

# The Level of Legal Literacy in Teacher Education and its Relationship with Discipline Management in SJKT Schools in the Hilir Perak District

Satyapriya Kumar, Aida Hanim A. Hamid

Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Email: P130285@siswa.ukm.edu.my, pgh-ikom@ukm.edu.my

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## Abstract

This study examines the relationship between legal literacy in education among teachers and the management of student discipline in Tamil National-Type Schools (SJKT) in the Hilir Perak District. Legal literacy in education refers to the level of teachers' understanding of laws, regulations, and policies related to the education system, such as the Education Act 1996, the Code of Ethics for Teachers, Conduct and Disciplinary Regulations, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989. The Hilir Perak District was selected due to its unique challenges in managing discipline in Tamil national-type schools, which demand strong legal knowledge to address disciplinary issues fairly and effectively. The study adopts quantitative approach involving surveys, interviews, and analysis of school disciplinary records to assess the level of teachers' legal literacy in education, the effectiveness of disciplinary actions, and the challenges encountered in their implementation. The findings indicate that teachers with a high level of legal literacy in education are more proficient in managing discipline in a lawful, equitable, and justice-oriented manner. Additionally, the study reveals that effective communication and dialogue skills play a critical role in resolving disciplinary issues and fostering positive relationships between teachers and students. The study recommends the implementation of targeted training programs, support from school management, and the provision of relevant resources to enhance teachers' legal literacy. The implications of this study are expected to strengthen school discipline management, improve teacher professionalism, and create a more positive, disciplined, and legally grounded learning environment.

**Keywords:** Legal Literacy in Education, Discipline Management, Teacher Professionalism

## Introduction

Discipline plays a vital role in maintaining a positive and conducive learning environment in schools. It is defined as the willingness or ability of individuals to respect authority and adhere to the rules established by a society or organization. In the context of education, discipline is often regarded as a means of shaping students to exhibit good behavior, develop orderly thinking, and cultivate positive habits that support the optimal development of their potential (Adesina, 2009). However, managing school discipline has

become increasingly complex due to social changes and heightened awareness among parents and the community regarding students' rights and needs.

The growing demand from parents and society for educational institutions to be accountable in addressing student discipline issues places additional pressure on teachers and school administrators. Furthermore, the rise in legal cases involving administrators and teachers adds to the burden on the education sector. Teachers are now expected not only to act as educators but also as discipline managers who must understand the legal implications of their actions. This phenomenon underscores the necessity for legal literacy among educators as a crucial element to ensure the effectiveness of discipline management in schools (Kutsyuruba, Murray, & Hogenkamp, 2019).

Previous studies have emphasized the importance of legal literacy in education. For instance, Mohd Ismail Othman (2008) and Adesina (2009) highlighted that legal literacy helps teachers understand their rights and responsibilities in handling discipline issues. Such knowledge not only ensures that teachers act with a high level of professionalism but also protects them from legal implications that could tarnish their personal and institutional reputations. Nevertheless, a clear knowledge gap still exists, particularly concerning the relationship between teachers' legal literacy and the effectiveness of discipline management at the primary school level.

In Tamil National-Type Schools (SJKT), especially in the Hilir Perak District, challenges in managing student discipline mirror broader issues at the national level. Teachers in these schools face various dilemmas in ensuring that their disciplinary approaches align with legal requirements and community expectations. Moreover, the lack of training or exposure to legal literacy leaves them more vulnerable to misunderstandings or errors in managing discipline. In this context, the relationship between teachers' legal literacy in education and the effectiveness of discipline management deserves focused attention to ensure a safe, fair, and productive learning environment.

This study aims to explore the relationship between legal literacy among teachers in SJKT schools in the Hilir Perak District and the effectiveness of discipline management. By focusing on this aspect, the research seeks to provide deeper insights into the significance of legal literacy in helping teachers address disciplinary challenges more professionally. Furthermore, the findings of this study could serve as a foundation for Malaysia's Ministry of Education to develop strategies for enhancing legal literacy among educators through structured training or professional development programs.

Legal literacy in education refers to teachers' understanding and knowledge of the laws, regulations, and policies governing the education system and school management. This includes the Education Act 1996, regulations from the Malaysian Ministry of Education, and guidelines issued by educational authorities. Such knowledge is essential to help teachers make informed decisions in situations involving student discipline, safeguard students' rights, and maintain a safe and orderly school environment.

In the context of SJKT schools, a high level of legal literacy among teachers can significantly enhance their ability to manage discipline effectively. Teachers with in-depth

legal knowledge are more confident and competent in performing their duties. They are better equipped to address disciplinary issues lawfully and fairly while avoiding actions that could infringe on students' rights or lead to legal repercussions.

