

## Implementation of Human Resource Management in Improving Teacher Work Discipline at State Junior High Schools in North Sumatra

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** This research aims to analyze the role of Human Resource Management (HRM) in strengthening teacher work discipline at state junior high schools in North Sumatra, Indonesia.

**Method:** A qualitative descriptive research approach was employed, utilizing in-depth interviews, direct observations, and document review to gather data from school principals, teachers, and education administrators. This method enabled a rich, nuanced exploration of how HRM functions are integrated into school management and their impact on teacher behavior.

**Practical Applications:** Schools can adopt systematic HRM frameworks—such as transparent recruitment, continuous professional development, fair performance appraisal, and equitable reward systems—to foster disciplined work environments. School principals can be trained in transformational leadership to model and enforce discipline effectively. Governments can revise policies to ensure adequate funding, teacher welfare, and flexible hiring practices.

**Conclusion:** The study concludes that effective HRM significantly enhances teacher work discipline through a holistic integration of recruitment, development, evaluation, incentives, and supportive leadership. Success is not solely attributable to individual effort but emerges from systemic alignment between institutional policies, leadership behavior, and organizational culture.



## **Introduction**

Human Resource Management (HRM) constitutes a critical component within organizational frameworks, particularly in educational contexts (Mercer et al., 2010). As educators, teachers require systematic and effective management to execute their responsibilities with professionalism and discipline (Keshmiri et al., 2023). A pivotal factor influencing teacher performance is work discipline, which encompasses punctuality, adherence to teaching schedules, and compliance with institutional regulations (Yahya & Simaremare, 2025). Consequently, this study aims to analyze the role of HRM in strengthening teachers' work discipline, thereby contributing to the optimization of educational outcomes.

Education serves as a cornerstone for national development (Shiurkar, 2023), significantly shaping economic, social, cultural, and political progress. Within this system, teachers function as primary agents responsible for transferring knowledge, skills, and values to students. The quality of education (Bayne-Jardine et al., 2005; Chapman & Adams, 2002; Kellaghan & Greaney, 2001), therefore, depends not only on curricular design but also on the competence and performance of educators (Tiana et al., 2011). Among the key determinants of teacher effectiveness is work discipline (Zainun et al., 2025), which directly influences instructional quality and the achievement of educational objectives.

Teachers' work discipline profoundly impacts the efficacy of the learning process and the realization of educational goals (Masnawati & Hariani, 2023). Disciplined educators efficiently manage time, adhere to established procedures, and model exemplary behavior for students (Bear, 2010). Conversely, inadequate work discipline can disrupt instructional continuity, diminish educational standards, and negatively affect student motivation and engagement. Thus, fostering a culture of discipline among teachers is essential for sustaining high-quality education.

To cultivate disciplined and productive teaching staff, effective HRM practices are indispensable. Within school environments, HRM serves as a decisive factor in enhancing teachers' work discipline through strategic talent management. Comprehensive HRM systems optimize teachers' potential, advance professional competencies, and foster a supportive work environment (Clores, 2025). In this context, school principals—as leaders entrusted with HRM responsibilities—play a pivotal role in establishing a conducive atmosphere that promotes professional growth and accountability.

HRM practices aimed at improving teachers' work discipline encompass multiple dimensions (Permatasari & Tandiyuk, 2023), including recruitment, training and development, performance evaluation, and the implementation of reward and sanction mechanisms. Additionally, prioritizing effective communication, intrinsic motivation, and individualized support tailored to teachers' needs is critical. Consequently, empirical research on HRM's role in enhancing work discipline is imperative to develop evidence-based strategies that address contextual challenges in educational institutions.

This paper provides a rigorous examination of HRM's role in strengthening teachers' work discipline. It identifies key factors influencing disciplinary behavior among educators and explores how HRM policies and practices can systematically enhance performance and accountability. Furthermore, the study critically analyzes challenges inherent in implementing effective HRM within schools and proposes actionable solutions to overcome these barriers. By elucidating the interplay between HRM and work discipline, this research contributes to the development of sustainable frameworks for improving educational quality through disciplined and professional teaching practices.

