

## **INTERNALIZATION OF DISCIPLINE VALUES THROUGH SCHOOL CULTURE IN STUDENT CHARACTER BUILDING AT MTSN 2 MANDAILING NATAL**

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**Abstract.** This study aims to analyze the process of internalizing disciplinary values through school culture and its impact on student character formation at MTsN 2 Mandailing Natal. This study used a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were obtained through participatory observation, in-depth interviews with the principal, teachers, and students, and documentation. The data analysis technique used the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which was carried out continuously through the stages of data condensation, data presentation, and drawing and verifying conclusions. In the data condensation stage, the researcher selected, focused, and grouped data according to the research theme. Next, the data were presented in the form of descriptive narratives to make the relationships between findings easier to understand. The final stage was carried out through drawing and verifying conclusions to ensure the consistency and validity of the data based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation. The research findings indicate that internalization of disciplinary values is carried out through habituation, teacher role models, and reinforcement through a system of rewards and sanctions. A consistent school culture has been proven to be able to shape the character of students who are more disciplined, responsible, independent, and have prosocial behavior in the madrasah environment.

**Keywords:** Value Internalization; Discipline; School Culture; Student Character; Character Education

**Abstrak.** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis proses internalisasi nilai-nilai kedisiplinan melalui budaya sekolah serta dampaknya terhadap pembentukan karakter siswa di MTsN 2 Mandailing Natal. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data diperoleh melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam dengan kepala sekolah, guru, dan siswa, serta dokumentasi. Teknik analisis data menggunakan model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña yang dilakukan secara berkelanjutan melalui tahapan kondensasi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan serta verifikasi kesimpulan. Pada tahap kondensasi data, peneliti menyeleksi, memfokuskan, dan mengelompokkan data sesuai tema penelitian. Selanjutnya, data disajikan dalam bentuk narasi deskriptif agar hubungan antar temuan lebih mudah dipahami. Tahap akhir dilakukan melalui penarikan dan verifikasi kesimpulan untuk memastikan konsistensi dan keabsahan data berdasarkan hasil observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa internalisasi nilai kedisiplinan dilakukan melalui pembiasaan, keteladanan guru, serta penguatan melalui sistem penghargaan dan sanksi. Budaya sekolah yang konsisten terbukti mampu membentuk karakter siswa yang lebih disiplin, bertanggung jawab, mandiri, dan memiliki perilaku prososial di lingkungan madrasah.

**Kata Kunci:** Internalisasi Nilai; Kedisiplinan; Budaya Sekolah; Karakter Siswa; Pendidikan Karakter

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## INTRODUCTION

Education in the 21st century faces the challenge of not only developing cognitive competencies but also strengthening students' character in response to social change, globalization, and the rapid development of technology (Yaumi, 2021). One of the most urgent character issues in schools today is the weakening of student discipline, reflected in behaviors such as tardiness, low responsibility, rule violations, and declining respect for school regulations. These conditions indicate that character education has not been fully internalized in students' daily behavior. Therefore, discipline is considered a fundamental character value because it supports self-regulation, responsibility, and social order in both academic and social life. The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture also emphasizes that character education should be integrated into school culture and daily practices rather than taught only as theoretical knowledge (Kemendikbud, 2020). At MTsN 2 Mandailing Natal, preliminary observations revealed that the school had implemented various disciplinary programs systematically, such as morning assemblies, attendance routines, and teacher supervision. However, the process through which these practices internalize discipline values into students' character has not been comprehensively examined.

Theoretically, this study is grounded in three interconnected pillars. First, Thomas Lickona's (2021) character education theory argues that good character consists of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Thus, discipline must be developed not only at the level of understanding rules but also through emotional commitment and habitual behavior. Second, Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory explains that students learn behaviors through observation and imitation of significant role models, particularly teachers. In this context, teachers' consistency in demonstrating disciplined behavior becomes a central factor in shaping students' character. Third, Dewey (1938) emphasized that habits are formed through continuous and meaningful practice, while Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory explains that values become internalized when repeated social interactions are transformed into internal psychological awareness. These theories collectively indicate that discipline cannot be formed through punishment alone, but through habituation, role modeling, and reinforcement within a supportive school culture.