Additionally, legal literacy enables teachers to serve as positive role models for students. When teachers demonstrate a commitment to complying with laws and regulations, they set a good example for students to follow. This, in turn, fosters a culture of positive discipline among students and contributes to a harmonious learning environment.

This study seeks to investigate the extent to which legal literacy in education among teachers in SJKT schools in the Hilir Perak District influences their efficiency in managing student discipline. Data for the study will be collected through surveys and interviews with teachers, as well as an analysis of school discipline records. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for school administrators and policymakers in their efforts to enhance teachers' legal literacy in education and improve discipline management in SJKT schools within this district.

By improving legal literacy in education, teachers can not only perform their duties more effectively but also contribute to the overall enhancement of educational quality. This is crucial to ensuring that every student receives a fair and high-quality education while growing up in an environment that respects laws and human rights.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To identify the level of understanding among teachers in Tamil National-Type Schools (SJKT) in the Hilir Perak District regarding the implementation of legal aspects as outlined in the Education Act 1996, the Code of Ethics for Teachers, Conduct and Disciplinary Regulations, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989.
2. To analyze the relationship between teachers' level of legal literacy in education and the implementation of disciplinary actions against students in SJKT schools in the Hilir Perak District.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of teachers' use of dialogue and effective communication skills in managing discipline to foster positive interactions with students and resolve issues constructively.

### **Research Questions**

Based on the stated objectives, the following are three quantitative research questions:

1. What is the level of understanding among teachers in SJKT schools in the Hilir Perak District regarding legal aspects such as the Education Act 1996, the Code of Ethics for Teachers, Conduct and Disciplinary Regulations, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989?
2. To what extent are disciplinary management measures taken by teachers aligned with compliance to current legal guidelines?
3. What is the level of effectiveness of teachers' use of dialogue and effective communication skills in managing discipline to foster positive interactions with students and resolve issues constructively?

## Literature Review

Discipline management refers to the processes and practices employed to maintain and enhance positive behaviors while minimizing or eliminating negative behaviors among individuals within an organization or institution, particularly in the context of education. This involves planning and establishing clear rules and guidelines regarding acceptable and unacceptable behaviors, including the formulation of codes of ethics and disciplinary regulations that all members must adhere to. Discipline management also encompasses proactive efforts to prevent undesirable behaviors through education, training, and awareness programs about the importance of discipline.

Effective discipline management requires continuous monitoring and supervision of individuals' behavior to ensure compliance with established rules. This can be achieved through direct observation, the use of technology, and behavior reports. Educators must also understand and internalize foundational legal frameworks, such as the Federal Constitution, the Education Act 1996, the Code of Ethics for Teachers, the Discipline Rules of Education (School Discipline) 1959, and the Child Act 2001 (Act 611). These frameworks are critical for teachers, who act as discipline managers in schools, enabling them to make decisions based on principles of justice and legal compliance. According to Suriati Suhaimi and Mohd Faiz Mohd Yaakob (2021), legal literacy helps teachers avoid legal conflicts that could harm their personal and institutional reputation. In this context, legal literacy not only ensures student safety but also provides protection for teachers.

The necessity of legal literacy is further supported by Maslow's theory, which highlights safety as one of the basic human needs. In schools, this level of safety includes actions grounded in regulations to ensure a secure and harmonious learning environment. Research by Muhammad Syakir Sulaiman and M. Adli Mohd Sidi (2022) reveals that legal knowledge among trainee teachers in educational institutions is crucial for building their capacity to professionally address student behavior. Teachers with high legal literacy tend to adopt more objective and fair approaches in managing student misconduct, thereby reducing the risk of inappropriate actions.

International studies, such as those conducted by Amoah and Owusu-Mensah (2015) in Ghana, highlight how personal factors like teachers' past experiences and emotions influence their approach to discipline management. Teachers lacking exposure to legal literacy may be influenced by subjective perceptions that are inconsistent with legal standards. This underscores the importance of structured training and professional development programs to enhance teachers' understanding of educational law. This need aligns with current demands in Malaysia, particularly in areas like the Klang Valley, where disciplinary challenges are more complex. Strengthening legal literacy among teachers can foster a more equitable, disciplined, and productive learning environment.

Rahmah (2006) emphasizes that educational programs implemented by the Ministry of Education align with the National Education Philosophy, aiming to nurture students who excel in physical, emotional, moral, and disciplinary aspects while avoiding behaviors that violate established rules. To achieve the objectives of the National Education Philosophy, schools must enforce strict discipline among students. Student disciplinary issues are a universal concern faced by schools globally, including in Malaysia (Cotton, 2001).

