

## STRATEGIC POLICY OF THE PRINCIPAL IN SOLVING STUDENT DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS AT STATE VOCATIONAL SCHOOL 1 SIGLI

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### Abstract

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Student indiscipline remains a major challenge in school management, especially in vocational schools. This condition requires the strategic role of the principal as a policy maker in formulating and implementing effective disciplinary policies. This study aims to examine the strategic policies of principals in dealing with student discipline issues and to identify the factors that cause student indiscipline at SMK Negeri 1 Sigli. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through interviews, observation, and documentation. The research subjects included the principal, vice principal for student affairs, and guidance and counseling teachers. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study indicate that the principal's strategic policies are formulated through a participatory process involving various school stakeholders and are implemented flexibly according to the conditions of the students. The principal's strategic policies have a positive effect on student disciplinary behavior and contribute to a more orderly and conducive school climate. Factors that influence student indiscipline include family environment, peer influence, economic conditions, and personal habits of students. This study concludes that the leadership of the principal and collaboration among stakeholders are important in managing student discipline in a sustainable manner.

**Keywords:** strategic policy, principal leadership, student discipline, school management.

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### INTRODUCTION

Student indiscipline remains a frequent problem faced by vocational schools because it affects the school climate and the effectiveness of the learning process. Behaviors such as tardiness, rule violations, and low compliance with school rules can disrupt order and weaken school management (Ilmiah et al., 2023). This situation indicates that the problem of indiscipline is not merely an individual issue, but is also closely related to the management system and strategic policies of the school principal.

The principal has a strategic role as a policy maker who determines the direction and priorities of school management, including in handling student discipline. The principal plays an important role as an educational leader who not only manages administration but also formulates strategic policies that directly influence the school climate and the behavior of school community members (Bush, 2020). These strategic policies are important instruments in controlling indiscipline through the establishment of rules and regulations, guidance mechanisms, and coordination between teachers, educational staff, and parents. Thus, the effectiveness of handling student indiscipline

depends heavily on the quality of leadership and policies formulated by the principal in developing a consistent and sustainable disciplinary system (Mulyasa, 2022).

Previous studies have shown that school principals' policies and leadership play an important role in shaping and strengthening student discipline. Principals not only act as administrators, but also as strategic leaders who determine the direction of school policy through the establishment of rules, the implementation of reward and punishment systems, and continuous supervision in collaboration with teachers and parents (Ihsan & Aryani, 2025). The principal's managerial strategies, including continuous coaching, communication with parents, and the involvement of all school stakeholders, contribute positively to the effectiveness of handling student indiscipline in secondary schools, including vocational schools (Dwi Ari Sandy, 2020). In addition, key strategies such as implementing religious rules, giving rewards, and communicating with students have been proven to create a conducive environment in vocational secondary schools (Hasdiana et al., 2025).

Although several studies have examined student discipline and the role of school leadership in shaping disciplinary behavior, these studies generally still focus on school regulations, teacher guidance, and general management strategies. Meanwhile, research examining the strategic policies of school principals as the main instrument in resolving student indiscipline issues is still relatively limited. In fact, the strategic policies of school principals play an important role in integrating the aspects of planning, implementation, supervision, and evaluation of discipline in a systematic and sustainable manner.

Based on these conditions, this study is necessary to understand how the principal's strategic policies act as the main mechanism in controlling and directing student behavior. This study aims to examine the policies formulated and implemented by the principal to address disciplinary issues among students at SMK Negeri 1 Sigli, as well as to identify the factors that cause such behavior and the impact of these policies on discipline and the school climate. This study is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between principal policies and the formation of a culture of discipline in schools, as well as serve as a conceptual reference for the development of educational management and practical guidance for school leaders in designing more effective and sustainable disciplinary policies.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the principal's strategic policies in resolving student indiscipline issues, as well as the social and institutional contexts surrounding them (John W Creswell et al., 2009). Descriptive research was used to systematically describe the form of policy and the factors causing student disciplinary behavior at school. The research was conducted at SMK Negeri 1 Sigli with research subjects including the principal, vice principal for student affairs, and guidance and counseling teachers. The subjects were selected purposively based on their involvement and understanding of the policies being studied. Data analysis was conducted qualitatively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. These analysis stages refer to the qualitative data analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman (Miles et al., 2013). Data validity was strengthened through source and technique triangulation, by comparing data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation to ensure the consistency, credibility, and accuracy of the research findings.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS**

### **Principal Policy Strategies in Resolving Student Discipline Problems**

Based on interviews with the principal, it appears that disciplinary policies at SMK Negeri 1 Sigli are formulated through a deliberative process involving school leaders and members of the school community. The principal emphasized that discipline is an important part of school life and is not something new for students, as the value of discipline has been instilled in them since their previous levels of education. Discipline is not only aimed at students, but also at teachers and educational staff as a form of exemplary behavior in building an orderly school culture.