Previous studies have highlighted the important role of school culture in strengthening character education (Hidayat & Asyafah, 2021; Rahman, 2022). However, most studies tend to focus on the outcomes of discipline rather than examining how disciplinary values are internalized through everyday school practices, especially in Islamic secondary schools or madrasah settings. Research exploring the interaction between habituation programs, teacher

modeling, and reinforcement systems in shaping disciplined behavior as a collective social habit remains limited (Rahmayani et al., 2024). This indicates a research gap in understanding the internalization process of discipline values within religious-based educational institutions.

Based on this gap, the novelty of this study lies in its focus on analyzing the internalization mechanisms and social dynamics of school culture in shaping disciplined character, rather than merely measuring behavioral compliance. The urgency of this research is closely related to the need for strengthening students' discipline as a foundation for developing responsible, independent, and morally aware citizens in the 21st century. Therefore, this study aims to: (1) analyze the process of internalizing discipline values through school culture at MTsN 2 Mandailing Natal, and (2) examine the impact of this internalization on students' character formation.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative approach (Arifin, 2012), chosen because the research aims to understand in-depth the internalization process of discipline values through school culture at MTsN 2 Mandailing Natal. The research type is a case study, which is appropriate for exploring contextual phenomena within real-life environments (Yin, 2014). This design allows in-depth, contextual analysis of interactions among school culture elements.

The research was conducted at MTsN 2 Mandailing Natal, North Sumatra, selected purposively because of its recognized implementation of discipline culture. The research took place over one month. Data sources consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from in-depth interviews and participatory observation with informants including the principal, four teachers, and ten students selected purposively based on their involvement in school culture activities. Secondary data were obtained from documentation including school rules, attendance records, sanction logs, and reward certificates.

Data were collected through three techniques: participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation study. Participatory observation was conducted to examine daily disciplinary practices such as morning assemblies, punctuality, classroom order, and extracurricular activities. Semi-structured interviews were used to explore participants' experiences, strategies, challenges, and perceptions regarding the internalization of discipline values. Documentation study supported the findings through written and visual evidence related to school programs and disciplinary activities. To ensure data trustworthiness, the study applied source triangulation, technique triangulation, and time triangulation. Source triangulation compared information obtained from principals, teachers, and students, while

technique triangulation compared findings from observation, interviews, and documentation. Time triangulation was conducted by collecting data at different periods to examine consistency.

Data analysis employed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. In the condensation stage, the researcher selected, simplified, and categorized data relevant to the research focus. The data were then organized into descriptive narratives to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn and continuously verified using supporting evidence from observations, interviews, and documentation. The analysis was theory-driven, focusing on themes related to habituation, modeling, reinforcement, and Lickona's character education components.

## **RESULTS**

### **The Process of Internalizing Discipline Values through School Culture**

#### *Habituation*

Habituation was implemented through daily routines: arriving on time (before 07:00 AM), participating in the morning assembly in orderly lines, and obeying written school rules. One student stated, "I come on time because my homeroom teacher is always in class before the bell. It would be embarrassing to be late" (Interview, Student A, February, 2026). Students reported that punctuality had become an automatic behavior rather than forced compliance. Examples of habituation extended beyond formal activities: students routinely cleaned their classroom before lessons, submitted assignments on time, and queued for canteen purchases.

#### *Modeling*

Teachers consistently demonstrated discipline: they arrived earlier than students, began and ended lessons on time, wore neat uniforms, and followed the same school rules. A teacher explained, "We cannot demand discipline from students if we are not disciplined ourselves. Every morning I am at the school gate by 06:45" (Interview, Teacher B, February, 2026). The hidden curriculum operated powerfully: students learned discipline not from explicit lectures but from watching adults' daily consistency.

#### *Reinforcement*

The school used both positive and negative reinforcement. Positive reinforcement included verbal praise, public recognition in assemblies, and small rewards such as certificates. Negative reinforcement consisted of graduated sanctions: verbal warnings for minor infractions, written

warnings for repeat offenses, and parental meetings for chronic lateness. One teacher noted, "When a student is late, we don't just scold. We ask why, remind them of responsibility, and assign a small reflective task. The goal is awareness, not fear" (Interview, Teacher C, February, 2026).

