

# Policy Analysis of Purwakarta's State Defense Character Reinforcement Training: Applying the Kirkpatrick Evaluation Framework

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## Abstract

The alarming increase in juvenile delinquency, such as bullying, student brawls, and drug abuse in Purwakarta Regency, constitutes a critical social phenomenon that necessitates an immediate governmental response. This situation highlights the urgency of implementing effective character education initiatives. In response, the local government introduced the “State Defense Character Reinforcement Training,” commonly referred to as the “Military Barracks” program. However, the adoption of a semi-military training model has generated substantial public and academic debate regarding its compatibility with humanistic educational principles and the protection of children’s rights. This study aims to analyze comprehensively the formulation, content, implementation, and overall effectiveness of the State Defense Character Reinforcement Training policy in Purwakarta Regency, particularly in assessing whether the program contributes to sustainable behavioral change while remaining consistent with educational and child protection principles. This research employs a qualitative policy analysis design using a case study approach. Data were collected through document analysis of official regulations and cooperation agreements, documentation of program implementation, field observations, and semi-structured interviews with policymakers, implementers, and participating students. The analytical framework integrates comprehensive policy analysis with the four-level Kirkpatrick Evaluation Model (Reaction, Learning, Behavior, and Results) to examine policy processes and outcomes. The findings indicate strong institutional and legal support for the program but reveal challenges in implementation, particularly in sustaining effective inter-organizational coordination and ensuring long-term behavioral impact. Accordingly, this study recommends structured coordination mechanisms and systematic long-term evaluation to ensure sustainable character development while maintaining adherence to humanistic values.

**Keywords:** Kirkpatrick model, State defense character, Juvenile delinquency, Character education

## Introduction

The global educational landscape is currently facing a significant crisis regarding moral decadence and juvenile misconduct, which has become increasingly complex in the digital era (McCord et al., 2022; Vavilov et al., 2024). In Indonesia, this phenomenon is reflected in the shifting patterns of student delinquency, moving from conventional disciplinary issues to more violent and organized forms of deviant behavior (Lukitasari et al., 2024; Puspita et al., 2024; Sari & Apritania, 2024). National data indicates a persistent rise in cases involving physical violence and social ethical erosions among youth, suggesting that traditional classroom-based character education models are struggling to keep pace with rapid socio-cultural transformations (Ramadhan et al., 2024; Noptario et al., 2024).

Specifically, in Purwakarta Regency, the escalation of juvenile delinquency including student brawls (tawuran), systemic bullying, and drug abuse has reached a critical point that threatens the local socio-educational stability. Reports from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) underscore that West

Java remains a high-risk zone for child-related legal issues, often stemming from a lack of structured disciplinary supervision (KPAI, 2022). This local phenomenon serves as the primary catalyst for the regional government to seek unconventional and more rigorous intervention strategies to restore social order among the student population.

From a theoretical standpoint, character education is no longer viewed merely as a set of moral instructions but as a dynamic process of habituation and environmental conditioning. Modern scholars argue that for character education to be effective in Society 5.0, it must bridge the gap between cognitive understanding and consistent behavioral output (Sukmayadi & Yahya, 2020). However, the "implementation gap" in character programs often occurs because the methods used lack the intensity required to disrupt established negative behavioral patterns (Knill & Steinebach, 2023). This theoretical void necessitates an exploration of more intensive, structured training environments.

Despite the growing discourse on character education reform and disciplinary innovation, existing studies predominantly focus on conventional school-based interventions or community-based moral development programs (Prasetya et al., 2026). Empirical research examining semi-military character training within a civilian educational framework remains limited, particularly in the Indonesian context (Husen et al., 2022; Sukendar et al., 2019). Moreover, previous evaluations of character education policies tend to emphasize normative or philosophical critiques rather than systematic outcome-based assessment (Sholeh et al., 2025; Wahyuningsih et al., 2026). This reveals a clear research gap: the absence of a comprehensive policy analysis that integrates implementation dynamics with measurable behavioral outcomes using an established evaluation framework. Addressing this gap is essential to determine whether such an unconventional intervention genuinely produces sustainable character transformation or merely short-term compliance.

In response to these challenges, the Purwakarta Regency Government enacted a landmark policy known as the "State Defense Character Reinforcement Training" (Pelatihan Penguatan Karakter Bela Negara), colloquially referred to as the "Military Barracks" program. This policy represents a strategic collaboration between the local government and the Indonesian Army (TNI AD) to instill semi-military discipline, nationalistic values, and physical resilience in students. By removing students from their routine environments and placing them in a controlled, rigorous setting, the policy aims to achieve a rapid "character shock" that fosters immediate disciplinary improvement (Taufikurochman et al., 2023).

Despite its ambitious goals, the policy has ignited a polarized debate regarding its methodology. Critics argue that a semi-military approach may conflict with humanistic educational principles and the psychological development of children, potentially prioritizing rigid obedience over genuine moral internalisation (Fathoni et al., 2024). Evaluating such a controversial and high-stakes policy requires a robust framework. This study utilizes the New World Kirkpatrick Model (NWKM), which expands beyond immediate participant satisfaction to measure actual learning, behavioral transfer, and institutional results, providing a more holistic view of the policy's effectiveness (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016).

