

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MORAL EDUCATION IN STRENGTHENING STUDENTS' DISCIPLINE AT ZULHIJAH ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan peran pendidikan akhlak dalam meningkatkan kedisiplinan santri di Pondok Pesantren Zulhijah Batanghari. Metode yang digunakan adalah penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif, melalui teknik pengumpulan data berupa observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Fokus penelitian ini diarahkan pada bagaimana pendidikan akhlak tidak hanya dipahami sebagai transfer pengetahuan, tetapi juga sebagai proses internalisasi nilai-nilai yang tercermin dalam sikap, perilaku, serta kepatuhan santri terhadap aturan dan tata tertib yang berlaku di pesantren. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai-nilai akhlak seperti kejujuran, tanggung jawab, ketaatan, kedisiplinan, serta penghormatan kepada guru berperan besar dalam membentuk perilaku disiplin santri. Penerapan nilai-nilai tersebut dilaksanakan melalui pembiasaan dan dicontohkan dalam kegiatan sehari-hari, baik yang bersifat ritual keagamaan seperti shalat berjamaah, membaca al-Qur'an, dan pengajian kitab, maupun kegiatan sosial seperti gotong royong dan kerja sama antar santri. Selain itu, metode pembinaan yang dilakukan oleh ustaz dan ustazah melalui keteladanan serta penerapan mekanisme *ta'zir* turut memperkuat konsistensi kedisiplinan. Keteladanan guru menjadi model nyata yang ditiru santri, sementara *ta'zir* berfungsi sebagai bentuk edukasi dan pengendalian agar santri memahami konsekuensi dari pelanggaran aturan. Dengan demikian, pendidikan akhlak terbukti menjadi fondasi utama dalam membentuk santri yang tidak hanya disiplin, tetapi juga memiliki integritas, tanggung jawab, dan kesiapan untuk menghadapi tantangan kehidupan di masyarakat.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Akhak, Kedisiplinan, Santri, Pondok Pesantren

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Abstract

This study aims to explain the role of moral education in improving the discipline of students (santri) at Zulhijjah Islamic Boarding School in Batanghari. The research method used is qualitative with a descriptive approach, utilizing data collection techniques such as observation, interviews, and documentation. The focus of this study is on how moral education is not only understood as a transfer of knowledge but also as a process of internalizing values reflected in the attitudes, behaviors, and compliance of santri with the rules of the pesantren. The findings show that moral values such as honesty, responsibility, obedience, discipline, and respect for teachers play a significant role in shaping the disciplined behavior of the santri. The implementation of these values is carried out through habituation and modeling in daily activities, both religious rituals such as congregational prayers, Qur'an recitation, and religious studies as well as social activities like mutual cooperation and collaboration among students. In addition, the guidance methods applied by teachers (*ustadz* and *ustadzah*) through role modeling and the implementation of the *ta'zir* mechanism further strengthen discipline. The exemplary behavior of teachers serves as a model for students to emulate, while *ta'zir* functions as both an educational tool and a form of control to help students understand the consequences of violating rules. Thus, moral education has proven to be a foundation in shaping students who are not only disciplined but also possess integrity, a sense of responsibility, and readiness to face challenges in society.

Keywords: Ethics Education, Discipline, Students, Islamic Boarding Schools

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary society, Indonesia is facing a serious moral crisis that reflects the erosion of ethical and religious values. Various social symptoms such as the rise of violence among students, disrespect toward teachers, lack of responsibility, and frequent violations of moral and religious norms illustrate this condition (Curren and Ryan, 2020). These phenomena indicate that education, particularly religious education, continues to face major challenges in shaping students' character and personality (Rissanen et al., 2018). Religious instruction often prioritizes cognitive mastery over moral and ethical development, resulting in moral



values that remain uninternalized within students' behavior and attitudes (Mahmud et al., 2022).