The principal explained that disciplinary policies are implemented based on school regulations, but are not applied rigidly. In practice, these policies are adapted to the circumstances of the students, such as the distance from their homes and special situations, such as bad weather. Students who arrive late to school are not only punished, but also guided and directed so that they do not repeat the same offense. This approach shows that the disciplinary policy is not only punishment-oriented, but also focuses on guidance.

The deputy principal in charge of student affairs said that the disciplinary policy focuses on several main aspects, namely attendance, appearance, and obedience to school rules. Supervision of the implementation of the policy is carried out through various activities, such as monitoring at the school gate, conducting guard duty, regular assemblies, and raids on violations of school rules. Any violations found are immediately followed up in accordance with the regulations in force at the school.

In this case, guidance and counseling teachers play a role in supporting the implementation of disciplinary policies by providing counseling services to students who violate the rules. Handling is carried out in stages according to the level of violation, starting from giving warnings, guidance through individual or group counseling, to contacting parents if necessary. The cooperation between the principal, vice principal for student affairs, guidance and counseling teachers, classroom teachers, and other related parties shows that the disciplinary policy strategy at SMK Negeri 1 Sigli is implemented in an integrated manner and involves various elements of the school.

The principal also added that the implementation of the disciplinary policy has brought about changes in the behavior of students at SMK Negeri 1 Sigli. These changes did not happen instantly, but rather through a gradual guidance process. The principal explained that most students have begun to show improved discipline, especially in terms of school attendance, although there are still some students who need additional help through special guidance and home visits.

The deputy principal in charge of student affairs also said that after the disciplinary policy was implemented, there were changes in several types of violations. The rate of student tardiness, appearance ethics, and rude communication decreased. Students tended to be more obedient to the rules and follow the instructions given by the school.

The Guidance and Counseling Teacher also added that students who received guidance and counseling services responded well to the disciplinary policy. Through individual and group counseling services, most students began to realize the importance of discipline. However, guidance and counseling teachers also noted that there were students from certain family backgrounds, such as broken families or those with a lack of parental supervision, who had difficulty maintaining consistent behavioral changes.

In addition to changes in student behavior, the disciplinary policy also had an impact on the overall school atmosphere. The principal stated that the school atmosphere became more orderly and conducive after the policy was implemented. Students became more orderly in participating in school activities, and teachers felt more supported in managing their classes as the number of violations decreased. It can be concluded that the

disciplinary policy implemented at SMK Negeri 1 Sigli is a strategic policy that not only serves as a tool for enforcing rules but also as a managerial instrument for schools in building an adaptive disciplinary culture that has a positive impact on student disciplinary behavior and the overall school climate when the disciplinary policy is implemented consistently and supported by continuous guidance.

### **Factors Causing Indiscipline Among Students at SMK Negeri 1 Sigli**

Based on interviews with the principal, it appears that student indiscipline is not only influenced by conditions at school, but also greatly influenced by the family environment. The principal explained that not all students who leave home actually arrive at school, so the school needs to communicate with parents to ensure student attendance and activities. The school is responsible for students while they are on school grounds, but supervision from the family remains an important factor in shaping disciplined behavior.

The principal also said that the home environment and social circle of students have a major influence on their behavior. Students who are accustomed to behaving well in their family and community environments tend to exhibit the same behavior at school. On the other hand, students who are in less conducive social environments are more likely to engage in indiscipline, even though they still receive supervision and guidance from teachers at school.

The deputy principal for student affairs also added that tardiness to school is often caused by a lack of parental supervision and family economic factors. In addition, peer influence is also a determining factor. Students who associate with friends who have good study habits and discipline tend to be positive, while associating with friends who often break the rules can encourage indiscipline. To prevent this, the school implements a monitoring system by directly monitoring and taking action against any violations that occur.

