



Strategies for Fostering Students' Learning Behavior in the New Normal Period at SMP PGRI 1 Ciputat, South Tangerang

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Abstract

The new normal period after the COVID-19 pandemic has brought significant changes in the learning system and learning behavior of students in Indonesia. The shift from conventional face-to-face learning to an online, then hybrid learning model, requires a thorough adaptation from all education stakeholders, including schools, teachers, learners, and parents. This study aims to describe the strategy of fostering students' learning behavior during the new normal period at SMP PGRI 1 Ciputat, South Tangerang. The research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data collection techniques are carried out through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving school principals, teachers, and students as informants. Data analysis uses the Miles and Huberman model through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/verification. The results of the study show that the strategy of fostering students' learning behavior is carried out through three phases: pre-pandemic (face-to-face learning with moral development based on religious activities), pandemic period (online learning with strengthening the role of parents and teachers as motivators), and the new normal period (limited face-to-face learning with health protocol discipline). The main strategies implemented include the application of school discipline, habituation of positive behavior through religious activities, providing motivation to learn, strengthening the role of teachers as role models, and cooperation between schools and parents. These strategies have been proven to help students adapt to changes in the learning system and improve discipline and learning responsibility. This study recommends that learning behavior coaching needs to be carried out in a sustainable, integrated, and inclusive manner so that the goals of national education can be achieved optimally in the new normal era.

Keywords: Learning behavior coaching, new normal, learners, educational strategies, COVID-19.

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INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic that has hit the world since the end of 2019 has dramatically changed almost every aspect of human life, including the education sector. In Indonesia, the Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) policy implemented by the government has had a major impact on the teaching and learning process. Changes in behavior and habits that are aligned with health procedures are referred to as the new normal or new normal, a new life order that



requires people to remain productive while strictly implementing health protocols (Habibi et al., 2025). In the context of education, the new normal requires a thorough adaptation of all components of the education system.

The learning policy during the pandemic refers to the Circular Letter of the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) Number 4 of 2020 and the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 719/P/2020 concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of the Curriculum in Education Units in Special Conditions. This policy requires conventional learning to be replaced by online learning using various technology platforms such as Zoom Meeting, Google Classroom, and WhatsApp (Firman & Rahman, 2020). This sudden shift not only changes learning methods, but also fundamentally affects students' learning behavior.

Student learning behavior is an attitude that arises in responding to and responding to the teaching and learning process, reflecting the level of enthusiasm and responsibility of students for learning opportunities in achieving learning objectives (Salim & Salim, 1991). At SMP PGRI 1 Ciputat, South Tangerang, the problem of students' learning behavior became real during the pandemic. Initial observations and interviews show that many students are not enthusiastic about learning, lack concentration, and often leave tasks unfinished. This condition is exacerbated by limited internet access, the financial inability of some families to buy data packages, and the lack of teachers' readiness to implement effective online learning methods (Eka Diana & Rofikir, 2020).

National data shows that up to 5% of all public and private elementary and junior high school students in South Tangerang are unable to participate in online Distance Learning (PJJ) due to limited facilities. This situation reflects the digital divide that is a serious obstacle in the implementation of education in the new normal era. Based on the results of the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) research, the reading competence of grade 9 students in Indonesia only reached 22.9% above the minimum standard, far below the 2020-2024 RPJMN target of 34.1%. This condition emphasizes the urgency of improving the quality of the learning process, including through the development of systematic learning behavior.

Behavioristic theory that emphasizes the formation of behavior through stimulus, habituation, and reinforcement is an important foundation in fostering students' learning behavior (Nahar, 2016). In Islam, the importance of conditioning and habituation is also found in the Qur'an Surah Thaha verse 132, which commands to establish prayer patiently and continuously—a cue about the importance of conditioning in shaping behavior (Andriyani, 2015). The synergy between scientific approaches and Islamic values is a typical characteristic of learning behavior development at SMP PGRI 1 Ciputat.