This moral crisis is also evident in Islamic educational institutions, including *pondok pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), which have traditionally functioned as moral fortresses and centers for character formation (Mujahid, 2021). However, recent observations show a decline in moral behavior among some students, as seen at Zulhijjah Islamic Boarding School in Batanghari. Some students display attitudes inconsistent with Islamic ethics such as dishonesty, impoliteness, diminished respect toward teachers, and noncompliance with institutional rules revealing a gap between the pesantren's moral education objectives and the lived behavior of its students.

Previous literature emphasizes that moral education plays a fundamental role in shaping students' character and discipline. The Qur'an (Surah Al-Anbiya, verse 107) and the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) affirm that the Prophet was sent to perfect human morality (Chandra, 2019). Classical Muslim scholars such as Imam al-Ghazali and Ibn Miskawayh conceptualized moral education as a process of *tazkiyatun nafs* (spiritual purification) and the continuous habituation of righteous deeds (*malakah*) (Jubba et al., 2022). Within this framework, moral education is not limited to the transmission of knowledge about right and wrong but involves a process of internalizing values through habituation, exemplary behavior, and nurturing moral advice (Chowdhury, 2018).

Building upon these perspectives, this study aims to examine and analyze the role of moral education in enhancing students' discipline at Zulhijjah Islamic Boarding School, Batanghari. Specifically, it explores how moral values are implemented in daily pesantren life, the extent to which role modeling and habituation contribute to the formation of discipline, and how moral education can serve as a transformative solution to moral challenges faced by Islamic educational institutions today. The central argument of this study posits that moral education holds a pivotal role in shaping students' disciplinary behavior. When education focuses solely on cognitive achievement, moral values tend to be overlooked, even though character formation constitutes the essence of Islamic education. As a holistic learning environment, the pesantren has the potential to integrate moral education across all aspects of student life. Through teachers' exemplary conduct, consistent habituation, and the implementation of educationally oriented discipline, moral education



functions as a transformative process that cultivates disciplined, responsible, and morally upright individuals grounded in Islamic values.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The conceptual-theoretical framework of this study is based on the theory of moral education and the theory of discipline in Islamic education, which are integratively used to analyze the implementation of moral education in improving student discipline. Moral education in the Islamic perspective is not only oriented toward the formation of moral knowing but also encompasses the dimensions of moral feeling and moral action, which together shape the complete character of the *insan kamil* (the ideal human) (Mujahid, 2021).

This theory is grounded in the thoughts of Al-Ghazali (*Ihya' Ulumuddin*) and Ibn Miskawaih (*Tahdzib al-Akhlak*), who emphasized that morality results from a continuous process of habituation and spiritual training aimed at controlling desires and instilling virtues through exemplary conduct, consistent practice, and spiritual supervision (Syaiful and Anam, 2024). In the context of Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) education, the internalization of moral values is carried out through a holistic system in which cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects are synergistically integrated into learning activities, mentoring, and students' daily lives (Arifin et al., 2022).

Meanwhile, the theory of discipline in Islamic education highlights the importance of *tadib* (the cultivation of proper conduct) as the foundation for developing orderly and responsible behavior. Discipline is not merely compliance with rules but rather a manifestation of moral and spiritual awareness that grows from an understanding of sharia values and respect for the authority of teachers and *pesantren* leaders. Modern scholars such as Nata have expanded this concept by linking it to the development of *pesantren* culture that supports discipline through social control, the exemplary conduct of the *kyai* (religious leader), and dialogical as well as educative guidance mechanisms (Nata, 2019). Thus, moral education functions as an instrument of value internalization, while discipline serves as a concrete indicator of the success of this process as reflected in the students' daily behavior.

Morality (*akhlaq*) is defined as a state of the soul that motivates a person to act spontaneously toward goodness without external compulsion. This conception emphasizes that morality is not merely the outcome of theoretical knowledge but rather the result of continuous practice and habituation (Mustain and Bakar, 2025). In the context of



modern education, this principle remains highly relevant as it underscores the importance of value internalization rather than mere information transmission. Effective moral education must encompass cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions so that learners not only understand moral values but also possess the willingness and ability to embody them in their daily conduct (Sarbini, Rahtikawati, and Syamsudin, 2021).