Guidance and counseling teachers said that some of the most common forms of disciplinary violations were related to students' personal habits, such as wearing makeup that did not comply with school rules and lack of punctuality. Guidance and counseling teachers also explained that family background, such as the habit of waking up late or lack of parental supervision, also influenced students' disciplinary behavior. Although the psychological and social conditions of students are relatively stable, factors such as limited transportation and dependence on friends to go to school can also cause tardiness. Guidance counselors also explained that not all students dare to convey their problems directly in the guidance counseling room, so the school provides youth counseling services as an alternative to help students convey their problems more comfortably. Therefore, efforts to address indiscipline need to be carried out comprehensively through cooperation between the school, parents, and the students' social environment. It can be concluded that the indiscipline of students at SMK Negeri 1 Sigli is caused by a combination of family factors, peer groups, socioeconomic conditions, and internal factors of the students.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Principal's Strategic Policy**

Strategy is not just a routine action, but a pattern of decisions and actions designed to achieve specific goals in a planned and contextual manner. In the context of education, Davies states that strategy is a pattern of specific decisions and actions taken to achieve organizational goals by considering the context, resources, and medium- and long-term plans, so that strategy serves as a framework that guides the overall activities of the school (Carvalho et al., 2021).

Narsa emphasizes that strategy is a multidimensional concept that describes a series of proactive decisions made by management to overcome challenges and achieve organizational goals, with the ability to adapt to a dynamic environment. This shows that strategy is not merely a response to problems, but rather an integrated process of thought and action in the planning and implementation of school policy (Pengajar et al., 2008).

Strategic management, according to Wheelen and Hunger, is seen as a series of managerial decisions and actions that determine the long-term performance of an organization. This process includes monitoring/observing the external and internal environment, formulating long-term strategies, implementing strategies, and evaluating and controlling strategies to ensure that the organization's vision, mission, and goals can be achieved effectively. Through these steps, organizations are expected to understand competitive forces and develop sustainable competitive advantages in a systematic and consistent manner (Okta & Priatin, 2023).

It can be concluded that strategy is a pattern of planned, contextual decisions and actions oriented towards achieving medium and long-term goals. Strategy not only functions as a response to problems, but also as a framework that guides all organizational activities. In the context of education, strategy becomes the basis for principals in formulating, implementing, and evaluating school policies systematically. Through strategic management, schools can integrate planning, implementation, and monitoring of policies on an ongoing basis. Thus, strategy becomes a key tool in improving performance effectiveness and achieving educational goals.

The principal acts as a strategic decision maker in formulating and implementing disciplinary policies that are not only administrative in nature but also oriented towards the long-term goals of the school organization. The principal's leadership strategy includes planning, decision-making, and actions designed to effectively achieve school goals, including improving the performance and discipline of the school community through participatory and communicative mechanisms, where strategic decisions involve monitoring, strategy formulation, and continuous evaluation to ensure that policies are aligned with the school's needs (Mudarris & Rizal, 2023).

In addition, effective school leadership strategies in the context of education often involve collaboration with various parties to overcome institutional challenges and build a conducive school environment. Principals have demonstrated their ability to use strategic approaches in dealing with the internal and external dynamics of school organizations, such as empowering teachers, optimizing communication, and establishing policies that are responsive to changes in the school environment. This approach reflects adaptive and comprehensive strategic leadership, which focuses not only on addressing violations but also on developing and improving the overall quality of the school community (Padang et al., 2026).

It can be concluded that the principal's strategic policy in dealing with disciplinary issues is not merely about enforcing rules, but a series of proactive, contextual, and collaborative decisions. This policy is implemented through various stages involving planning, implementation, coordination, evaluation, and adjustment, which ultimately creates a more disciplined and conducive school climate for the learning process.

School policy as a formal decision that sets guidelines for action requires a clear strategy in order to be implemented effectively. The principal's strategy is understood as a series of managerial decisions and actions that direct all school activities in achieving predetermined goals, including in dealing with student behavior (Utami et al., 2025). In practice, this strategy includes long-term planning, periodic evaluation, and the involvement of various related parties so that the policies that have been formulated are not only normative but also realized in their implementation at school (Sihombing & Samosir,

2021). Therefore, the integration of policy and principal strategy is a determining factor in the effective implementation of rules and discipline at school.

It can be concluded that the disciplinary policy at SMK Negeri 1 Sigli, formulated by the principal, serves as a normative framework that regulates student behavior, while the strategies implemented, such as routine supervision, counseling, and guidance, serve as operational tools to realize this policy. It is this integration between policy and strategy that enables gradual and sustainable changes in disciplinary behavior. Therefore, the success of disciplinary policies is not only determined by the content of the rules, but also by how the principal designs and implements strategies to carry them out consistently and in a context-appropriate manner.