This research is important because the new normal period is a crucial transition phase for the formation of character and learning behavior of junior high school students. The right coaching strategy in this phase will determine the success of students in adapting to the new learning system and achieving optimal educational goals. Relevant previous research was conducted by Yani Yunita (2021) on the creativity of distance learning at MIN 1 Banyumas, but the research focused on the aspect of learning creativity and has not explored the strategy

of fostering learning behavior comprehensively in the context of the new normal at the junior high school level. Based on this background, this study aims to: (1) describe changes in students' learning behavior during the new normal period, (2) analyze the impact of changes in students' learning characteristics during the new normal period, and (3) identify effective learning behavior coaching strategies at SMP PGRI 1 Ciputat.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. The qualitative approach was chosen because the research aims to deeply understand the phenomenon of fostering students' learning behavior in the context of the new normal, which cannot be adequately understood through a quantitative approach alone (Moleong, 2007). The object of the research is 8th grade students of SMP PGRI 1 Ciputat, South Tangerang, with the consideration that grade 8 is a critical phase in the academic and social development of students.

The data sources in this study consist of two categories. Primary data sources include school principals, vice principals, subject teachers (including Islamic Religious Education, Indonesian and English teachers), and students. Secondary data sources include school documents, field notes, and interview recordings. The selection of informants is carried out by purposive sampling, namely by selecting informants who are considered to know the most and are directly involved in the process of fostering students' learning behavior during the new normal period.

The data collection technique was carried out in three ways: direct observation of the learning process and interaction in schools, in-depth interviews with ten main informants and supporters, and documentation studies on school program documents, student attendance, and activity reports. The interviews were conducted from February to March 2021, with interview guidelines compiled based on the dimensions of the research problem.

Data analysis uses the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994) which consists of three flows of activities that take place simultaneously, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn/verification. Data reduction is done by choosing, focusing on important things, and discarding irrelevant information. The presentation of data is carried out in the form of a systematic narrative description. Conclusions are drawn based on data that has gone through a reduction and presentation process, then re-verified to ensure the validity of the findings.

The validity of the data is guaranteed through source triangulation, technique triangulation, and time triangulation (Sugiyono, 2019). Source triangulation is carried out by checking data from various informants. The triangulation technique was carried out by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. Time triangulation is done by conducting re-interviews at different times to verify the consistency of the data. The extension of observations was also carried out to strengthen the credibility of the data obtained.

The research was carried out from January to July 2022, including the preparation stage (title submission, proposal preparation, and licensing), the implementation stage (data collection and analysis), and the research report preparation stage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of SMP PGRI 1 Ciputat and Research Context

SMP PGRI 1 Ciputat was established on January 1, 1975 on the initiative of a number of teachers of SMP Negeri 8 Jakarta led by Drs. Sukandi Kuswara. This school is located in Ciputat, South Tangerang, on an area of 0.25 hectares which is a waqf from Brigadier General Shardjono. Since its establishment until now, SMP PGRI 1 Ciputat has undergone various developments and received the status of "Recognized" and then "Equalized" from the Directorate General of Primary and Secondary Education. This school has diverse student characteristics in terms of ethnicity, culture, and socioeconomic background, so the learning behavior coaching strategy must be inclusive and adaptive.

Fostering Student Learning Behavior in the Pre-Pandemic Period

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, learning at SMP PGRI 1 Ciputat was carried out face-to-face. Teachers can interact directly with students, provide material verbatim, assign assignments, and directly evaluate the results of students' work. The development of learning behavior is carried out comprehensively and integrated in all aspects of school life. The principal emphasized that all religious aspects carried out in schools do not only show the identity of public schools, but more than that, namely as an instrument for fostering students' morals in a sustainable manner (interview with the Principal, March 2021).

The coaching strategy in the pre-pandemic period includes several important components. First, routine religious activities such as the Commemoration of Islamic Holidays (PHBI) which contain material on Islamic History, Fiqh, Moral Faith, and the Qur'an Hadith. From this activity, students are expected to be able to take lessons and make them an example in daily life. Second, positive habituation in the form of reading the Qur'an and praying Dhuha together before learning begins. Third, moral development through the example of teachers. Teachers are not only in charge of delivering academic materials, but also carry out their functions as moral coaches who are role models for students.

This approach is in line with al-Abrasyi's (1970) view that the purpose of studying in Islam is not just to earn a living in the world, but to achieve the essence and strengthen morals—to seek true knowledge and perfect morals. Learning behavior coaching in the pre-pandemic period has proven effective because of direct interaction that allows teachers to immediately respond to students' negative behavior, provide positive reinforcement, and build strong interpersonal relationships.

Fostering Student Learning Behavior during the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic forced SMP PGRI 1 Ciputat to switch to online learning. This condition poses various serious challenges in fostering students' learning behavior. Based on the results of interviews and observations, it was found that during online learning, students' morals did not show a positive response to the learning process: students began to be inactive, bored quickly, complained a lot about accumulated tasks, and less interesting use of learning media (interview with PAI Teachers, November 2021).

