
Mean		25%	0%	4%	9.7%

According to the school counselor, their behaviors were accounted for by their unpreparedness to adapt to offline learning. They were also still unfamiliar with the school regulation.

Discipline in education provides students with understanding of what behaviors are expected of them (Covaleskie, 2000). Internalizing disciplined attitude could help students achieve their goals (Angguni 2021). Disciplined behaviors are important in the learning process, as students with higher learning discipline may likely obtain higher learning quality. As Haryono (2016) asserts,

students' learning success may be affected by their learning methods (Sugiarto et al., 2019).

In this study, behavioral theory was applied to address students' learning discipline, considering that students' lack of learning discipline is categorized as maladaptive behaviors, and the behavioral theory is developed to address such behaviors. In the same vein, Prabowo and Cahyawulan (2016) states that behavioral approach aims to modify maladaptive behaviors and habituate them to adaptive behaviors.

According to Lynn and Garske (1985), behavioral theory (1) concentrates on behavioral process, (2) emphasizes the here-and-now dimension, (3) believes that individuals are in maladaptive behaviors, (4) believes that learning process is an effective means to change maladaptive behaviors, (5) sets behavioral changes-related goals, (6) empirically emphasizes values through various techniques and methods (Sanyata, 2012). In other words, this theory fits the purpose of this study, as it focuses on students' lack of learning discipline.

There are some techniques in behavioral theory applicable to the context of this study: (1) Reinforcement (Positive Reinforcement and Negative Reinforcement), (2) Token Economy, (3) Contract technique, (6) Deprivation, (7) Time Out, (8) Flooding, (9) satiation, (10) punishment, and (11) systematic desensitization (Sari et al., 2014). For this study's purpose, reinforcement was used.

## METHODOLOGY

This spiral classroom action research comprises four main stages (Kemmis & McTaggart.): Planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

Participants were six students in class 7C in SMP Negeri 1 Salawu. They were recruited due to their lack of discipline. Data were garnered through observation and interview and analyzed descriptively.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Based on Cycle I result, we concluded that students' improvement was still suboptimal because the score was below 65% (i.e., 64% for dressing discipline). Although the score was close to the predetermined criteria, the behavior was still inconsistent. However, students exhibited a stable improvement in dressing behaviors, as shown in the following chart:

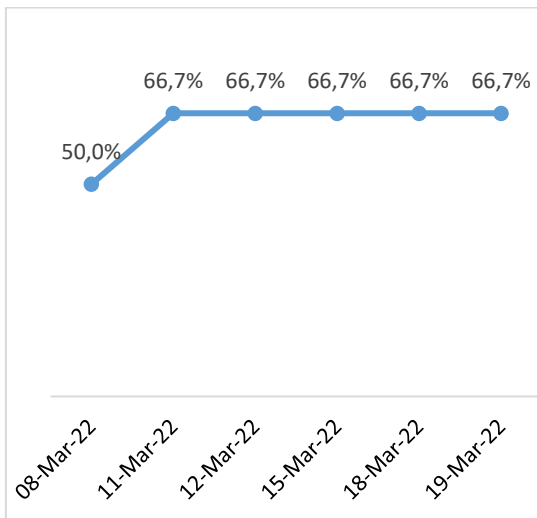


Figure 1  
*Discipline in Dressing Cycle I*

As shown in Table 1, The mean score of students' assignment submission in cycle I was 41.7%, which was far below the predetermined criteria. Students' assignment submission behavior also exhibit stable improvement, as shown in the following figure.

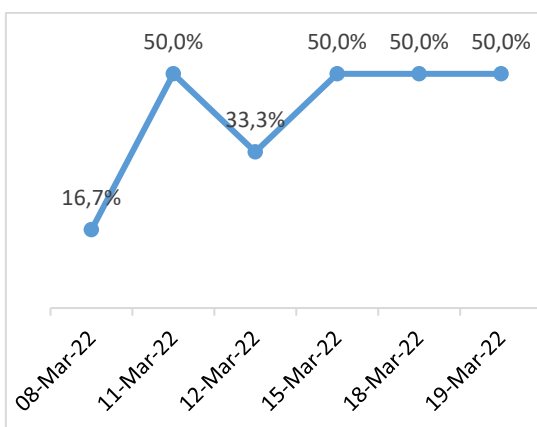


Figure 2  
*Assignment Submission Behavior in Cycle I*

This result may be accounted for by the ineffective reinforcement and counseling session. Thus, it is necessary to improve the treatment.

An improvement was noticed although students' discipline in dressing was still far below the outcome criteria. During the precycle stage, students' score in dressing discipline was 12.5% and that in assignment submission was 10%.

In cycle II, the action plan was modified by referring to the result of reflection to Cycle I, considering that the improvement was still not as expected. The modifications were made as follows: (1) Positive reinforcement was given by praising students in more detail, which was previously merely a modest compliment. (2) Negative reinforcement was changed from merely a verbal warning to punishment. These changes exhibited a significant result. The students' score for dressing discipline was 94%, thus meeting the predetermined criteria. The following chart demonstrates students' significant improvement.

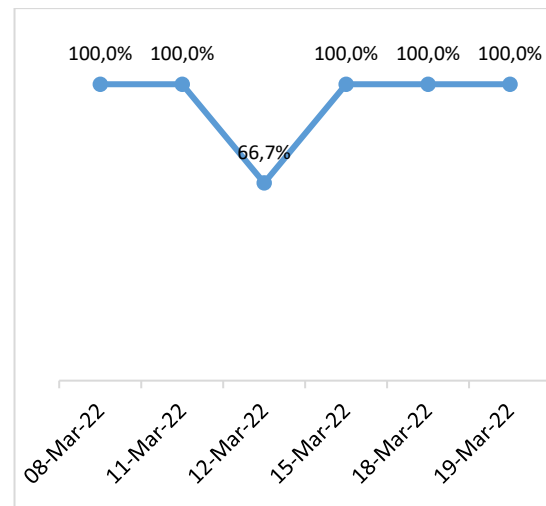


Figure 3  
*Discipline in Dressing Cycle II*

Students' overall score of assignment submission behavior in Cycle II was 81%, which also met the predetermined criteria. The following chart presents students' significant improvement.