The concept of moral education within Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) possesses distinctive characteristics, as it is inherently integrated into students' everyday lives. The *pesantren* educational system does not rely solely on classroom instruction but also emphasizes character formation through social interaction, communal worship, and direct mentorship by teachers (*ustadz*) (Islamic, Ishaq, and Dayati, 2024). According to Nata, *pesantren* function as transformative institutions that instill manners (*adab*), discipline, and responsibility through the process of role modeling. The formation of morality within *pesantren* occurs gradually through consistent habituation, which develops a moral habitus within the students (Nata, 2019). In this sense, discipline represents a tangible manifestation of internalized morality, as disciplined students demonstrate obedience, responsibility, and a heightened sense of moral awareness (Jaenullah et al., 2022).

Previous studies have demonstrated a strong correlation between moral education and the development of discipline within Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) (Shiddiq et al., 2024). For instance, research conducted by Fausi revealed that the success of character education in *pesantren* depends largely on the extent to which moral values are taught through practical experience rather than mere lectures or theoretical instruction (Fausi, 2020). Students learn to value time, obey rules, and respect their teachers through the exemplary conduct of *ustadz* and the implementation of educational *ta'zir* (constructive disciplinary measures) (Chandra, 2019). *Ta'zir* is not merely a form of punishment but serves as a means of moral guidance, helping students to understand the ethical consequences of their actions (Agustin et al., 2024). Thus, moral education in *pesantren* constitutes a holistic educational system that integrates the cognitive (religious knowledge), affective (moral values), and psychomotor (disciplinary practice) dimensions of learning (Fanani and Sonhadji, 2022).

From the perspective of Islamic educational psychology, moral formation is closely related to the processes of value internalization and self-regulation (Wijayanti and Abdurrahman, 2025). Isroani emphasizes



that the ultimate goal of Islamic education is to cultivate morally upright individuals through spiritual training, habituation, and exemplary behavior. This aligns with Bandura's social learning theory, which underscores the critical role of modeling in the learning process. Students imitate the behavior of *ustadz* as respected authority figures, making role modeling a dominant factor in the success of moral education (Isroani, 2023). Furthermore, the routine activities within *pesantren* foster internal social control that motivates students to maintain discipline without external coercion. In other words, discipline in *pesantren* emerges as the result of an integrated system of spiritual and social values instilled simultaneously through daily practice (Badri and Malik, 2024).

In the context of national education, moral education in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) can be viewed as a practical embodiment of the character education framework promoted by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (Muhajir, 2022). According to Kurniawan, character education encompasses three essential dimensions: knowing the good, feeling the good, and doing the good. The *pesantren*, with its value-based and exemplary learning system, naturally integrates all three dimensions into its educational practice (Kurniawan and Fitriyani, 2023). The students' discipline manifested in their adherence to study schedules, maintenance of cleanliness, and respect for teachers serves as tangible evidence of the success of moral education. This demonstrates that the *pesantren* model remains highly relevant as a moral education system amidst the challenges of globalization and modernization, which often erode the spiritual and social values of learners (Ghafur, 2025).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of moral education in enhancing the discipline of students (*santri*) at Zulhijjah Islamic Boarding School, Batanghari. This approach was chosen because it allows for a natural and contextual description of the phenomenon under study. The research was conducted at Zulhijjah Islamic Boarding School, with participants consisting of the head of the boarding school, teachers of moral education, Islamic religious education teachers, and students, who were selected using the snowball sampling technique. The data comprised primary data obtained through observation and in-depth interviews, as well as secondary data collected from institutional documents such as the school profile, organizational structure, vision and mission statements, and activity archives. Data were gathered through three main techniques non-



participatory observation, interviews, and documentation to provide a comprehensive picture of the implementation of moral values and discipline within the pesantren environment.