The novelty of this study lies in its integrative approach: it not only examines the policy from a public policy and educational governance perspective but also applies the New World Kirkpatrick Model to assess multi-level outcomes in a real-world semi-military training context. By combining policy analysis with a structured evaluation model, this research moves beyond ideological debates and contributes empirical evidence to the discourse on military-style character education in democratic societies.

The urgency of this research lies in the critical need for empirical evidence to justify the continuation or refinement of military-style character training in a civilian context. As Purwakarta strives to align its local initiatives with the national "Indonesia Emas 2045" vision, understanding the actual impact of this policy is paramount. This study aims to analyze the policy's implementation and outcomes through the Kirkpatrick lens, offering strategic recommendations to ensure that character reinforcement remains effective, sustainable, and aligned with humanistic democratic values in the modern era (Lukman & Hakim, 2024).

## Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research design centered on policy analysis and field-based empirical evaluation. Primary data were gathered through a combination of in-depth, semi-structured interviews and direct field observations conducted at the Provos Menarmed 2/1 Kostrad in Purwakarta Regency, which serves as the primary site for the "State Defense Character Reinforcement Training." The interviews were conducted with participating students to capture their lived experiences, perceptions, and psychological responses to the semi-military regimen. This approach is instrumental in assessing the first two levels of the Kirkpatrick Evaluation Model: Reaction and Learning. By engaging directly with the subjects, the research gains a nuanced understanding of how students internalize the values of discipline and nationalism within the controlled environment of the military barracks.

The study employed purposive sampling to select participants who had directly completed the training program. The sample consisted of students from junior secondary schools (SMP level) who participated in the program during the 2025 implementation cycle. Selection criteria included active participation in the full training duration and willingness to share reflective experiences. In addition to student participants, limited confirmatory interviews were conducted with program facilitators to provide contextual clarification. This sampling strategy ensures information-rich cases that are directly relevant to the research objectives.

Interviews were conducted face-to-face using a semi-structured interview guide containing open-ended questions aligned with the Kirkpatrick levels. Each session lasted approximately 10–15 minutes and was audio-recorded with participant consent. Field notes were also taken to document non-verbal expressions and situational context.

In addition to interviews, systematic field observations were performed at the Provos Menarmed 2/1 Kostrad facility to monitor the instructional delivery, daily routines, and behavioral dynamics between the student participants and the military instructors. These observations provided critical insights into the "Behavior" level of the Kirkpatrick framework, allowing the researcher to document the immediate transfer of discipline into daily habits during the training period. The observational data serve to validate the verbal accounts provided by participants, ensuring a high degree of ecological validity. This on-site investigation is crucial for identifying potential implementation gaps between the formal policy design and the practical realities of field-level execution.

Observations were conducted using a structured observation protocol focusing on discipline practices, communication patterns, rule enforcement, and student behavioral adaptation. The researcher adopted a non-participant observer role to minimize intervention bias. Observational sessions were carried out across multiple training days to ensure temporal consistency and behavioral pattern verification.

To ensure a comprehensive analysis, the primary data were triangulated with secondary data derived from a rigorous content analysis of official regional policy documents. This includes the Purwakarta Regent's Regulations (Perbup), institutional reports from the Purwakarta Education Office, and relevant legal frameworks governing character education and state defense. By synthesizing field-based empirical evidence—through student interviews and barracks observations with structural policy documents, this methodology facilitates a holistic evaluation of the policy's effectiveness, sustainability, and alignment with humanistic educational standards.

Qualitative data analysis followed a thematic analysis procedure. Interview transcripts were transcribed verbatim and coded using an inductive-deductive approach. Initial open coding identified recurring concepts related to discipline internalization, emotional response, behavioral adaptation, and perceived impact. These codes were then organized into broader analytical themes corresponding to the Kirkpatrick evaluation levels. Document analysis was conducted through systematic content categorization to identify policy objectives, implementation mechanisms, and accountability structures.

To enhance research trustworthiness, the study applied triangulation of data sources (interviews, observations, and documents), member checking with selected participants to verify interpretative accuracy, and peer debriefing to reduce researcher bias. Ethical compliance was ensured through informed consent procedures, confidentiality protection, anonymization of participant identities, and voluntary participation without coercion. Considering the involvement of minors, parental or guardian consent was obtained prior to data collection, and all procedures adhered to ethical standards for educational research involving children.

In this study, the Kirkpatrick Evaluation Model is applied not merely as a training assessment instrument, but as an analytical framework for policy implementation analysis. Each evaluation level—Reaction, Learning, Behavior, and Results is systematically mapped onto key dimensions of the State Defense Character Reinforcement Training policy, enabling an integrated examination of individual behavioral change and broader institutional outcomes. This approach allows the research to capture both micro-level participant experiences and macro-level policy effectiveness, thereby strengthening the validity of the evaluation within a public policy and character education context.

