

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MILITARY BARACKS TRAINING IN RESTORING PROBLEM STUDENT DISCIPLINE

Ahmad Dimiyati Ridwan<sup>1</sup>, Ghina Salsabila<sup>2</sup>, Alfi Nazmi Dimarifah<sup>3</sup>,  
Muhamad Sidqi Mujahid<sup>4</sup>, Fitri Amalia<sup>5</sup>, Sally Aisah Amini<sup>6</sup>

Indonesian University of Education, Indonesia<sup>1</sup>

Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University, Bandung, Indonesia<sup>2,3,4,5,6</sup>

Email: [ahmaddimiyati16@upi.edu](mailto:ahmaddimiyati16@upi.edu)<sup>1</sup>, [ghinasalsabila252525@gmail.com](mailto:ghinasalsabila252525@gmail.com)<sup>2</sup>,  
[alfnazmi2004@gmail.com](mailto:alfnazmi2004@gmail.com)<sup>3</sup>, [sidqimujahid53@gmail.com](mailto:sidqimujahid53@gmail.com)<sup>4</sup>,  
[fitriamalia1000@gmail.com](mailto:fitriamalia1000@gmail.com)<sup>5</sup>, [sallyamini90@gmail.com](mailto:sallyamini90@gmail.com)<sup>6</sup>

### Abstrak

#### Keywords:

Military Barracks Training,  
Student Discipline,  
Behaviorism,  
Juvenile Delinquency,  
Character Education

*The phenomenon of juvenile delinquency in the digital era has reached an alarming level, ranging from brawls to structured criminal acts such as motorcycle gangs. This situation forces educational institutions to seek alternative solutions, one of which is adopting a semi-military approach (barracks training) in collaboration with the TNI/Polri. This article aims to theoretically analyze the effectiveness of military barracks training in restoring the discipline of troubled students and to examine the psychological mechanisms behind it. This study uses a qualitative method with a library research approach. Data were obtained from primary sources in the form of scientific journals and credible news reports, as well as secondary sources in the form of behavioristic psychology literature. The results of the study show three main findings: (1) Military barracks training is effective in forming "compliance reflexes" and improving physical discipline in the short term through a rigorous system of routines and hierarchies; (2) Psychologically, this method works based on the principles of Classical and Operant Conditioning (Pavlov & Skinner) where strict rewards and punishments create a deterrent effect and new habituation; (3) However, long-term effectiveness is often criticized because it tends to produce "forced" compliance rather than awareness. The study concludes that the military approach is effective as "shock therapy" for crisis intervention, but must be integrated with a humanist-persuasive approach (counseling) so that the character changes formed can be permanent and internalized into the students' self-awareness.*

*This is an open access article under the [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/) license*



---

---

## INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a crucial transition period that bridges the gap between childhood and adulthood. During this complex developmental stage, individuals experience significant hormonal, cognitive, and emotional upheavals. Physically, adolescents experience biological changes that influence sexual maturity and physical growth. However, the greatest challenges lie in the psychosocial aspects. Erik Erikson emphasized this, stating that adolescents are in a phase of identity search (identity versus role confusion), where they struggle to find their true selves amidst diverse social demands. Failure to navigate this phase ultimately leads to role confusion, which makes adolescents vulnerable to actions that are detrimental to themselves and their social environment (Cahyadewi & Susilawati, 2025).

The phenomenon of juvenile delinquency in Indonesia has now developed into a disturbing social problem. The forms of deviance are no longer limited to minor offenses such as truancy, but have metamorphosed into structured criminal acts. Recent reports show an extreme escalation of juvenile violence, ranging from brawls using sharp weapons on the streets of East Jakarta to a sadistic bullying case that went viral on social media, in which a teenager was pushed into a river for a spectacle (Cahyadewi & Susilawati, 2025). Furthermore, the phenomenon of motorcycle gangs in urban areas shows a systematic pattern of crime, confirming that juvenile delinquency is no longer just "ordinary delinquency," but rather a symptom of social pathology that requires serious treatment (Asbari, 2025). This condition is exacerbated by the fragile pedagogical relationship in schools, marked by increasing physical and legal conflicts between teachers and students in various regions, such as the case of teacher abuse in Riau and legal disputes in West Java (Eriyanti et al., 2021).

This phenomenon is not unique to Indonesia. Comparative studies show that in countries like the United States and South Korea, strict disciplinary approaches or boot camps are also frequently used as a response to juvenile delinquency crises. However, their effectiveness depends heavily on the cultural context and post-training psychological support. Without systematic follow-up, these interventions often serve as merely cosmetic solutions that fail to address the root of adolescents' emotional problems (Dishion et al., 1999). Therefore, it is important to position barracks training not as mere punishment, but as part of a comprehensive educational rehabilitation strategy.