The collected data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was conducted to select essential information; data display was presented narratively; and conclusions were drawn continuously throughout the research process. The validity of the data was ensured through extended observation, increased persistence, triangulation of sources and methods, as well as consultation with supervisors and peer discussions. These procedures ensured the accuracy, consistency, and validity of the findings, thereby providing a credible understanding of the role of moral education in shaping students' discipline at Zuhijjah Islamic Boarding School, Batanghari.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Implementation of Moral Education

Moral education at Zuhijjah Islamic Boarding School is not limited to formal classroom instruction but is predominantly realized through continuous habituation integrated into students' daily routines. The life of students (*santri*) in the pesantren is governed by a structured schedule that extends from early morning until bedtime.

Students are required to wake up before the dawn prayer (Subuh), perform congregational prayers, recite the Qur'an, attend *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic texts) study sessions, and participate in formal school activities. Such a daily pattern directly cultivates discipline, perseverance, and obedience to institutional rules. As stated by the Vice Principal for Curriculum Affairs:

"Students' discipline is not formed merely through lectures but through a structured and consistent daily schedule. The students become accustomed to punctuality, rule compliance, and self-regulation, all of which constitute integral aspects of moral development" (Interview with TL, 21 July 2025).

Time	Activity	Description
04.15 – 04.30	Wake up and get ready	Discipline of personal hygiene
04.30 – 05.15	Morning prayer in congregation and wirid	Continued with the cultum



05.30 – 06.15	Studying the Qur'an	Guidance from religious teachers
06.30 – 07.00	Dormitory/mosque cleaning duty	Rotating
07.15 – 12.00	Formal learning activities (school)	Curriculum
12.00 – 12.45	Dhuhr prayer in congregation & lunch	Etiquette for eating together
13.00 – 15.00	Rest and memorization	Supervision of polytheists
15.15 – 15.45	Asr prayer in congregation	Continued dhikr
16.00 – 17.30	Extracurricular (sports/organizations)	Training responsibility
17.45 – 18.30	Maghrib prayer in congregation and <i>tadarus</i>	Book study
18.45 – 19.30	Isha prayer in congregation & dinner	Congregational etiquette
20.00 – 22.00	Evening study (<i>halaqah</i>)	Learning discipline
22.15	Rest	Must sleep on time

Table 1. List of Student Activities for the Year 2025

The activity schedule plays a crucial role in instilling the values of time discipline, responsibility, and togetherness among the students. This view is reinforced by the statement of the Akhlak teacher, Ustadz TN, who explained that:

“In cultivating moral character, students study classical moral texts such as *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* and *Bidayat al-Hidayah*. These texts teach proper manners, etiquette toward teachers and peers, and ethical guidelines for seeking knowledge. However, students do not learn morality solely from these books but also through shared daily experiences within the pesantren community. Through a structured and demanding schedule, they become accustomed to living orderly, maintaining discipline, and valuing time” (Interview with TN, 21 July 2025).

The statement reinforces that the process of moral education in the pesantren does not merely take place in the classroom through the reading and study of classical moral texts but is also manifested in the students' daily routines. The structured schedule from waking up early, performing congregational prayers, Qur'an recitation, and classroom learning to



afternoon and evening activities serves as an effective medium for habituating discipline among the students.

The *ustadz* further explained that the students' discipline is reflected not only in their punctuality and commitment to study but also in their efforts to maintain the cleanliness of dormitories, fulfill assigned duties, and adhere to institutional regulations. This sense of order develops naturally because the students live in a community environment that encourages mutual supervision, reminding, and correction when a rule is violated.



Figure 1. Interview with Teacher

Moreover, he emphasized that moral education in the pesantren is essentially aimed at training students to live in accordance with Islamic values, wherein orderliness and discipline are integral components of virtuous character formation (Sista et al., 2019). Although some students initially find it difficult to adjust to the strict rules, consistent habituation and the teachers' role modeling gradually help them internalize and accept the values of discipline.