Discipline is defined as a set of rules established to ensure individuals behave appropriately, as well as training in thought and behavior to foster self-control and adherence to regulations (Kamus Dewan, 2005). In schools, discipline is described as the rules imposed on students to regulate their behavior through proportional punishment or rewards (Abdullah Sani Yahaya, 2005). Walker (2014) defines discipline as students' willingness to comply with rules that serve as behavioral models set by school leadership. From an Islamic perspective, behavior, conduct, or habits collectively form an individual's discipline, requiring obedience, respect, and adherence to rules with unwavering commitment (Hasnan Kasan, 2008; al-Ghazali, 1998).

Furthermore, Mohd Faizal et al. (2014) view discipline as a method for shaping individuals' character to create a comfortable environment conducive to efficient and effective activity execution. However, student involvement in disciplinary issues continues to provoke public speculation, as society views students as future contributors to national development and well-being (Khaidzir Ismail, 2007).

Englander (1987) highlights the seriousness of discipline issues in schools, noting that 80% of teachers' time is spent managing student discipline. Researchers such as Bennett (1994) attribute undisciplined behavior among students to the failure of parents and teachers in adopting teaching styles that emphasize strong values and morals. Factors contributing to student misconduct are generally categorized as school-related or external, such as environment, family, peer influence, and others. While external factors are often complex and difficult to address, efforts should focus on controllable school factors, such as fostering a positive atmosphere within the school and classroom (Khalim, 2004; Liong, 2005).

## Theory and Model

### 1. Thomas Gordon Model

The Thomas Gordon Model, renowned for its *Effective Leadership Concept*, was introduced by Thomas Gordon, a prominent psychologist and educator, in the mid-20th century. This model emphasizes effective communication, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills as key elements for fostering positive and productive relationships across various life contexts.

At the core of the Thomas Gordon Model lies the principle of effective communication. Gordon underscores the importance of honest, open, and efficient communication between individuals. This entails attentive listening, articulating feelings clearly, and expressing needs and expectations in a constructive manner.

According to Thomas Gordon, effective communication facilitates successful problem-solving. The model advocates for a collaborative approach to resolving issues, wherein individuals involved in the interaction strive to achieve mutually satisfying solutions. This is accomplished through dialogue, mutual understanding, and consideration of the needs and desires of all parties.

Gordon also introduced two primary skill sets essential to his model: **confrontation skills**, aimed at addressing overt problems and **helping skills**, designed to support individuals in achieving their goals and improving relationships.

The Thomas Gordon Model has been widely applied in diverse contexts, including education, conflict management, healthcare, and organizational development.

Despite its popularity, the model has faced criticism, particularly regarding its applicability in complex situations and evolving social and cultural landscapes. Nonetheless, the foundational principles of this model continue to serve as a cornerstone for the development of effective communication and problem-solving skills in interpersonal relationships.

In summary, the Thomas Gordon Model plays a vital role in advancing understanding and skills in effective communication while fostering positive relationships across various contexts. By emphasizing open communication, collaborative problem-solving, and respect for individuals, this model provides a valuable framework for personal growth and interpersonal success.