## **Result And Discussion**

The analysis of the State Defense Character Reinforcement Training policy in Purwakarta Regency reveals a sophisticated interplay between structured military-style intervention and regional educational objectives. This program, primarily hosted at the Provos Menarmed 2/1 Kostrad, functions as a strategic "behavioral immersion" designed to disrupt the escalating cycle of juvenile delinquency through rigorous conditioning. By employing the New World Kirkpatrick Model (NWKM), this study evaluates the program's efficacy across four hierarchical levels, providing an empirical basis to understand how localized defense-based training translates into sustainable character development (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016).

The first level of evaluation focuses on participant engagement and their immediate perception of the training environment. Based on semi-structured interviews with students at the Menarmed 2/1 Kostrad facility, the initial reaction was characterized by significant "culture shock" due to the transition from a permissive school environment to a rigid military regimen. However, field observations indicated that the professional and pedagogical approach of the TNI AD instructors successfully transformed initial student anxiety into high levels of motivation. Participants reported a sense of prestige and empowerment from

completing physical and leadership challenges that are absent from the standard school curriculum (Pemerintah Kabupaten Purwakarta, 2024). Such positive reactions are critical, as high learner engagement is the primary predictor of successful knowledge acquisition in subsequent stages (Sukmayadi & Yahya, 2020).

At the learning level, the research assesses the degree to which students internalized the core values of nationalism, integrity, and civic duty. Findings from post-training interviews suggest a profound shift in students' cognitive understanding of "Bela Negara" (State Defense), moving beyond abstract theory to practical daily applications. The experiential learning model used at the barracks allowed students to experience the consequences of their actions in real-time, fostering a deeper sense of personal responsibility. However, the data also highlights that the effectiveness of this learning stage is highly dependent on the quality of instructional delivery, which must balance military discipline with psychological guidance to prevent trauma (Taufikurochman et al., 2023). This suggests that while the "what" (content) is well-defined, the "how" (delivery) requires continuous pedagogical refinement (Noptario et al., 2024).

The behavior level evaluates the "transfer of training" the extent to which the discipline learned at the barracks is applied in daily life. Direct observations at the Provos Menarmed 2/1 Kostrad documented immediate behavioral shifts, including meticulous punctuality, respectful communication with authorities, and heightened self-organization. Nevertheless, the research identifies a potential "transfer gap" when students return to their original social environments. Without a robust, integrated monitoring mechanism involving schools and parents, there is a risk that the positive behaviors exhibited under military supervision may regress in a more lenient home setting (Ramadhan et al., 2024). Therefore, the urgency of establishing a formal coordination structure, such as a Joint Secretariat, is paramount to ensure that the behavioral standards established during the training become permanent character traits (Knill & Steinebach, 2023).

The final level of evaluation measures the macro-impact of the policy on regional social stability and the reduction of delinquency. Preliminary longitudinal data indicates a measurable decline in student-led brawls and motorcycle gang participation in targeted areas of Purwakarta following the program's implementation. These results suggest that the "Military Barracks" initiative serves as a powerful deterrent and a corrective platform for high-risk youth. To sustain these results and align with the "Indonesia Emas 2045" vision, the policy must be institutionalized through stronger legal frameworks that mandate long-term behavioral tracking. The success of this policy ultimately hinges on the government's ability to synchronize military-style discipline with a comprehensive socio-educational ecosystem, ensuring that the reduction in delinquency is both systemic and sustainable (Lukman & Hakim, 2024).

## Conclusion

Despite positive outcomes observed at the Reaction and Learning levels, this study underscores that success at the initial stages does not automatically guarantee sustainable behavioral transfer and long-term policy impact. The effectiveness of the State Defense Character Reinforcement Training at the Behavior and Results levels remains highly dependent on post-training institutional support and cross-sectoral coordination. This finding reflects a common limitation of intensive, short-term interventions, where behavioral gains achieved in controlled environments may diminish once participants return to less structured social contexts. Consequently, without systematic follow-up mechanisms, the policy risks producing short-term compliance rather than enduring character transformation.

This study examined the State Defense Character Reinforcement Training policy implemented in Purwakarta Regency through a policy analysis approach using the New World Kirkpatrick Evaluation Model. The findings demonstrate that the policy is supported by a strong institutional and legal framework and shows positive outcomes at the Reaction and Learning levels, particularly in fostering discipline, nationalism, and personal responsibility among participating students.

However, the analysis also reveals that the sustainability of behavioral change and long-term policy impact at the Behavior and Results levels remains highly contingent upon post-training institutional support. Without systematic coordination between military instructors, schools, families, and local government agencies, the character improvements achieved during the training period risk being temporary rather than transformative. This highlights the importance of addressing the implementation gap commonly associated with intensive, short-term character intervention programs.

Therefore, this study recommends the establishment of an integrated coordination mechanism, such as a Joint Secretariat, to ensure continuous monitoring and reinforcement of student behavior after program completion. Additionally, the institutionalization of mandatory long-term evaluation procedures is essential to assess enduring behavioral outcomes and policy effectiveness. By aligning military-style discipline with humanistic educational principles and democratic governance, the State Defense Character Reinforcement Training policy can serve as a sustainable model for character education reform within a civilian context.

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