

# Student Character Development: How Do Buddhist Religious Retreat Activities Matter to Students' Discipline at Schools?

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**Abstract:** This study aimed to find the Influence of Buddhist Religious Retreat Activities on Student Discipline. The problems that occur in students are the lack of awareness of students to maintain a learning atmosphere, low student responsibility for assignments, lack of understanding of students to sustain social interaction ethics, and lack of student participation in school activities. This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method. The population in this study was 89. The results showed that retreat activities positively and significantly influenced student discipline, with a t-value of 3.446 and a significance (p) of 0.001 < 0.05. This indicates that retreat activities do have a positive effect on student discipline. Based on a simple linear analysis, the R square value of 0.120 suggests that retreats contribute 12.0% to discipline, while the other 88.0% is influenced by different factors, such as the school environment, family, and peers. This confirms that retreat activities are only one component in forming discipline, while other factors outside of spiritual activities also have an essential role in creating the character and self-development of students.

**Keyword:** Retreat Activities; Discipline; Students Character Building

## 1. Introduction

Education in Buddhism is a learning process involving intellectual teaching and moral and spiritual development [1]. Close interaction between educators and students is crucial in learning [2]. In the *sigalovada sutta*, Gautama Buddha explains educators' five responsibilities: providing comprehensive instructions, ensuring students' understanding, equipping them with solid skills, recommending them to others, and creating a safe learning environment. Educational institutions face challenges in providing space for students to engage in religious activities that follow their beliefs, which can contribute to the formation of good behavior [3], [4]. Education is not only limited to academics but also involves activities that support character development, such as retreats. This activity is effective in helping students develop their character and discipline [5]. The formation of disciplined behavior in students can be obtained by doing or participating in retreat activities [6], [7]. Retreat activities are a development of the *vassa* period, where monks practiced more intensively during the *vassa* period because, in Buddha's time, the monks'

spiritual level increased after retreat activities. Therefore, retreat activities can become a positive activity that improves students' discipline. Retreat activities are essential ways to deepen the understanding and practice of Buddhist teachings among students. Retreat activities are carried out by living mindfully and obeying the rules expressed by the Buddha in the *mahasatipatana sutta*, part 2 on the foundations of mindfulness, which reads, thus he abides contemplating the body as a body internally, externally and both internally and externally and he abides without clinging, not attached to anything in the world. And that, monks, is how a monk abides contemplating the body as the body. This means that students must practice mindfulness at all times, whether sitting, standing, walking, or lying down; they should always be aware of what they are doing because retreat activities are a practice of mindful living to instill wisdom in themselves so that students can distinguish between what is good, wrong and beneficial [8].

Retreat activities benefit simplicity, honesty, serenity, and wisdom, which are the core of Buddhist teachings [9]. In schools, educators play a role in directing students to good things, being role models, and giving full attention. Educators must be able to instill values of discipline, especially in students themselves, and eliminate habits that can cause discipline problems [10]. For this reason, education in schools is essential for students because this is the basis for the development of knowledge obtained by students in addition to education from family or the surrounding environment, such as friends [11]. The family environment allows children to develop disciplined characters [12]. The role of family members dramatically influences children's discipline. Parents are responsible for developing children's character, especially in attitudes and behavior, so children become disciplined [13]. Student discipline is a behavior formed through a series of behaviors that show the values of obedience, compliance, loyalty, regularity, and order in learning. Discipline makes students more obedient to regulations and as a basis for forming good characteristics [3], [14]. With discipline, students can comply with the rules set, both in the school environment and outside of school. This makes discipline the foundation for forming directed and responsible behavior, which ultimately supports achieving personal and academic goals [15].