In response to this moral and discipline degradation, the discourse on implementing military-style educational methods or barracks training has resurfaced. Many schools and local governments have begun adopting a "semi-military" approach by sending problem students to military training centers (Rindam/Kodim) for intensive training. This approach is based on the assumption that a structured, hierarchical, and strictly regulated training pattern can restructure students' lifestyles to become more disciplined and responsible. The disciplined daily routines and strict rules of the military barracks are considered a solid foundation for developing a resilient character that is difficult to achieve through conventional pedagogical methods (Mahbubi, 2025).

However, the implementation of this method has sparked intense academic debate. On the one hand, this approach is considered effective as shock therapy to break the chain of deviant behavior. On the other hand, concerns have arisen regarding long-

term psychological impacts, such as the potential for trauma or false obedience. In the context of educational modernization, the main challenge is how to maintain traditional values (discipline) while still responding to contemporary dynamics that demand a humanistic approach. As expressed by Patriasya, Ridwan, et al. (2025), educational revitalization must be able to bridge the gap between strict traditional methods and the psychological needs of students in the modern era so that character values can be properly internalized without excessive coercion (Patriasya et al., 2025).

This article aims to theoretically examine the effectiveness of military barracks training in changing the behavior of problem students. The analysis will focus on the psychological mechanisms underlying this method, using the tools of behaviorist theory (classical and operant conditioning). Through this study, it is hoped to synthesize understanding regarding the role of military methods in the national education system: whether they are the primary solution or merely an instrument for crisis intervention.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *The Concept of Military Discipline Education*

Education, broadly defined, is a conscious process of nurturing and training morals and intellectual intelligence. In the context of military discipline, this concept is narrowed down to a systematic effort to shape character through total adherence to rules. Military discipline focuses not only on physical or combat skills, but also on the formation of mentality, ethics, and the values of loyalty (*esprit de corps*). Its main characteristics include a very strict routine, a clear command hierarchy, physical consequences for violations, and rewards for obedience.

### *Behaviorist Theory of Behavioral Change*

The theoretical basis for the effectiveness of military methods can be traced back to behaviorist psychology. Ivan Pavlov, with his Classical Conditioning theory, explained that behavior can be shaped through repeated stimulus conditioning. In military barracks, a "siren bell" (a neutral stimulus) was conditioned to signal danger or a command to assemble (a conditioned stimulus), triggering an instant disciplinary response. Meanwhile, B.F. Skinner, through Operant Conditioning, emphasized the role of rewards and punishments. Military education implemented this system to an extreme: compliance was rewarded with rest or praise, while violations were punished with physical sanctions (push-ups, running). According to Fachrudin (2025), this approach acts as behavioral conditioning through strict control of the external environment to elicit desired responses (Fachrudin, 2025).

### *Integrative Character Education Model*

Character education in the modern era can no longer rely on a single approach. Lickona emphasizes that effective character education must address three aspects: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action (Lickona, 2012). Military training tends to emphasize moral action through physical conditioning, but is often weak in moral feeling. Conversely, the humanist-counseling approach emphasizes moral knowing and feeling. Therefore, the integration of these two models, known as blended character education, is the most ideal theoretical solution for addressing students with high psychological complexity.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with library research. This method was chosen because the focus of the study is theoretical and conceptual, with all discussions based on critical analysis of various written sources. The primary focus of the study is the effectiveness of military barracks training and its impact on student psychology.

The research data is classified into two categories. Primary data includes reputable national scientific journals, research articles, and credible news reports (such as those from KompasTV and MetroTV) that specifically discuss the implementation of semi-military-based character education in Indonesia. Secondary data includes textbooks on behaviorist psychology, educational management, and supporting literature on adolescent development and social pathology.

Data collection techniques were carried out through documentation and online searches on academic databases (Google Scholar, DOAJ). All collected data were then analyzed using Content Analysis techniques. The analysis process includes three stages: (1) Data reduction, which is summarizing key points from various literature; (2) Data presentation, which is classifying findings into discussion themes (psychological mechanisms, effectiveness, criticism); and (3) Conclusion drawing, which is synthesizing diverse views to answer the problem formulation regarding the effectiveness of the military barracks method.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Implementation of the Military Barracks Training Concept*

The implementation of military discipline education in schools or through collaboration with the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) is a reactive response to the character crisis. In practice, students are placed in an environment isolated from external distractions (gadgets, promiscuity) and required to follow a schedule designed down to the minute.