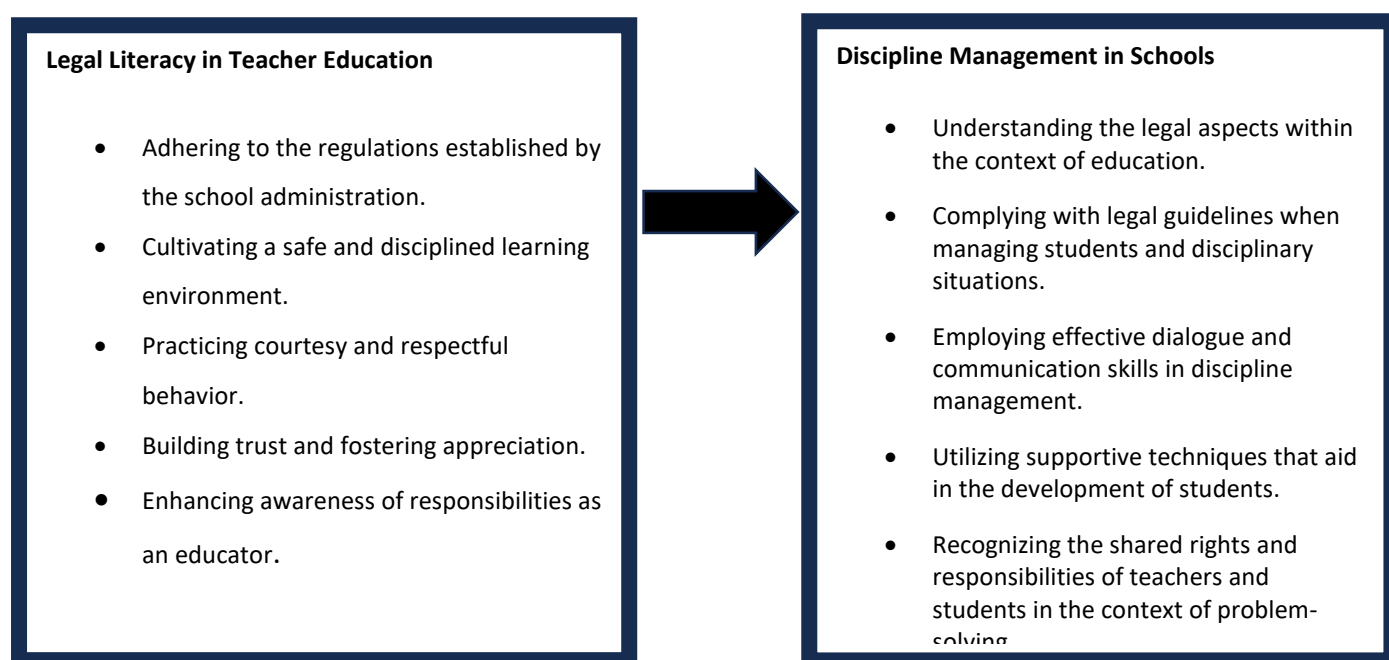


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework of the Study

Source: Thomas Gordon Model (1962) and John Stacey Adams Theory (1963)

This conceptual framework integrates the Thomas Gordon Model and John Stacey Adams' Theory to examine the relationship between legal literacy in teacher education (as an independent variable) and discipline management (as a dependent variable). Legal literacy in education refers to teachers' understanding and knowledge of laws related to education, while discipline management pertains to teachers' ability to effectively manage and regulate student behavior.

The Thomas Gordon Model emphasizes the importance of effective communication skills in discipline management. Teachers who are well-versed in education law can apply dialogue and communication techniques effectively when addressing disciplinary issues. These include strategies such as active listening and providing constructive feedback, which



can support and encourage student development. Furthermore, understanding the shared rights and responsibilities between teachers and students in problem-solving contexts is crucial for fostering a fair and effective learning environment.

When teachers possess strong legal literacy and employ effective communication skills, students are more likely to comply with the regulations established by the school administration. Students also feel safer and develop trust in a disciplined learning environment. According to John Stacey Adams' Equity Theory, students compare their inputs (efforts and behaviors) to their outputs (rewards and consequences). If students perceive that they are being treated fairly and equitably, they are more likely to demonstrate courtesy toward educators, build trust and appreciation for their teachers, and increase their sense of responsibility as learners.

The integration of the Thomas Gordon Model and John Stacey Adams' Theory in this conceptual framework highlights the significant relationship between teachers' legal literacy and their competence in managing discipline. Teachers who understand and adhere to educational laws while employing effective communication strategies are better equipped to manage student discipline. This, in turn, fosters positive responses from students, including adherence to rules, trust in a safe learning environment, and a heightened sense of accountability.

Thus, legal literacy in teacher education is a critical factor in ensuring effective discipline management in schools.

## **Research Methodology**

### *1. Research Design*

This study employs a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between legal literacy in teacher education and discipline management in Tamil National-Type Schools (SJKT) in the Hilir Perak district. A quantitative design was chosen as it allows for the collection of numerical data that can be statistically analyzed to identify patterns and relationships between the variables under study.

The quantitative approach enables the measurement of teachers' legal literacy levels using standardized and validated questionnaires. Additionally, it assesses the effectiveness of discipline management in the participating schools through data collected from questionnaires, disciplinary reports, and school records. This approach facilitates the determination of the relationship between the independent variable (teachers' legal literacy) and the dependent variable (discipline management) using mean analysis, standard deviations, and correlation analysis. The study population comprises all teachers in SJKT within the Hilir Perak district.

The primary instrument for this study is a questionnaire developed based on previous literature and adapted to the local context. The questionnaire consists of the following sections:

- **Section A:** Respondents' background information.

- **Section B:** Teachers' understanding of legal literacy in education, including the Education Act 1996, the Code of Ethics for Teachers, Conduct and Discipline Regulations, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989.
- **Section C:** Teachers' literacy levels in school discipline management.
- **Section D:** Teachers' use of dialogue and effective communication skills in discipline management.

## *2. Data Collection Procedures*

Data will be collected by distributing the questionnaire directly to the teachers in the participating schools. Each questionnaire will be explained to ensure respondents have a clear understanding of the questions presented. Respondents will be given sufficient time to complete the questionnaire, and the collected data will be handled with strict confidentiality.

## *3. Data Analysis Techniques*

The data gathered from the questionnaires will be analyzed using statistical software such as SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The analyses to be conducted include:

- **Descriptive statistics** to describe the respondents' profiles and levels of legal literacy in education.
- **Descriptive frequency analysis** to present the mean and standard deviation.
- **Correlation analysis** to examine the relationship between legal literacy in education and discipline management.