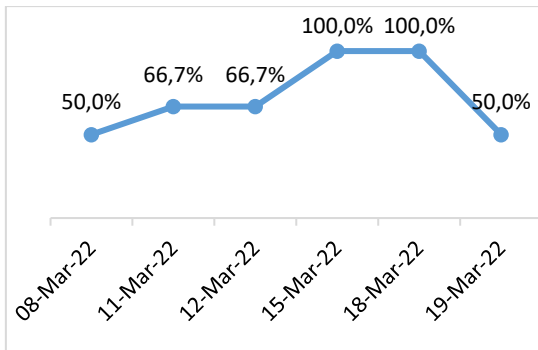


Figure 4  
*Students' Assignment Submission Behavior Cycle II*

In addition to achieving the criteria, cycle II witnessed a significant improvement, during which Students' discipline in dressing and assignment submission behavior increase by 30% and 39%, respectively. These score improvements have met the process criteria of minimum improvement of 10%.

The following figure displays the overall result of students' learning discipline.

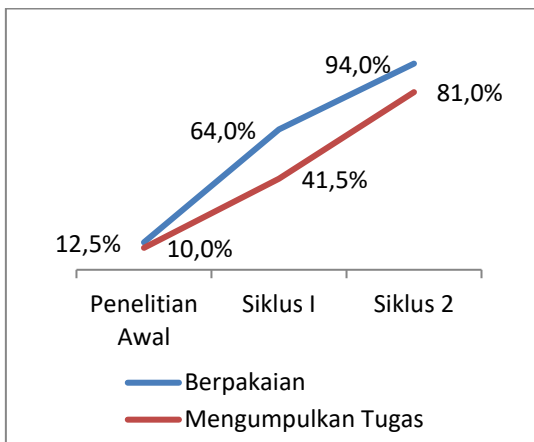


Figure 5  
*Students Learning Discipline*

The graph above demonstrate students' learning discipline improvement. This spiral classroom action research has passed the process criterion of 10% improvement in each cycle and the outcome criterion of minimum score of 65%.

## CONCLUSION

An improvement was noticed after two-cycle action research. In conclusion, the reinforcement applied by researchers and the teacher collaborator could enhance students' learning discipline in SMPN 1 Salawu. This spiral classroom action research has passed the process criterion of 10% improvement in each cycle and the outcome criterion of minimum score of 65%.

Prior to the main cycles, students' discipline in dressing was 12.5%, and after two-cycle of reinforcement techniques, they exhibited a score of 94%, showing a 81.5% improvement. With regard to students' assignment submission behavior, their score in the pre-cycle stage was 10%. After two-cycle of reinforcement techniques, they exhibited a score of 81% or 71% improvement. Learning discipline is helpful in maintaining optimal learning processes and optimize learning outcomes.

Suharsimi Arikunto views discipline as one's self-control with respect to regulations. One's compliance with regulation may be driven by his/her awareness (Agustin, 2018). Hurlock (2000) explains that the word discipline has a similar meaning to 'disciple, an individual who willingly learns or voluntarily follows a leader, and in this context, parents and teachers may act as a leader to whom a student learns to attain a happy life. Disciplined behaviors have a number of purposes.

Schaefer divides these purposes into short-term and long-term ones: The former aims to train students to have self-control and be familiar with rules, while the latter aims to control and develop students' character that could resist external influences (Schaefer, 2010). Skinner argues that individuals' behavior stems from the consequences they receive. When they receive positive reinforcement due to their behaviors, they will likely repeat their behaviors. In contrast, when they receive a negative reinforcement, they will likely stop exhibiting such behaviors (Erford, 2017).

The reinforcement technique was first proposed by Skinner, a psychologist focusing

on behavioral theory. He defines reinforcement as a stimulus that strengthens certain behaviors (Erford, 2017). The term reinforcement also means 'to improve', 'to strengthen', or 'to repeat' (Gerald Corey, 2009). According to Saidiman, reinforcement technique refers to a teacher's positive response to students' behavior, which potentially causes such a behavior to be repeated by the students (Gatina Komalasari, 2011). According to Moh. Uzer Usman, reinforcement refers to any form of response that constitutes teachers' modification of students' behavior, which aims to provide feedback to students related to their behaviors (Usman, 2003).

There are two types of reinforcement: positive and negative reinforcement. It should be noted that both types primarily aim to strengthen one's behavior. They both aim to increase the possibility of the target behavior being repeated in the future. The difference between them lies in the nature of consequences following the behavior (Miltenberger, 2001).

Raymond G. Miltenberger states that a reinforcement technique aims to achieve at least one of these goals: (1) increasing the frequency of target behavior, (2) extending the duration of the target behavior, (3) increasing the intensity of target behavior, (4) reducing the latency of the target behavior (Miltenberger, 2001).

Martin and Pearl (2015) suggest steps for effectively implementing reinforcement techniques: (1) Selecting the target behavior, (2) selecting appropriate reinforcement, (3) implementing reinforcement, (4) directing toward natural reinforcement (Martin & Pear, 2015). In the present study, the teacher-researcher put efforts to apply these stages to improve the students' discipline.

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