The primary goal of this method is to develop an "obedience reflex." As explained by Putra (in Zidni et al., 2024), military discipline aims to build strong character through the internalization of values of order (Husnurofik et al., 2024). Students are taught to value time, respect hierarchy (trainers/teachers), and be responsible for their own equipment and personal hygiene. Unlike regular, persuasive education, this approach is instructive and command-driven.

### *Psychological Analysis: Why Does This Method Work?*

Psychologically, the success of military methods in drastically changing student behavior in a short time can be explained through two main behaviorist mechanisms:

1. Classical Conditioning: The military barracks environment is designed in such a way that students must respond to certain stimuli automatically. Consistency is key here. Pavlov explained that conditioned responses become stronger if the stimulus is presented repeatedly. In the barracks context, waking up at the sound of the trumpet, lining up neatly before meals, and responding in unison are forms of forced habituation that become automatic behavior.

2. Shock Therapy and Environmental Disconnection: This method is effective because it disconnects students from the triggers for their delinquency. By removing students from a "toxic" environment (gang friends, drug access, social media) to a sterile and controlled environment, students' brains are forced to adapt to new norms. Fachrudin (2025) states that external stimuli in the form of strict procedures force students' egos to

submit to communal rules (Fachrudin, 2025).

3. Reinforcement and Punishment (Reward & Punishment): The military system provides instant consequences. There is no negotiation. This provides students with clarity about behavioral boundaries. Students accustomed to living without rules at home will learn that every action has an immediate consequence. This is a concrete application of Skinner's theory, where behavior that is punished tends to weaken, and behavior that is reinforced tends to repeat (Lubis & Nirwana, 2025).

#### ***Effectiveness: Between Disciplinary Success and Educational Criticism***

Based on a synthesis of previous studies, the effectiveness of this method has given rise to a dualistic perspective:

##### **1. Positive Impact (Short-Term Effectiveness)**

Research by Khairul et al. (2022) and Anwari et al. (2025) shows that students who participate in military-style training programs demonstrate significant improvements in physical discipline, neatness, and respect for parents/teachers (Anwari et al., 2025).

a). Academic Improvement: The discipline developed in the barracks often carries over to study patterns. Students become more organized in managing their time, which has implications for improved report card grades.

b). Mental Resilience: The measured physical and mental stress during training builds resilience. Students who were initially spoiled or easily give up become more resilient in the face of stressful assignments.

##### **2. Criticism and Challenges (Long-Term Sustainability)**

Despite its success, this method has drawn sharp criticism from the perspective of humanist pedagogy and children's rights.

a). Banking Model of Education: Musrifah et al. (2025) criticized this approach, arguing that it mirrors Paulo Freire's "banking model," where students become passive recipients of instruction without any room for dialogue. This risks stifling students' critical thinking.

b). False Obedience: The discipline created is often based on fear (fear-based discipline), not internal awareness. When the authority figure (military trainer) disappears and students return to their home environment, the tendency to relapse into deviant behavior is high.

c). Risk of Trauma: Maryam (2025) highlighted that excessive physical approaches risk causing psychological trauma, especially for students who have a history of domestic violence. Rather than healing, this method can exacerbate students' emotional wounds.

##### **3. Critical Analysis: Why Is Military Obedience Often Fragile?**

While data suggests short-term success, a closer analysis reveals the fundamental fragility of this method on its own. Obedience formed in military barracks is often situational. Bandura, in his Social Learning Theory, explains that human behavior is strongly influenced by the environment in which it is placed. In the barracks, the environment is highly controlled (there are trainers, rules, and sanctions). However, when students return to a more relaxed home or school environment, these controlling stimuli are removed.

Students who lack an internal locus of control experience value confusion. In the barracks, they are forced to wake up at 4:00 a.m., but at home, no one scolds them for staying up late. This cultural disparity creates cognitive dissonance, which students often resolve by returning to old, more comfortable behaviors (Festinger, 1972).

Furthermore, neuropsychological criticism suggests that the developing adolescent brain needs emotional connection more than physical threat to learn self-regulation. Chronic stress from physical pressure in the barracks, if excessive, can trigger an increase in the hormone cortisol, which actually inhibits the function of the prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain responsible for wise decision-making (Siegel, 2015). This explains why some students become more aggressive or apathetic after training. Therefore, the role of school counselors is crucial in 'translating' the harsh experiences in the barracks into meaningful, reflective understanding for students.

#### ***Proposed Solution: An Integrative Model***

Given the complexity of juvenile delinquency, a single approach is insufficient. Patriasya, Ridwan, et al. (2025) emphasize the importance of maintaining tradition while responding to modernization, which in this context can be interpreted as combining firmness (traditional discipline) with a psychological approach (modern).