Through this quantitative research design, the study aims to provide robust empirical evidence regarding the relationship between teachers' legal literacy and discipline management in SJKT within the Hilir Perak district.

## *4. Study Population and Sample*

The study population consists of all teachers working in Tamil National-Type Schools (SJKT) in the Hilir Perak district. These teachers play a critical role in student discipline management and legal literacy in education, making them a relevant population for this research. There are 11 SJKT schools in this district, with an estimated total of 142 teachers.

The study respondents include:

1. Teachers with extensive experience in discipline management, having at least five years of teaching experience in SJKT.
2. Teachers who have participated in legal literacy programs or attended courses and training related to education law.
3. Teachers holding administrative positions, such as headteachers, discipline assistants, or academic coordinators, as they have a broader perspective on disciplinary and school management issues.

## *5. Data Collection Procedures*

Data will be collected through the distribution of questionnaires to the teachers in the participating schools. The questionnaires will be distributed directly and explained to respondents to ensure clarity in understanding the questions. Respondents will be given ample time to complete the questionnaires, and the data collected will be managed with strict confidentiality.



**Research Findings***Demographic Findings*

Table 1.1

*Demographics of Study Respondents**Service Experience*

<i>Years of Service</i>	<i>Frequency (f)</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>10 to 20 years</i>	35	41.7
<i>20 to 30 years</i>	28	33.3
<i>5 to 10 years</i>	8	9.5
<i>Less than 5 years</i>	10	11.9
<i>More than 30 years</i>	2	2.4

*AGE RANGE*

<i>Age</i>	<i>Frequency (f)</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>25 to 35 years</i>	7	8.3
<i>35 to 45 years</i>	48	57.1
<i>Less than 25 years</i>	6	7.1
<i>More than 45 years</i>	23	27.4

*SEX*

<i>Sex</i>	<i>Frequency (f)</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Male</i>	15	17.9
<i>Female</i>	69	82.1

*POSITION*

<i>Position</i>	<i>Frequency (f)</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Administrator (Principal)</i>	7	8.3
<i>Assistant principal</i>	22	26.1
<i>Academic teacher</i>	55	65.6

*CURRENT EDUCATION LEVEL*

<i>Education Level</i>	<i>Frequency (f)</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Master's Degree</i>	33	39.3
<i>Diploma</i>	4	4.8
<i>Bachelor's Degree</i>	47	56.0

**Demographic Findings of Study Respondents**

This study involved 84 respondents, consisting of teachers from Tamil National Type Schools (SJKT). The demographic analysis covers respondents' service experience, age range,

gender, position, and their current level of education. The majority of respondents have between 10 to 20 years of service experience (41.7%), followed by those with 20 to 30 years of experience (33.3%). A small number of respondents have less than 5 years (11.9%) or more than 30 years of service experience (2.4%).

Most respondents are aged between 35 and 45 years (57.1%). The group aged above 45 years comprises 27.4%, while only 8.3% are aged between 25 and 35 years. The lowest number of respondents is under 25 years old (7.1%). The study also shows that the majority of respondents are female (82.1%), while males make up only 17.9%.

Among the respondents, 65.6% are academic teachers, 26.1% are assistant principals, and only 8.3% hold administrative positions or are headmasters. Regarding education, most respondents hold a bachelor's degree (56.0%), followed by those with a master's degree (39.3%). A small number of respondents have a diploma (4.8%).

These findings indicate that the study respondents have diverse backgrounds, with the majority having long service years and high educational qualifications. Most respondents are female and academic teachers, reflecting the composition of the teaching staff in SJKT.

Table 1.2

*Descriptive analysis findings of frequency to explain the mean and standard deviation*

<i>DIMENSION</i>	<i>Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>)</i>	<i>Standard Deviation (<math>\sigma</math>)</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>The level of understanding among teachers in SJKT Hilir Perak District regarding aspects of educational law such as the Education Act 1996, the Code of Ethics for Teachers, and the Rules of Conduct and Discipline.</i>	4.04	0.69	High
<i>The level of discipline management implemented by teachers in ensuring compliance with current legal guidelines.</i>	4.26	0.59	High
<i>The level of use of dialogue and effective communication skills.</i>	4.26	0.59	High
<i>Average</i>	4.18	0.62	High

Based on the data obtained, the analysis reveals several significant findings as follows:

1. **Level of Teachers' Understanding of Educational Law**

The level of understanding among teachers at SJKT in the Hilir Perak District regarding aspects of educational law, including the Education Act 1996, the Code of Ethics for Educators, and Rules of Conduct and Discipline, was found to be high. This is evidenced by a mean score of 4.04 with a standard deviation ( $\sigma$ ) of 0.69, interpreted as high. This indicates the teachers' capability to comprehend and identify key elements of educational law within the context of teaching.