## **Method**

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research methodology to systematically examine the role of Human Resource Management (HRM) in enhancing teachers' work discipline within educational institutions. The primary objective is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the multifaceted factors influencing teacher discipline and the institutional policies

implemented to address these dynamics. A qualitative approach was selected due to its capacity to facilitate an in-depth exploration of contextual phenomena, capturing nuanced insights that quantitative methods may overlook. This methodology enables the investigation of complex social interactions and organizational structures inherent in school environments, thereby fostering a holistic understanding of HRM practices. Central to this inquiry is the elicitation of perspectives and lived experiences from key stakeholders, including teachers, school principals, and education administrators, through structured interviews and observational techniques. By prioritizing rich, contextualized data, this research aims to uncover underlying patterns, challenges, and effective strategies that inform evidence-based HRM interventions tailored to the educational sector. The rigorous application of qualitative analysis ensures that findings are grounded in empirical reality, offering actionable insights for optimizing teacher performance and institutional accountability.

## **Result**

Human Resource Management (HRM) constitutes a strategic approach to optimizing human capital as a primary organizational asset to achieve institutional objectives. As articulated by Hasibuan (2016), HRM encompasses core functions such as planning, recruitment, training, development, performance appraisal, compensation, and labor relations. Within educational institutions, HRM is systematically applied to manage teaching staff as professional educators, ensuring their operational efficacy and alignment with pedagogical goals. This framework underscores the centrality of HRM in fostering an environment where teachers can perform their duties with precision and accountability.

Work discipline, defined as an individual's adherence to organizational regulations and procedural norms, serves as a critical determinant of professional conduct in educational settings. Rivai (2016) conceptualize discipline as the voluntary compliance with institutional rules and standards, reflecting an individual's commitment to organizational integrity. For teachers, work discipline manifests through punctuality in instructional schedules, meticulous adherence to teaching timetables, and rigorous compliance with administrative and institutional policies. Such discipline directly influences classroom management, instructional quality, and the cultivation of exemplary behavior among students, thereby reinforcing the educational mission.

The interplay between HRM and teacher work discipline is rooted in the systematic alignment of HRM functions with behavioral outcomes. Robbins and Judge (2017) emphasize that effective management of motivational systems, professional development, and performance evaluation significantly enhances employee satisfaction and regulatory compliance. In schools, a robust HRM framework establishes clear expectations, provides structured support, and reinforces accountability, thereby nurturing a culture of discipline. This relationship highlights HRM's role not merely as an administrative function but as a strategic lever for shaping teacher behavior and institutional effectiveness.

## **Discussion**

This study's qualitative analysis, derived from in-depth interviews, observations, and document reviews, reveals six critical dimensions through which HRM influences teacher work discipline. First, recruitment and selection practices demonstrate that most schools implement rigorous protocols, particularly for contract-based teachers, prioritizing both academic qualifications and personal integrity. Transparent selection processes aim to identify candidates with high commitment to pedagogical responsibilities, thereby preempting future disciplinary issues. However, external constraints—such as inflexible governmental hiring policies and budgetary limitations—often compromise the quality of recruited personnel. While orientation programs introduce new hires to institutional culture, the absence of standardized selection criteria undermines long-term disciplinary outcomes, necessitating policy reforms to enhance recruitment efficacy.

Second, professional training and development emerge as pivotal for cultivating discipline. Schools facilitate participation in workshops organized by the Department of Education and internal programs, addressing pedagogical skills alongside discipline-centric competencies like time management and ethical conduct. Nevertheless, these initiatives frequently lack coherence and continuity, resulting in suboptimal impacts on teacher behavior. Structured, longitudinal training frameworks that integrate technical instruction with soft skill development are essential to foster holistic discipline. Without institutionalized professional development systems, schools risk perpetuating fragmented efforts that fail to address systemic disciplinary challenges.