Internal factors that hinder positive learning behavior during the pandemic include: decreased learning motivation, lack of concentration due to an uncondusive home environment, and low student confidence in online learning. External factors include limited access to the internet and technological devices, lack of supervision of busy working parents, and the psychological impact of the pandemic situation itself (Sugihartono in Prigantini & Abdullah, 2022).

In response to this situation, SMP PGRI 1 Ciputat developed several adaptive strategies. PAI teachers strive to improve students' morals by providing motivation to remain enthusiastic about learning even in a pandemic situation. The principal actively opens a discussion room so that teachers can ask questions and answers when there are obstacles in carrying out their duties. Every Friday, an online Islamic spiritual activity (Rohis) is held to foster students' learning behavior. In addition, intensive cooperation is carried out between schools and parents: parents play the role of teachers at home, facilitators, and motivators for students (Rahmaniati et al., 2021).

The implementation of student moral development during the pandemic involves all elements of the school, not just PAI teachers. This shows an understanding that fostering learning behaviors is a collective responsibility that must be carried out with the entire school community (Amelia et al., 2023). The five concrete strategies that teachers carry out in fostering students' morals during the pandemic are: (1) being a good role model, (2) making clear and mutually agreed upon class rules, (3) cooperation with students' parents, (4) providing consistent motivation, and (5) efforts to overcome difficulties in online KBM through the flexibility of communication media.

Fostering Students' Learning Behavior in the New Normal Period

The new normal period is marked by the limited reopening of schools by implementing strict health protocols. Learning is carried out in a blended manner (a limited mix of face-to-face and online), with the number of students attending limited according to government regulations. In this phase, the strategy for fostering students' learning behavior becomes increasingly complex because it must integrate adaptation to two learning modalities at once.

The results of the study show that in the new normal period, the development of student learning behavior at SMP PGRI 1 Ciputat is carried out through several main strategies that complement each other. The application of strict school discipline is the first pillar. The vice principal gave directions at the morning briefing so that teachers could carry out their duties properly. Principals are directly involved in solving problems that arise during the new normal, demonstrating active and responsive leadership.

The second pillar is the habituation of positive behavior that continues from the pre-pandemic period, adjusted to the new normal conditions. Reading the Qur'an before learning starts is still carried out, both face-to-face and online. This is in line with the behavioristic view that behaviors that are habitual consistently will become automatic and permanent (Budiningsi, 2012). Congregational Dhuha prayers are carried out when students are physically present at school.

The third pillar is to strengthen the role of teachers as motivators and role models. Teachers are expected not only to ensure the continuity of learning, but also to support the mental health and well-being of students. In the context of the new normal, the role of teachers as motivators has become increasingly crucial considering that many students experience learning boredom and decreased motivation due to prolonged changes in the learning system.

The fourth pillar is close cooperation between schools and parents. Experience during the pandemic shows that parents have a very large role in supporting children's learning success (Susanti & Ain, 2022). In the new normal, the synergy between schools and parents continues to be strengthened, with schools providing transparent information about the development of students' learning behavior to parents.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for Learning Behavior Development

Supporting factors for the realization of positive learning behavior at SMP PGRI 1 Ciputat during the new normal period include internal and external factors of students. From the internal side, factors such as the level of intelligence, positive attitude towards learning, talents, interests, and learning motivation of students contribute positively to the formation of good learning behavior (Ahmadi & Supriyono, 2008). Externally, consistent parental support, a positive social environment, and a creative and empathetic approach to teachers are significant supporting factors.

The inhibiting factors identified include several negative behaviors of students that are still found, including: disturbing friends during learning, bullying behavior in various forms (calling inappropriate, mocking, threatening), and emotional behavior shown by aggressive reactions when feeling disturbed. In addition, family factors are also significant obstacles, including lack of parental attention due to busy work, the impact of divorce, and economic pressure that negatively affects the psychological condition of students (Handayani, 2020).

Implementation of Behavioristic Theory in the Development of Learning Behavior

The coaching of learning behavior at SMP PGRI 1 Ciputat implicitly applies the principles of behavioristic theory developed by Gage and Berliner. The first principle is the use of positive reinforcement in the form of praise, appreciation, and giving trust to students who show positive learning behavior. Djamarah (2006) emphasized that selective positive reinforcement can increase students' attention, provide motivation, control disruptive behavior, and develop confidence.