Disciplined students have good behavior, are moral, respect each other, are wise, polite, generous, understand others, and act based on knowledge [16]. In Buddhism, this is shown by the implementation of good ethics. Discipline includes the development of ethics that involve a combination of good thoughts, words, and actions. This is inseparable from self-control, where student discipline reflects their ability to regulate themselves according to ethical values. The behavior and discipline of students greatly influence the success of learning in schools [17]. The condition of students significantly affects the learning process in schools because the learning process at school requires concentration, discipline, and sincerity. Therefore, suggestions are needed to develop discipline by conducting retreat activities to instill good and positive behavior [18]. The discipline formed from the retreat allows students to be more focused, diligent, and responsible in carrying out their student duties [16]. Based on the description above, the researcher is interested in studying the influence of student involvement in Buddhist religious retreat activities on the discipline of students. Therefore, it is necessary to

research and reveal the problem of student discipline as the primary variable connected to other variables that are thought to be able to overcome discipline problems, namely the retreat activity variable. The final result expected from this study is to prove the hypothesis regarding the influence of student involvement in Buddhist religious retreat activities on the discipline of students.

## 2. Method

In this study, the researcher used a survey method with a quantitative descriptive approach and data processing techniques in the form of a questionnaire with a total of 74 questions using a Likert scale in the answers. In this study, the population studied was 89 students from class IX at SMP Bodhi Dharma Batam, and all students were sampled using the total sampling technique. According to [19], total sampling is a sampling return technique in which all members of the population are sampled, and according to [19], if the population is less than 100 people, then the entire population is sampled. The research design carried out in this study is related to making observations, editing the background of the problem, identifying problems, formulating problems using theoretical foundations, or looking for theories related to retreat activities and student discipline, including exploring theories, creating research methods, and making decisions and continued by determining variables, creating instrument grids, collecting data with questionnaires, analyzing data, making conclusions and suggestions. The data analysis used in this study used a simple linear regression analysis technique. To obtain higher and more reliable analysis results, this study uses data analysis using the SPSS data processing program.

## 3. Results

Based on the test instrument of the influence of Buddhist religious retreat activities on student discipline, it was obtained that out of 79 items, there were 40 items of retreat activity variables and 39 items of student discipline variables. The results for the retreat activity variable showed 37 valid items and three invalid items, while for the student discipline variable, there were 37 valid items and two invalid items. Several of these items were declared invalid by comparing  $r_{\text{table}}$  on 44 respondents with a significance level of 0.05, namely 0.297. If  $r_{\text{count}} < r_{\text{table}}$ , then the items are declared invalid. The researcher removed the invalid statement items so that out of 79 statement items, there were still 74. Based on the reliability test of the research instrument, the reliability statistics obtained using SPSS 16.0 produced a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.913 because the significance value  $> 0.05$  means that the measuring instrument is declared reliable. It can be concluded that the research instruments used in this study met the requirements and were dependable.

**Table 1.** Instrument Reliability Test

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.913	74

(Source: SPSS 16.0 data processing)

The normality test was conducted using the One Sample Kolmogorov Smirnow test. The requirement for sample data comes from a normally distributed population with a significance of 0.05 or 5%. Based on the normality test results obtained from 108 respondents, the practical value (2-tailed) is 0.630, which means  $0.630 > 0.05$ . It can be concluded that the residual data value is usually distributed, which is the result of the normality calculation using the One-Sample Kolmogorov Smirnow. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is presented in the following table.

**Table 2.** Normality Test Results

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test			
N		Variable x	Variable y
		89	89
Normal Parameters <sup>a</sup>	Mean	141.1011	127.4270
	Std. Deviation	15.31120	28.30190
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.097	.123
	Positive	.047	.076
	Negative	-.097	-.123
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.916	1.162
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.371	.134

a. Test distribution is Normal.

(Source: 2024 data processing results using SPSS 16.0)

A homogeneity test is required to analyze independent sample tests using Compare Means One-way ANOVA. The underlying assumption in the study (ANOVA) is that the variance of the population is the same. If the test criteria are more than 0.05 or 5%, then it can be said that the conflict between the two data groups is the same. The homogeneity test results can be seen in table 4.19, the output test of homogeneity variance significance value of retreat activities and student discipline of 0.104, which means  $0.104 > 0.05$ . Then, it can be said that the two data are homogeneous. More details can be seen in the following homogeneity variance test table.