Third, performance evaluation and reward systems exhibit mixed effectiveness. Several institutions employ periodic assessments evaluating punctuality, instructional outcomes, and extracurricular engagement, linking results to rewards such as “Exemplary Teacher” awards or financial incentives. Conversely, underperforming teachers face written warnings or rank demotions. Yet inconsistent application of these systems—coupled with perceptions of inequity among staff—diminishes their motivational impact. For evaluations to strengthen discipline, they must adhere to transparent, objective metrics with uniform enforcement, ensuring that recognition and corrective actions are perceived as fair and merit-based.

Fourth, school principal leadership proves instrumental in shaping disciplinary climates. Principals who model disciplined behavior through effective time management, open communication, and equitable policy enforcement foster environments of mutual accountability. However, many principals encounter obstacles in enforcing discipline due to insufficient support from educational supervisors or resistance from influential yet undisciplined staff. Strengthening principals’ HRM competencies through targeted leadership training is critical to empowering them as agents of cultural transformation within schools.

Fifth, external factors—including governmental workload policies, inadequate remuneration, and socio-economic challenges—exert profound influence on teacher discipline. Interview data indicate that substandard salaries and insufficient educational resources erode motivation, even among committed educators. These systemic issues necessitate policy interventions at the national level to improve teacher welfare, ensuring that financial and infrastructural constraints do not undermine professional dedication. Sustainable discipline enhancement requires collaborative efforts between schools, policymakers, and stakeholders to address structural inequities.

Finally, school culture and work environment significantly mediate disciplinary outcomes. Institutions characterized by collaborative relationships, open communication, and mutual respect among teachers, principals, and staff exhibit higher levels of work discipline. Conversely, environments marked by internal conflicts or hierarchical rigidity foster disengagement and noncompliance. Cultivating a positive school culture demands intentional strategies to resolve conflicts, promote trust, and reinforce collective responsibility for upholding institutional standards. Such efforts transform the workplace into a supportive ecosystem where discipline becomes an organic outcome of shared values rather than mere compliance.

Collectively, these findings underscore HRM’s multifaceted role in shaping teacher work discipline. While internal HRM practices—such as recruitment, training, and performance management—provide foundational mechanisms, their efficacy is contingent upon alignment with external policy frameworks and the cultivation of supportive organizational cultures. Addressing these interrelated dimensions is imperative for advancing educational quality through disciplined, professional teaching practices.

## **Conclusion**

The empirical synthesis of existing literature unequivocally establishes effective Human Resource Management (HRM) as a critical determinant in enhancing teachers’ work discipline through systematic and strategic organizational interventions. Rigorous implementation of

core HRM functions—including meticulous recruitment processes, structured professional development programs, objective performance evaluation frameworks, and consistently enforced reward and sanction systems—directly correlates with significant improvements in educators' adherence to institutional protocols, punctuality, and regulatory compliance.

Furthermore, the literature underscores that HRM efficacy is amplified when synergistically integrated with transformational school leadership, which models disciplined behavior, fosters accountability, and prioritizes transparent communication. Concurrently, external factors such as equitable remuneration policies, adequate resource allocation, and supportive governmental frameworks addressing socio-economic challenges play an indispensable role in mitigating systemic barriers that undermine teacher motivation and discipline. Equally vital is the cultivation of a positive school culture characterized by collaborative relationships, mutual respect, and shared responsibility, which collectively create an environment where disciplined conduct becomes institutionalized rather than merely enforced.

Empirical evidence further demonstrates that teachers operating within HRM systems that prioritize their professional valuation—through continuous mentorship, clear role expectations, and fair recognition mechanisms—exhibit measurable advancements in attendance reliability, timeliness, compliance with institutional regulations, and holistic professional accountability. These findings collectively affirm that sustainable enhancement of teacher work discipline is not solely contingent upon individual volition but emerges from a holistic HRM paradigm that aligns procedural rigor, leadership commitment, and socio-organizational support to transform discipline from a regulatory obligation into an intrinsic professional ethic, thereby reinforcing the foundational role of disciplined educators in achieving educational excellence.

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