The ideal model proposed is to make military barracks training the initial stage of Crisis Intervention (the initial stage) to break bad habits and provide shock therapy. After this stage is completed, schools are required to continue with Humanist Guidance through intensive counseling and a persuasive approach. The goal is to transform initially "forced" compliance (due to fear of military punishment) into "conscious" compliance (due to an understanding of the value of goodness). This synergy between military firmness and pedagogical gentleness will result in permanent restoration of discipline.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on theoretical analysis and field data, it can be concluded that military barracks training is significantly effective in restoring discipline in problem students, especially in the short term. This method works effectively through a strict behavioral conditioning mechanism, providing a clear structure for students experiencing role disorientation, and building physical and mental resilience.

However, this effectiveness has limitations. A militaristic approach, without psychological support, is prone to producing false obedience and risks stifling students' critical thinking. Therefore, the main recommendation of this study is the implementation of a hybrid model: using military methods as an initial "shock" to break down students' negative egos, which must then be immediately followed by humanistic and dialogical educational rehabilitation to build intrinsic awareness. Only in this way will the discipline formed become a lasting character, not simply a mask of fear. Only in this way will the discipline formed become a lasting character, not just a mask of fear. The implementation of this policy must also be accompanied by regular evaluations involving educational psychologists to ensure there are no violations of children's rights during the training process, and to ensure that every drop of sweat in the training barracks leads to moral improvement, not revenge.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Anwari, A. C. A., Fahruzy, K., Putra, R. I. K., & Yohanes, Y. (2025). EFEKTIVITAS PROGRAM BARAK MILITER SOLUSI UNTUK MENGATASI SISWA/REMAJA BERMASALAH DI PROVINSI JAWA BARAT. *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, 10(02), 337–351.

Asbari, M. (2025). Kenakalan Remaja dan Geng Motor sebagai Gejala Sosial-Kultural:

- Rekomendasi Rehabilitasi Sistemik melalui Integrasi Barak TNI dan Gerakan Pramuka. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial, Manajemen, Akuntansi Dan Bisnis*, 2(1), 12–17.
- Cahyadewi, N. K. C., & Susilawati, L. K. A. (2025). Analisis Faktor Sosial, Keluarga, dan Psikologis di Balik Kenakalan Remaja: Literature Review. *RIGGS: Journal of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Business*, 4(2), 7493–7500.
- Dishion, T. J., McCord, J., & Poulin, F. (1999). When interventions harm: Peer groups and problem behavior. *American Psychologist*, 54(9), 755.
- Eriyanti, E., Arafat, Y., & Eddy, S. (2021). Pengaruh komunikasi interpersonal dan manajemen konflik terhadap kinerja guru. *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai*, 5(2), 2998–3004.
- Fachrudin, Y. (2025). PENDIDIKAN MILITER SEBAGAI STRATEGI BEHAVIORISME UNTUK MENANGANI KENAKALAN SISWA BERLANDASKAN NILAI-NILAI ISLAM. *Tarbawi: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam*, 8(2), 125–138.
- Festinger, L. (1972). A theory of cognitive dissonance. *Social Psychology: Experimentation, Theory, Research*, 254–257.
- Husnurofik, Z., Samsun, S., Tjalla, A., & Syarifah, I. (2024). Pengaruh Budaya Terhadap Pendidikan Disiplin Militer di Indonesia. *Syntax Idea*, 6(2), 578–592.
- Lickona, T. (2012). Character education: Restoring virtue to the mission of schools. In *Developing Cultures* (pp. 57–76). Routledge.
- Lubis, A. H., & Nirwana, H. (2025). Classical Conditioning: Menanamkan Kebiasaan Belajar Yang Efektif Pada Siswa. *Journal Educational Research and Development* | E-ISSN: 3063-9158, 1(3), 307–310.
- Mahbubi, M. (2025). Pendidikan Karakter Melalui Pendekatan Militer:: Analisis Kebijakan Gubernur Jawa Barat Dalam Mengatasi Siswa Bermasalah. *Jurnal Man- Aana*, 2(1), 54–66.
- Patriasya, P. G., Ridwan, A. D., Susetyo, M. B., & Wicaksono, A. T. (2025). MERAWAT TRADISI MERESPON MODERNISASI: REVITALISASI PENDIDIKAN AGAMA ISLAM DALAM DINAMIKA PEMBELAJARAN KONTEMPORER. *Journal of Educational and Religious Perspectives*, 1(3), 85–97.
- Siegel, D. J. (2015). *Brainstorm: The power and purpose of the teenage brain*. Penguin.