2. **Relationship Between Legal Literacy and Discipline Management**

The relationship between legal literacy and discipline management in schools was also rated as high, with a mean score of 4.26 and a standard deviation of 0.59. These findings demonstrate that teachers with a strong grasp of educational law are more likely to implement disciplinary strategies that align with established regulations. They are better positioned to take fair and professional actions in addressing disciplinary issues.

3. **Proficiency in Dialogue and Effective Communication Skills**

The level of proficiency in dialogue and effective communication skills among teachers also achieved a high rating, with a mean score of 4.26 and a standard deviation of 0.59. These skills are crucial for building positive relationships with students and resolving disciplinary issues constructively. Teachers with strong communication skills can guide students in understanding their mistakes and encourage behavioral changes for the better.

4. **Overall Average**

The overall average across the three dimensions studied was 4.18, with a standard deviation of 0.62, also interpreted as high. This indicates that, overall, teachers at SJKT in the Hilir Perak District possess robust legal literacy and the ability to apply this knowledge effectively in managing discipline.

These findings underscore the high level of awareness among teachers at SJKT in the Hilir Perak District regarding the critical importance of legal literacy in the teaching profession. A solid understanding of educational law provides teachers with a firm foundation for making sound decisions in disciplinary situations, contributing to a more conducive and harmonious learning environment.

The significant relationship between legal literacy and discipline management highlights that legal knowledge is not merely theoretical but must be actively applied in daily practice. Teachers with a comprehensive understanding of educational law are more likely to act with fairness and professionalism when addressing disciplinary challenges, thereby sustaining students' and parents' trust in educational institutions.

Overall, this research presents a positive outlook on the level of legal literacy among teachers at SJKT in the Hilir Perak District. While the findings indicate a high level of understanding of educational law, continuous efforts are necessary to further enhance the quality of teacher

education. This can be achieved through various initiatives, such as training programs, workshops, and updates to relevant educational regulations.

By enhancing legal literacy, teachers can continue to serve as leaders in shaping a disciplined and responsible future generation. This study emphasizes that legal literacy not only empowers teachers to perform their duties more effectively but also fosters a more structured and inclusive school environment.

### Correlation Analysis Findings

Table 1.2

*Correlation Analysis Findings*

Correlations			
		Teacher's knowledge of educational law literacy	Discipline mangement in SJKT Hilir Perak district
Teacher's knowledge of educational law literacy	Pearson Correlation	1	.597**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	81	81
Discipline mangement in SJKT Hilir Perak district	Pearson Correlation	.597**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	81	81
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Two main variables studied are teachers' knowledge of educational law literacy as the independent variable and discipline management as the dependent variable.

### Relationship Between Variables

Data analysis indicates a positive relationship between teachers' knowledge of educational law literacy and their ability to manage discipline in schools. The independent variable, knowledge of educational law literacy, refers to teachers' understanding of education-related laws such as students' rights, teachers' responsibilities, and disciplinary procedures. The dependent variable, discipline management, refers to teachers' ability to control and resolve student behavior issues effectively.

### Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r)

The study findings revealed a Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of 0.597. This value reflects a moderately strong positive relationship between the two variables. This means that as teachers' knowledge of educational law literacy improves, their ability to manage student discipline also increases.

**Statistical Significance (Sig. 2-tailed)**

The Sig. (2-tailed) value is  $< 0.001$ , indicating that the relationship between teachers' knowledge of educational law literacy and discipline management is statistically significant at a 99% confidence level ( $p < 0.01$ ). Thus, we can conclude that the observed relationship is not due to chance and that teachers' knowledge of educational law literacy indeed has a significant impact on discipline management in schools.

**Sample Size (N)**

This analysis involved 81 respondents out of 84 total participants (3 respondents did not fully complete the survey), consisting of teachers from SJKT in the Hilir Perak District. This sample size is sufficient to provide reliable insights into the relationship between the variables studied.

**Overall Interpretation**

The findings of this study demonstrate that teachers with a higher level of educational law literacy are more likely to excel in managing student discipline. A deeper understanding of students' rights, teachers' responsibilities, and lawful disciplinary procedures enables teachers to implement discipline management fairly and effectively. Furthermore, this knowledge equips teachers to adopt more professional communication approaches, as outlined in Thomas Gordon's Model, which emphasizes the importance of communication skills in discipline management.

Students who perceive that they are treated fairly based on principles of justice (as described in John Stacey Adams' Equity Theory) are more likely to comply with school rules, respect teachers, and develop a greater awareness of their responsibilities as students. Therefore, educational law literacy not only assists teachers in managing discipline but also contributes to creating a positive learning environment.