Thus, it can be understood that the moral education implemented at Zulhijjah Islamic Boarding School plays a crucial role in training students to internalize the value of discipline continuously both through the study of moral texts and through direct, lived experiences in daily activities. This is further illustrated by the following statement from one of the teachers:



“In educating morals, we teachers strive to lead by example. Students typically don't just listen to what we teach, but rather imitate what we do. Therefore, teachers must truly set an example in discipline, such as arriving on time, maintaining good manners when speaking, and demonstrating patience when dealing with unruly students” (Interview with Mr, 21 July 2025).

From this statement, it can be concluded that the role model of teachers is a crucial aspect in shaping the morals of students. Teachers are not merely instructors, but also role models whose behavior students emulate in their daily lives. However, one teacher lamented that the negative habits of previous students also influenced their early education at the Islamic boarding school. This is more explicitly expressed in the following quote:

“Sometimes our biggest obstacle is when students have developed bad habits from their homes or their environment before entering the Islamic boarding school. For example, some are lazy about waking up in the morning, tend to procrastinate, or prefer playing with gadgets. This certainly takes time to correct. But we are confident that with consistent practice, they can gradually become more disciplined” (Interview with ZE, 24 July 2025).

This statement indicates the existence of inhibiting factors in the implementation of moral education, namely the background and habits of students before entering Islamic boarding schools. However, the administrators believe that with an Islamic boarding school education system that emphasizes discipline, togetherness, and the habituation of worship, students will experience positive changes. These efforts to change are implemented through various coaching strategies tailored to the character and level of the student's violation. One approach frequently used is personal counseling for female students who violate the rules. As explained by Ustadz TN below:

“We also frequently use personal counseling methods with female students who break the rules. Not all violations require punishment; sometimes, with a gentle approach, students can become more aware and repent. However, if the violations are repeated, sanctions or *ta'zir* are imposed to create a deterrent effect” (Interview with TN, 21 July 2025).



This shows that the teachers' strategy in educating students' morals not only emphasizes punishment, but also prioritizes a persuasive approach and compassionate advice. Thus, the moral education model at the Zulhijjah Islamic boarding school maintains a balance between firmness and gentleness. This statement demonstrates that habituating daily activities, such as waking up early and praying in congregation, is an effective way to instill discipline in students. Discipline is formed not through coercion, but through a process of social adaptation and a collaborative approach within the Islamic boarding school environment. As stated by the following student, MH:

“Morals learned at the Islamic boarding school aren't just from the scriptures, but also from everyday habits. For example, we have to be polite when speaking to the male and female teachers, and we shouldn't be rude to our friends. Over time, we became accustomed to maintaining good manners, as violations usually involve reprimands or *ta'zir* (reprimands). Although it was difficult at first, I realized it was for the greater good” (Interview with M, 28 July 2025).

This quote reinforces the previous view that moral education in Islamic boarding schools stems not only from theoretical teaching, but also from the habituation of behavior and ongoing social control. Reprimands and *ta'zir* are part of the moral education system that educates, not merely forms of punishment. The statement above illustrates that consistency in maintaining discipline is still influenced by external factors, particularly the environment outside the Islamic boarding school. This suggests that moral development requires continuity between guidance at the Islamic boarding school and support from friends and family. This is what the SR students experienced, as seen in the following quote:

“At the Islamic boarding school, if a friend is undisciplined, we usually remind each other. So, it's not just the female teacher who reprimands us; our friends also help us remind them. From that, I realized that morality and discipline aren't just rules, but rather habits that should be carried over to when we return home and live in society” (Interview with SR, 28 July 2025).

The large number of students and limited teacher ratio creates challenges in supervision, but also trains students to supervise each other (peer supervision). The findings above illustrate that the moral values that



are the core of education at the Zuhijah Islamic Boarding School include: honesty instilled through a strict prohibition on cheating on exams and an emphasis on trustworthiness in holding responsibilities.