**Table 3.** Homogeneity Test Results

Test of Homogeneity of Variances				
Variabel_X Terhadap_Y				
	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
	2.695	1	87	.104

(Source: Process data for 2024 using SPSS 16.0)

**Table 4.** Regression Equation Output

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	37.034	26.382		1.404	.164
Variable X	.641	.186	.347	3.446	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Student Discipline

(Source: 2024 data processing results using SPSS 16.0)

Based on the output results by reading the coefficients, a constant value of 37.034 is obtained, meaning that if the retreat activity has a value of 0, then the consistent value of the student discipline variable is 37.034. The regression coefficient on the retreat activity variable (X) is 0.641, meaning that if the retreat activity increases or develops, the retreat activity variable (Y) will decrease by 0.641. Based on the data analysis, the t-count value is 3.446, and the t-table value with  $df = n - 2$  is  $df = 87$  of 1.662 with a significance value of 0.001 because the absolute value of t-count is  $3.446 > 1.662$  and the significance is  $0.001 < 0.05$ , then  $H_0$  is rejected, and  $H_a$  is accepted. The coefficient is positive, meaning that the retreat activity positively affects the discipline of class IX students of SMP Bodhi Dharma Batam. Seeing these results implies that  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted, so it can be concluded that the retreat activity positively and significantly affects the discipline of class IX students of SMP Bodhi Dharma Batam. The hypothesis testing criteria use alpha 5% (0.05), rejecting  $H_0$  if the significance is  $\leq 0.05$  by reading the following ANOVA table.

**Table 5.** ANOVA Analysis Output

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8466.605	1	8466.605	11.877	.001a
	Residual	62021.171	87	712.887		
	Total	70487.775	88			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Retreat Activities

b. Dependent Variable: Student Discipline

(Source: 2024 data processing results using SPSS 16.0)

From the ANOVA analysis output, the Fcount value is 11,877 with a significance of 0.001, so there is no need to match the F table because SPSS already provides the significance value. The importance of  $0.001 < 0.05$  indicates that  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted. This shows that retreat activities affect student discipline.

**Table 6.** R Square Determination Coefficient Value

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.347a	.120	.110	26.69994
a. Predictors: (Constant), Retreat Activities				
b. Dependent Variable: Student Discipline				

(Source: 2024 data processing results using SPSS 16.0)

The coefficient of determination in table 6 above is R Square, which has a value of 0.120, thus meaning that 12.0% of retreat activities influence retreat activities while other variables affect the remaining 88%.

#### 4. Discussion

Based on the results of data analysis and hypothesis testing, it is known that Buddhist religious retreat activities have a positive and significant influence on student discipline. This shows that religious retreats are essential for students because they can improve their discipline by encouraging full involvement in learning. Students are more disciplined in doing assignments, giving opinions, asking questions, and actively participating in learning. The study results showed that retreat activities positively and significantly influenced student discipline. Retreat activities, which involve joint practice to achieve specific goals, can direct students' personalities to be more transparent and focused. In addition, this activity also plays a role in forming a disciplined attitude, especially in terms of active participation in learning and completing assignments. Through retreats, students can develop their ability to work together, think critically, and become more responsible in undergoing the learning process in the school environment. The strength of retreat activities with student discipline can be seen in the regression test results with a coefficient value of 0.641. Student discipline is related to retreat activities; this can be seen from the coefficient of determination value of 0.120, meaning that the retreat activity variable and student discipline variable are influenced by 12.0%, while other factors outside the research influence the remaining 88%. The results of this study are in line with research by [20] on "The Effect of Habituation of Religious Activities on Student Discipline, which states that the study shows a significant relationship between habituation of religious activities and the level of student discipline. This means that the more often students are involved in structured religious activities, the higher the level of student discipline. This habituation not only forms spiritual habits but also strengthens self-discipline, which positively impacts student behavior in daily life at school [16], [21], [22]. Retreat activities are one meaningful way to deepen the understanding and practice

of Buddhist teachings among students. Retreat activities are carried out by living consciously and obeying the rules of the Mahasatipatana Sutta, Dhiga Nikaya.