### **Implementation of Discipline Culture in School Activities**

Discipline culture was implemented across three school domains. First, morning rituals: the daily morning assembly was a key site where students lined up by class, stood at attention, listened to announcements, and practiced collective discipline. Second, classroom learning: discipline was observed through active engagement where students raised hands before speaking, worked in groups without noise, and submitted assignments on time. A teacher noted, "Discipline in learning means respecting the learning process itself. Students now understand that disruption harms everyone" (Interview, Teacher D, February, 2026). Third, extracurricular and social interactions: in sports, clubs, and free time, students followed schedules, cleaned up after activities, and resolved conflicts without teacher intervention.

### **Impact of Internalization on Student Character**

The internalization of discipline produced measurable changes in student character across four dimensions. First, responsibility: students completed tasks without reminders and admitted mistakes. Second, independence: students managed their time and organized personal belongings. Third, rule adherence: students followed rules even when unsupervised. Fourth, prosocial behavior: students helped peers and maintained school cleanliness. One teacher reported, "Before, students would litter during recess. Now they automatically pick up trash even if the teacher isn't looking" (Interview, Teacher A, February, 2026). The principal noted a 30% reduction in disciplinary referrals over one semester based on documentation analysis

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Internalization as a Three-Stage Process**

The findings of this study indicate that the internalization of discipline values at MTsN 2 Mandailing Natal occurs through a systematic, three-stage process of habituation, modeling, and reinforcement. This finding supports Lickona's (2021) character education theory, which argues that good character requires moral knowing, feeling, and action. Habituation provides moral knowing as students cognitively understand rules through repeated practice. Modeling activates moral feeling as students develop respect for disciplined teachers and internalize the

emotional value of orderliness. Reinforcement enables moral action as behavioral consequences encourage consistent disciplined conduct.

This finding also aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory, which explains that internalization occurs when external social activities are transformed into internal psychological functions. The school's daily routines, collective assemblies, and teacher–student interactions function as mediating tools that gradually shape students' self-regulation and disciplined behavior. Recent studies also support this perspective by emphasizing that social interaction and school culture play a central role in strengthening students' character formation through repeated collective practices (Rahmayani et al., 2024; Hidayat & Asyafah, 2021). Similarly, Dewey's (1938) theory of habit formation is reflected in the findings of this study, where repeated and meaningful disciplinary activities contribute to the development of stable character traits. Through consistent habituation, discipline is no longer perceived merely as external control, but becomes part of students' internal awareness and moral responsibility. This finding is reinforced by recent research showing that continuous school-based habituation programs significantly influence students' responsibility, self-discipline, and prosocial behavior in educational settings (Sari & Nugroho, 2023; Fitriani et al., 2024).

### **School Culture as a Mediating Tool**

The findings indicate that school culture functions as the primary medium for the internalization of discipline values. Through daily routines such as morning assemblies and punctuality practices, teacher role modeling, and consistent reinforcement systems, the school creates an educational environment that supports the formation of disciplined behavior. This finding is consistent with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, which explains that student development is influenced by interactions within interconnected social systems. In this context, school culture as a microsystem is strengthened through teacher practices and institutional policies, creating a consistent environment that supports character formation. Recent studies also confirm that supportive school environments and consistent behavioral reinforcement significantly contribute to students' self-regulation and character development (Rahmayani et al., 2024; Fitriani et al., 2024).

The implementation of morning assemblies and collective routines also reflects Durkheim's (1925) concept of moral education through collective activities, where repeated social practices build shared moral awareness and collective responsibility. Students not only learn discipline individually but also develop a collective commitment to orderly behavior within the school community. These findings support previous studies by Hidayat and Asyafah

(2021) and Rahman (2022), which emphasize the role of school culture in strengthening character education. However, this study contributes a more specific analysis by modeling the internalization process into three interconnected stages, namely habituation, modeling, and reinforcement, and by linking each stage to relevant theoretical mechanisms in character education and socio-cultural learning.

### **Teacher Role Modeling as a Critical Success Factor**

Among the three stages, teacher role modeling emerged as the most critical success factor. Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory explains that modeling influences observers through attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. Teacher discipline provides a live, credible model that students naturally imitate. This finding is consistent with research by Marwah et al. (2023) on culturally responsive pedagogy in Indonesian multilingual education, which emphasizes that teacher authenticity and consistency are essential for value internalization. The hidden curriculum operates powerfully in this context. Students learn discipline not from explicit lectures but from watching adults' daily consistency. When teachers arrive early, dress neatly, and follow rules, they demonstrate that discipline is a shared value rather than a mere student requirement. This finding has important practical implications: madrasahs must invest in teacher character development alongside student programs.