**Impact and Significance of the Study**

This study underscores the importance of educational law literacy among teachers as a key factor in enhancing the efficiency of discipline management in schools. The findings can serve as a guide for school administrators to provide training and exposure to teachers on educational laws. Additionally, these findings may benefit educational policymakers by emphasizing the inclusion of educational law literacy as a core element in teacher training curricula.

Overall, the study reinforces the understanding that teachers' educational law literacy is an essential component for ensuring effective discipline management, thereby contributing to the achievement of broader educational goals at SJKT in the Hilir Perak District.

**Policy Recommendations***Formulating Teacher Training Policies*

The Ministry of Education is encouraged to strengthen teacher training modules by making educational law literacy mandatory. Implementing such policies would ensure that teachers comprehensively understand educational laws, including their rights and responsibilities in fulfilling their duties. Periodic training, such as courses on educational laws and discipline management, should be made compulsory. These courses could provide

practical guidance to teachers in handling complex disciplinary situations, thereby enhancing their credibility and professionalism.

#### *Developing Legal Guidelines for Schools*

A manual or set of guidelines on educational law literacy should be created for use by all teachers. This guide could include steps for discipline management, case studies, and relevant legal procedures. Serving as a primary reference for daily tasks, this manual would enable teachers to make rule-based decisions without infringing on students' rights.

#### *Models and Theories*

The **Thomas Gordon Model**, which emphasizes discipline approaches that preserve students' self-esteem, is particularly relevant for fostering positive teacher-student relationships. This model encourages teachers to resolve conflicts collaboratively without creating feelings of pressure or labeling individuals as "losers."

Furthermore, **John Stacey Adams' Equity Theory**, focusing on fairness, can assist teachers in ensuring that disciplinary actions are balanced, just, and acceptable to students. The integration of these two approaches has the potential to enhance the effectiveness of discipline management strategies.

#### **Practices**

##### *Teacher Training and Competency Development*

Consistent practical training that simulates discipline scenarios grounded in legal frameworks should be conducted. Through workshops and hands-on training, teachers can gain direct experience in managing disciplinary issues professionally. Such training would also boost their confidence in applying legally sound approaches and ensure unbiased decision-making.

##### *Establishing Legal Support Units in Schools*

The establishment of dedicated units in schools to provide support and guidance to teachers in situations requiring legal understanding is a strategic step. These units could serve as reference points for teachers facing complex disciplinary cases. This support would ensure that disciplinary actions taken are legally compliant and avoid further conflicts.

##### *Collaboration with Educational Lawyers*

Schools are encouraged to collaborate with lawyers or legal experts to organize seminars and workshops on educational law literacy. These programs would help teachers stay informed about the latest legal issues and apply this knowledge in their daily responsibilities. Teachers could also leverage such collaborations to develop clear, proactive, and legally sound classroom rules.

Educational law literacy among teachers contributes not only to more effective discipline management but also to creating a safe and conducive learning environment. Strengthening this literacy requires the support of educational policies, continuous training, and collaboration with key stakeholders such as educational lawyers. Through such strategic initiatives, teachers can perform their responsibilities more professionally and ensure the well-being of all parties in the school environment.



### Study Limitations

The study examining the relationship between teachers' educational law literacy and discipline management at Tamil National-Type Schools (SJKT) in the Hilir Perak District has yielded significant findings. However, several limitations must be considered, particularly concerning the type of schools, the teacher sample, and the geographic scope of the study.

#### 1. Type of Schools

This study focused exclusively on Tamil National-Type Schools (SJKT), which may face unique challenges and needs based on their cultural and social context. Consequently, the findings may not be generalizable to other types of schools, such as National Schools (SK) or Chinese National-Type Schools (SJKC). Each school type has distinct management structures, disciplinary regulations, and pedagogical approaches, which could influence the relationship between teachers' educational law literacy and discipline management.

#### 2. Teachers in SJKT

The study involved only teachers from SJKT, who may possess differing educational backgrounds, experiences, and exposure to educational law. Teachers in these schools may also encounter specific disciplinary challenges tied to their community context. As a result, the findings may not accurately represent the experiences of teachers in other school settings, such as urban, rural, or more demographically diverse schools.

#### 3. Geographic Scope: Hilir Perak District

The study was conducted exclusively in the Hilir Perak District, which may not reflect conditions in other regions of Malaysia. Each district has unique socio-economic, demographic, and educational challenges that could affect how teachers manage discipline and perceive educational law literacy.

These limitations highlight the need for further research with a broader scope, encompassing a variety of school types, teacher backgrounds, and geographical locations. Such expanded studies are essential to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between educational law literacy and discipline management in schools across Malaysia.