This study is also in line with the study by Poniman in 2014, the study showed a significant relationship between retreat activities and students' spiritual intelligence. This study's results indicate that a person can increase their spiritual intelligence through retreat activities. Individuals with high spiritual intelligence, coupled with vital intellectual and emotional intelligence, tend to be influential and can positively impact their attitudes toward society. Such as the message of the Buddha, which says, wake up! Don't be careless! Live a righteous life, and then a person will achieve happiness in this world and the next. The fragrance of people who have the moral discipline (sila) will spread to the world of the gods. Retreat activities can affect the condition of students in undergoing their learning process. Strategic steps must be taken to ensure students can maintain complete focus and attention on academic tasks. Through retreat activities, students can develop a sense of responsibility, interest, attention, and deeper involvement in learning. This helps students not to delay completing academic tasks, improve discipline, and optimize study time. Thus, retreat activities are spiritually beneficial and play an essential role in forming an attitude of discipline and regularity in students' academic activities.

Implementing suitable retreat activities is expected to create full awareness and positive feelings in learning and completing academic tasks. This retreat activity also has the potential to change the learning behavior of less disciplined students to be more focused and responsible so that they are more focused and committed to carrying out academic activities. Retreat activities can help someone control their behavior and become a better individual; as the Buddha explained in the Satipatthāna Sutta, part I Buddha said, in this way, he abides contemplating the mind as mind internally, or he abides contemplating the mind as mind externally, or he abides contemplating the mind as mind internally and externally. Student discipline is a person's ability to organize and control themselves and comply with applicable rules and norms. Discipline includes the ability to carry out tasks and obligations consistently and on time, even though there is a temptation to postpone or ignore them [23]. The Buddha explained in the Parābhava Sutta, by contemplating deeply all the causes of collapse in this world, the wise who have insight will enjoy joy in the realm of happiness. Discipline helps students become better individuals because they learn to control themselves, value time, and obey applicable rules through discipline. With discipline, students will have an orderly and regular life and be able to develop an upbeat personality. Discipline includes obedience and compliance with applicable rules, regulations, and norms [24].

Discipline can be formed through actions that reflect values such as obedience, compliance, loyalty, orderliness, and order. Discipline helps a person understand and distinguish between things that should be done, what must be done, what is allowed to be done, and what should not be done, thus forming a better and more responsible character [24]. In the Dhammapada, Verse 240, the Buddha said, as rust arises from iron, which can damage the iron itself, so bad deeds will plunge the perpetrator into a miserable realm of life. This verse emphasizes the consequences of wrong actions committed by a person.

This means that students who do not have the discipline to obey the rules will have difficulty forming themselves into good people and have the potential to become irresponsible individuals. From the explanation above, the researcher conducted a descriptive analysis, stating statement items in high criteria. This is known to be able to influence retreat activities on student discipline. Items in the retreat activity variable can be seen from the place indicator because by having a good place, students get a sense of comfort and concentrate more during activities, and they have an average value of 80% with a high category. While the student discipline variable item is seen from the discipline indicator in doing assignments, namely the ability of students to complete tasks on time, follow instructions well, and maintain consistency in the learning process. This discipline also includes active participation in learning and responsibility in completing academic assignments, which is one of the benchmarks for success in forming student discipline, and has an average value of 72% with a high category. This shows that grade IX students of SMP Bodhi Dharma Batam have fully participated in the retreat activities well, positively impacting student discipline.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study that have been discussed regarding the Influence of Buddhist Religious Retreat Activities on Student Discipline, it can be explained that retreat activities have a positive influence on improving student discipline. This influence is measured through the R Square value of 12.0%, which means that retreat activities contribute 12% to improving discipline. In other words, the retreat activities can explain only a tiny part of the change in student discipline. However, 88% of the factors influencing student discipline come from other variables not covered in this study. These factors include family environment, peers, social conditions, and school policies not discussed explicitly in the study. Therefore, although retreat activities have a significant influence, many other variables still need to be considered to improve student discipline as a whole.

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