Figure 2. Interview with Student

Responsibility is manifested in the form of cleaning duties, class leadership, and responsibility for maintaining the boarding school facilities. Discipline is practiced through adherence to the established activity schedule. Respect for teachers is demonstrated through manners when speaking, kissing the hands of *ustadz/ustadzah*, and prioritizing the interests of teachers above personal interests. As well as social concern, manifested through a culture of mutual assistance among students, sharing food, and visiting sick students.

Exemplary Behavior (*Uswah Hasanah*)

Teachers and caregivers consistently emphasize the importance of role models. They guard their speech, dress modestly, adhere to time discipline, and demonstrate humility. Students emulate these behaviors, allowing for natural moral development. Ustadz TN, who teaches a book on morals, explained that students learn morals not only from the book but also through example in their daily lives. Therefore, the teachers strive to be role models in every aspect, from their attire and speech to maintaining time discipline. If we demand discipline from our students, we must first demonstrate that discipline, for example, by arriving on time, maintaining cleanliness, and actively participating in student activities. In this way, students can see firsthand that discipline is an important value in their lives (Interview with TN, 21 July 2025).

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This was confirmed by *Ustadz* ZE, who stated that in the process of moral development, an exemplary approach is prioritized over verbal advice. The *ustadz* strive to display humility, humility, and patience in their interactions with their students. When violations or mistakes occur, the response is not anger, but rather gentle and educational reprimands. This approach demonstrates that the values of patience and gentleness are an integral part of moral education, which students are expected to emulate (Interview with ZE, 24 July 2025).



Figure 3. Routine Activities of Students

Moral education will not succeed if teachers rely solely on lectures. Therefore, in this pesantren, we emphasize the principle of *uswah hasanah* (exemplary conduct). What we teach in the classroom must also be practiced outside it. For instance, when we teach about guarding one's speech, we ourselves must be careful with our words. When we teach about the importance of attending congregational prayers, we too must always be present at the prayer congregation (Interview with Mr, 21 July 2025).

Findings from interviews with teachers (*ustadz* and *ustadzah*) indicate that the exemplary conduct of educators and caretakers serves as the key factor in the implementation of moral education at Zulhijjah Islamic Boarding School, Batanghari. Moral values are not merely taught theoretically but are demonstrated through teachers' real-life behavior in their daily interactions. The interviews reveal that the teachers' and caretakers' role modeling (*uswah hasanah*) is the primary factor shaping students' morality and discipline. Students do not simply receive theoretical instruction; rather, they learn directly from the concrete



examples displayed daily such as punctuality, simplicity, politeness, and humility (*tawadhu'*).

Discussion

Habituation as a System of Moral Education

Each student is trained to perform good deeds repeatedly, such as reciting prayers before and after studying, maintaining cleanliness, and performing voluntary (*sunnah*) prayers. The underlying principle is that morality cannot be developed solely through theoretical learning; it must be continuously practiced until it becomes an integral part of daily life. This habituation process enables students to cultivate independence, discipline, and a sense of responsibility without the need for constant supervision (Rino and Setiawan, 2025).

Through this approach, students become aware of the importance of maintaining good moral conduct not merely out of compliance with institutional rules, but as a result of inner moral consciousness. Thus, habituation functions as a formative process that shapes students' character, fostering greater discipline and virtuous behaviour (Interview with TN, 21 July 2025). Through this habituation, we learn to be disciplined with time and not to procrastinate. Even when I go home during holidays, I still wake up early and perform prayers on time.

Advice and *Mau'izhah*: Education with the Heart

Advice (*mau'izhah*) is delivered both formally through religious study sessions (*pengajian*) and informally when students commit mistakes. In Islamic educational theory, *mau'izhah*, or moral admonition, is considered an effective method of moral education because it contains elements of guidance, reminder, and motivation. According to al-Ghazali, advice conveyed with gentleness of heart is more readily accepted, since the essence of moral education lies not merely in the transfer of knowledge but in the internalization of values that touch the heart (Syaiful and Anam, 2024).