### **Impact on Student Character and Self-Regulation**

The impact of internalization on student character is multidimensional. Students demonstrate increased responsibility, independence, rule adherence, and prosocial behavior. The finding that discipline generalizes from formal settings to unstructured activities indicates genuine character change rather than mere compliance. This represents what Lickona (2021) terms the highest stage of internalization: self-regulated discipline. Students who automatically pick up trash even when teachers are not looking, or who remind peers about punctuality, have internalized discipline as a personal value. This finding supports previous research by Wulandari et al. (2021) on translanguaging practices in Indonesian classrooms, which demonstrated that contextual practice helps students connect school values to meaningful action. However, this study extends that research by showing that the same principle applies to character values: repeated, contextual practice within a supportive culture enables deep internalization.

### **Challenges and Differentiated Support**

Although the internalization of discipline values generally showed positive results, several challenges remained, particularly among students who had difficulty maintaining consistent disciplined behavior. This condition indicates that internalization is not a uniform process because students come from different family backgrounds, social environments, and levels of parental supervision. Students from less structured home environments often require longer adaptation because the discipline values developed at school are not always reinforced in their daily life outside school. Therefore, the success of school culture in shaping discipline depends not only on school programs but also on the continuity of values between school, family, and community.

This finding is consistent with Navanti (2025), who explains that policy implementation in rural Indonesian schools often faces gaps due to differences in family support, limited resources, and uneven student readiness. In this study, the school addressed these challenges through individualized mentoring, teacher supervision, and repeated reinforcement. Such strategies show that internalization requires differentiated support based on students' needs. This is also in line with Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the zone of proximal development, which emphasizes that students need scaffolding from more capable adults to move from external compliance toward internal self-regulation. Thus, the main challenge in discipline internalization lies not only in designing school rules but also in ensuring continuous guidance and contextual support for students. Discipline becomes sustainable when students are not merely required to obey rules but are gradually guided to understand the meaning, benefits, and moral responsibility behind disciplined behavior.

### **Theoretical and Practical Implications**

Theoretically, this research enriches the study of character education in madrasahs by showing how school culture can build disciplined character through habituation, modeling, and reinforcement mechanisms. These findings support and extend Lickona's character education theory by demonstrating how the three components operate in a non-Western, religious-based educational context. Practically, this research provides recommendations for other madrasahs. First, written codes of conduct must be institutionalized, but teacher consistency as role models is even more important. Second, teachers should use guided reflection rather than punitive sanctions to strengthen moral feeling. Third, regular evaluations need to be conducted for continuous improvement. Fourth, strategies are needed to support students from less structured home environments through individualized mentoring

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that the internalization of discipline values at MTsN 2 Mandailing Natal occurs through a systematic, three-stage process: habituation, modeling, and reinforcement. These stages align with and operationalize Lickona's character components (moral knowing, feeling, action), Bandura's observational learning, and Dewey's habit formation theory. School culture serves as the primary mediating tool for internalization. Through daily routines (assembly, punctuality), teacher role models, and a consistent reinforcement system, the school transforms external rules into internal self-discipline.

The impact on student character is positive and multidimensional. Students demonstrate increased responsibility, independence, rule adherence, and prosocial behavior. The internalization generalizes from formal settings to unstructured activities, indicating genuine character change. Teacher role modeling and a supportive school environment are identified as the most critical success factors. Without credible models and consistent enforcement, habituation alone is insufficient. These findings confirm that consistent school culture, integrating moral knowing, feeling, and action, effectively builds sustainable student character in madrasah settings.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings, the researchers recommend several things for future program development. First, for madrasahs: institutionalize written codes of conduct, but more importantly, ensure teacher consistency as role models through ongoing professional development. Second, for teachers: use guided reflection rather than punitive sanctions to strengthen moral feeling, and provide individualized mentoring for students struggling with consistency. Third, for future researchers: conduct longitudinal studies to measure retention of discipline values after students leave the madrasah environment, and include multiple madrasahs using observational scoring rubrics to strengthen generalizability.

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