### **Factors Causing Indiscipline in Students**

Indiscipline in students does not only occur because of violations of school rules, but is a manifestation of the interaction between complex internal and external factors. Factors that cause indiscipline in school students include internal factors such as peer influence, lack of parental attention, and poor academic habits, as well as external factors such as school environment conditions and unsupportive regulatory structures, which together influence student behavior in complying with school rules. Determinants of student discipline include internal aspects such as motivation and self-awareness, as well as external factors related to the clarity of school rules, family support, and parental involvement in school life. This study confirms that student discipline levels are significantly influenced by how school rules are consistently enforced and how social support from the educational environment and household work together to shape behavior that complies with norms (Sandi et al., 2025).

Hasan (2020) states that indiscipline is not merely a violation of rules, but a manifestation of an imbalance between students' understanding of school norms and their behavior in their social environment (Hasan, 2020). Disciplinary problems among students can occur due to repeated habits that are not immediately addressed by the school, so that behavior that was initially minor becomes a pattern that continues to occur. Therefore, violations of rules such as tardiness and non-compliance with daily rules tend to be influenced by personal factors and the habits of the students themselves, which, if not anticipated, will affect school discipline as a whole (Indris & Info, 2021).

The role of the principal as a strategic leader in formulating and implementing disciplinary policies can reduce indiscipline through the integration of formal rules and a coaching approach that involves the entire school community (Zaghloul, 2019). An analysis of the factors causing low discipline shows that both internal factors within students and external factors such as family, school, and community contribute to the emergence of indiscipline. These factors include a lack of parental attention, peer pressure, and the influence of different environmental norms, so that addressing indiscipline requires an approach that involves all stakeholders (Nazifa Elisa, 2025).

It can be concluded that student indiscipline is a multidimensional phenomenon that cannot be understood as a mere violation of rules, but rather as the result of interactions between internal factors such as motivation, habits, and peer influence, and external factors such as family, school environment, and rule enforcement systems. Habitual violations that are not immediately addressed have the potential to develop into established patterns of behavior and impact the overall school climate. Therefore, efforts to address indiscipline require a comprehensive and sustainable approach through strategic policies by the principal that integrate rule enforcement, guidance, and the synergistic involvement of teachers, parents, and the students' social environment.

## **The Relationship Between Principals' Strategic Policies and the Resolution of Student Discipline Problems**

The implementation of strategic policies by school principals has a strong relationship with efforts to resolve student disciplinary problems. Policies formulated systematically by school principals are not only normative rules, but also strategic decisions that are implemented through planned implementation steps to direct student behavior in a productive direction. Principal policies that include consistent enforcement of rules, a system of rewards and sanctions, and continuous supervision can create a strong culture of discipline in schools (Ihsan & Aryani, 2025). The implementation of these policies creates an orderly learning environment, supports student order, and directly reduces various forms of indiscipline.

The relationship between strategic policies and student discipline behavior can also be seen in how these policies guide collaboration among school stakeholders. Effective strategic policies are not only determined by the principal individually, but also through coordination with the vice principal, teachers, homeroom teachers, and parents to convey rules and provide continuous discipline guidance. The implementation of school policies that involve the cooperation of all school members and committees can improve the success of character education, including student discipline. The involvement of various parties shows that the principal's strategic policies serve as a framework that supports the sustainability of disciplinary norms in schools and strengthens the collective commitment to the expected behavioral order (Sudaryono, 2021).

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded that the principal's strategic policy plays a very important role in resolving student indiscipline issues at SMK Negeri 1 Sigli. Disciplinary policies that are formulated in a participatory, flexible, and contextual manner can be effective managerial instruments in building a culture of discipline in the school environment. These policies are not only oriented towards enforcing rules, but also emphasize the aspects of guidance, prevention, and assistance for students.

The implementation of the principal's strategic policies has a positive impact on student disciplinary behavior, particularly in terms of attendance, compliance with rules and regulations, and attitudes in interacting within the school environment. In addition, consistently implemented disciplinary policies help create a more orderly, safe, and conducive school climate for the learning process. The success of this policy is supported by the involvement of various school elements, such as the vice principal for student affairs, guidance and counseling teachers, homeroom teachers, and cooperation with students' parents.

However, this study also shows that students' indiscipline is influenced by various factors, both internal and external, such as family background, social interactions, economic conditions, and personal habits. Therefore, addressing indiscipline cannot be done partially, but requires a comprehensive approach through synergy between school policies, parental supervision, and ongoing guidance and counseling services. Thus, the principal's strategic policies, supported by the cooperation of all school stakeholders, are key to achieving sustainable student discipline.

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