The second principle is the use of negative reinforcement through the reduction of burden or obligation in response to the desired improvement in learning behavior. The third principle is punishment that is given in a proportionate and educational manner to reduce unwanted behavior, such as asking students to memorize certain material as a consequence of indiscipline. According to Radjah (2021) view, punishment combined with appropriate rewards is more effective in directing student behavior in a positive direction.

The fourth principle is classical conditioning which is applied through daily routines such as Dhuha prayers, reading the Qur'an, and weekly Rohis activities. Habituation that is carried out consistently and repeatedly will form an automatic learning character and behavior

(Budiningsi, 2012). In the Islamic perspective, the command to establish prayer with patience as stated in Q.S. Thaha: 132 is a manifestation of the importance of conditioning in shaping behavior (Andriyani, 2015).

Implementation of the Independent Curriculum as a Context of the New Normal

The new normal period coincides with the implementation of the Independent Curriculum which was launched on February 11, 2022. The Independent Curriculum offers a more flexible structure, focuses on essential materials, and provides flexibility for teachers to use teaching tools that suit the needs and characteristics of students (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019). In the context of fostering learning behaviors, the Independent Curriculum opens up a wider space for the development of non-academic competencies, including the character and learning behavior of students.

The application of diagnostic assessments in the Independent Curriculum allows teachers to map students' competencies, interests, talents, and weaknesses more accurately, so that learning behavior coaching strategies can be designed in a more targeted manner (Budiono & Hatip, 2023). The differentiated learning that is the hallmark of the Independent Curriculum also allows teachers to respond to the diversity of student characteristics—including the diversity of ethnic, cultural, and social status at SMP PGRI 1 Ciputat—with a more personalized and adaptive approach.

Educational Resilience in the Face of the New Normal

The journey of fostering student learning behavior at SMP PGRI 1 Ciputat from the pre-pandemic period to the new normal reflects significant educational resilience. Educational resilience, as interpreted as the ability to survive and recover from disruptions (Masten, in Wijoyo et al., 2021), is evident in the ability of schools to continue to carry out their coaching functions despite facing extraordinary limitations during the pandemic. Kurt Lewin's change model, which includes the Unfreeze-Change-Refreeze stages, is relevant to understand the dynamics of change experienced by SMP PGRI 1 Ciputat. The Unfreeze stage is characterized by the awareness of the need to change from a conventional system to an online system. The change stage is characterized by the implementation of various learning and coaching innovations. The refreeze stage is characterized by the stabilization of new practices that have proven effective in the new normal learning model.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the strategy of fostering student learning behavior at SMP PGRI 1 Ciputat, South Tangerang during the new normal period is implemented in an integrated and evolutionary manner through three phases that are mutually sustainable. In the pre-pandemic period, coaching was carried out through direct face-to-face learning accompanied by various religious activities and positive habits that were integrated into the school ecosystem. During the pandemic, schools adapted to online learning while maintaining the essence of coaching through strengthening the role of teachers as motivators, active involvement of parents, and creative use of digital technology. In the new normal period,

coaching is carried out through a limited face-to-face learning model that still prioritizes health protocols, with the main strategies including: (1) consistent implementation of school discipline, (2) habituation of positive behavior based on Islamic values, (3) providing continuous learning motivation, (4) strengthening the role of teachers as role models and facilitators, and (5) close cooperation between schools and parents.

Students' learning behavior during the new normal is influenced by internal factors (motivation, attitudes, psychological conditions) and external factors (family support, social environment, availability of technological facilities). Inhibiting factors identified included disruptive behavior of friends, bullying, excessive emotionality, and family disharmony. The application of behavioristic theory through positive reinforcement, educational punishment, and conditioning has proven to be effective in shaping and maintaining positive learning behaviors of students.

This study recommends that the development of students' learning behavior needs to be carried out in a sustainable and integrated manner in all aspects of school life, not limited to specific subjects or special moments. Collaboration between schools, parents, and the community is the key to the success of fostering learning behaviors, especially in the era of the new normal full of uncertainty. Schools need to continue to innovate in developing coaching strategies that are responsive to changing social and educational contexts, while still being grounded in the nation's religious and cultural values. The development of similar programs in other schools needs to take into account the specific characteristics of the students and the local context of each educational unit.

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