### Suggestions for Future Research

Based on the limitations of the study regarding the relationship between teachers' educational law literacy and discipline management in Tamil National-Type Schools (SJKT) in the Hilir Perak District, several suggestions for future research have been proposed to expand the scope of the investigation and obtain more comprehensive and meaningful findings.

#### 1. Cross-School Type Research

Future studies are recommended to involve various types of schools, including National Schools (SK), Chinese National-Type Schools (SJKC), and private schools. This approach will allow for comparisons between different school types in terms of discipline management structures, student cultural backgrounds, and teachers' understanding of educational law. By comparing diverse school types, researchers can identify the specific needs of each school in the context of legal literacy. For example, discipline management in National Schools (SK) may differ from that in Tamil National-Type Schools (SJKT) due to variations in student composition, pedagogical approaches, and

teacher work culture. A broader study could provide a foundation for crafting more inclusive education policies that cater to all school types.

**2. Research Involving Diverse Teacher Backgrounds**

This study focused exclusively on teachers in SJKT, which may not represent the broader population of teachers in Malaysia. Future research should involve teachers from a variety of educational backgrounds, experiences, and locations, such as urban, rural, and remote areas. This type of research could reveal differences in teachers' understanding of educational law based on factors such as years of service, academic qualifications, and work experience. For example, teachers with more years of experience may have a greater understanding of the law compared to newer teachers, while teachers in rural areas may face different challenges in implementing discipline.

**3. Research Across Districts or States**

Future studies could also be expanded to other districts or states to assess the extent to which the conclusions of this study can be generalized. Comparative studies between urban and rural districts could help identify differences in teachers' approaches to discipline management. For instance, teachers in urban areas may have greater access to training resources and educational law literacy than their counterparts in rural areas. Involving multiple districts in future research could provide a more holistic view of the challenges and needs in discipline management across schools in the country.

**4. Qualitative Research to Investigate Teachers' Perceptions and Approaches**

In addition to quantitative approaches, qualitative studies involving in-depth interviews or focus groups could be conducted to understand teachers' perceptions of legal literacy and how it influences their decisions in managing discipline. This research could offer deeper insights into the factors affecting the effectiveness of discipline management in schools.

The suggested future studies aim to address the limitations of the previous research by involving a wider range of school types, teacher backgrounds, and geographic locations. With a more comprehensive approach, the findings from these studies could make significant contributions to educational policy, professional development for teachers, and more effective discipline management across schools in Malaysia.

**Conclusion**

A high level of educational law literacy is crucial in fostering teachers' awareness and understanding of the relationship between the law and discipline management in schools. Educational law literacy refers to the knowledge teachers possess regarding the regulations, acts, and laws that govern the education system, as well as how these laws relate to student discipline management. Teachers with high levels of legal literacy are more likely to perform their duties in discipline management more effectively and responsibly, adhering to the established regulations.

In the context of discipline management, teachers who understand and internalize educational laws are able to identify the boundaries that must be adhered to when dealing with students involved in disciplinary cases. This is important because the decisions made by

teachers in handling disciplinary cases not only impact the students but also the institution as a whole. Actions that are not based on legal frameworks or that do not follow the correct procedures can result in legal issues, damage the school's reputation, or even lead to legal actions against the school and its staff.

A strong understanding of educational law enhances teachers' awareness of student rights, the correct procedures for handling disciplinary cases, and the consequences of the actions taken. For instance, teachers who have a good grasp of students' rights to protection from discrimination or abuse of power will be more cautious in performing their duties. They will be more inclined to ensure that discipline management is carried out fairly and in accordance with the prescribed guidelines. This not only reduces the risk of legal action but also strengthens the trust of students and parents in the school's disciplinary system.

Moreover, educational law literacy also improves the effectiveness of discipline management because teachers can better understand the rules that govern student behavior. In this regard, teachers not only act as enforcers of rules but also as educators who guide students toward positive behaviors. They will be more prepared to apply appropriate approaches based on the severity of the discipline issues encountered, without being excessive or neglecting students' rights.

Effective discipline management involves not only actions taken against students who violate rules but also how these actions are executed to positively impact the development of students' character and behavior. Therefore, when teachers have a clear understanding of educational law, they are more likely to take appropriate and balanced actions, which ultimately contribute to a conducive and safe learning environment.

A heightened awareness of the relationship between educational law literacy and discipline management also benefits schools in complying with the guidelines set by educational authorities. Schools that adhere to educational laws are more likely to earn the trust of the community, parents, and authorities. This also helps preserve the integrity of the education system while creating an environment that supports both academic and personal development for students.

Overall, the study of educational law literacy among teachers not only strengthens their legal knowledge but also raises awareness of the importance of complying with the law and carrying out discipline management with full responsibility. Effective discipline management requires a deep understanding of regulations and students' rights, and with strong legal literacy, teachers can carry out these tasks in a more professional and effective manner.

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