This view is consistent with Zakiah Daradjat's perspective, which asserts that giving advice is one of the oldest and most enduring methods of education, as human beings naturally need direction, reminders, and moral exemplars (Arifin et al., 2022). Within the context of the pesantren, *mau'izhah* is not confined to formal settings but is also practiced in everyday life, enabling students to habitually listen to, comprehend, and apply moral values consistently (Roqib, 2021).

Advice is an essential part of moral education. Teachers usually give advice formally, for instance during religious study sessions or after

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congregational prayers. However, we also often deliver it informally, such as when a student makes a mistake or forgets proper etiquette. In this way, students feel closer, more cared for, and ultimately able to learn from the experience. In my view, *mau'izhah* is not merely about words it is a message from the heart that must touch the hearts of the students so that they become aware and willing to improve themselves (Interview with TN, 21 July 2025).

***Ta'zir*: Educational Punishment**

Ta'zir is applied as a form of education rather than mere punishment. From the perspective of Islamic education, *ta'zir* refers to a disciplinary measure administered with the purpose of educating, correcting, and fostering discipline. Imam al-Ghazali emphasizes that punishment may be imposed as long as it upholds the principle of *maslahah* (benefit) and does not cause greater harm (*mafsadah*). Zakiah Daradjat also emphasizes that punishment in education should not serve merely to inflict suffering but should function as a means to foster moral awareness in students. Punishment must be proportional, fair, and educational so that students recognize their mistakes and are motivated to correct themselves (Muvid et al., 2020).

In the process of student education, the implementation of *ta'zir* or disciplinary punishment is sometimes unavoidable, particularly when violations of pesantren regulations occur. However, *ta'zir* is not intended to cause harm but rather to serve as a medium for moral guidance and personal development (Rahmatullah and Baharun, 2023). The forms of punishment administered are educational in nature, such as assigning additional tasks like cleaning the mosque, memorizing short supplications, or rewriting missed lessons. Through such measures, students are expected to feel remorse while simultaneously learning valuable lessons from their mistakes. Every application of punishment carefully considers principles of justice and educational value, aiming not to instill fear but to cultivate awareness and a sense of responsibility (Interview with Mr, 21 July 2025).

In educational psychology theory, punishment can serve as a behavioral control mechanism but should be employed only as a last resort after persuasive approaches, role modeling, and advice have proven ineffective (Ryan and Deci, 2020). Accordingly, *ta'zir* within the pesantren holds a strategic position as both a reinforcer of discipline and a means of character development.

At Zulhijjah Islamic Boarding School, *ta'zir* functions as an educational form of discipline that instills a sense of responsibility and



self-control among students. Punishments are administered proportionally, without causing harm, and are always directed toward the cultivation of noble character. Students who receive *ta'zir* experience a corrective effect that discourages repetition of their mistakes while fostering reflection and moral awareness. Thus, *ta'zir* constitutes an essential component of the pesantren's moral education system, complementing the methods of role modeling, habituation, and moral advice in shaping students who are disciplined, humble (*tawadhu'*), and possess integrity (Cahyono et al., 2024).

Based on the findings presented earlier, several key aspects can be identified in understanding the role of moral education in enhancing students' discipline at Zulhijjah Islamic Boarding School, Batanghari. One of the main findings indicates that moral education implemented in this pesantren does not merely focus on the cognitive aspect of knowledge transmission but rather emphasizes the process of value internalization.

Moral education is positioned as the core of students' character formation, wherein values such as honesty, responsibility, obedience, and discipline are cultivated through consistent habituation and the concrete example set by educators. This aligns with Nata view that the development of noble character is achieved through a continuous process of habituation and role modeling in everyday life (Nata, 2018). In this context, education is no longer narrowly understood as a process of instruction but as a holistic endeavor aimed at shaping the human person through values that are lived and deeply embedded in every action (Lubis, 2025).

Furthermore, the combination of role modeling (*uswah hasanah*) and the implementation of *ta'zir* serves as a crucial factor in fostering sustainable discipline among students. Teachers at Zulhijjah Islamic Boarding School function not only as instructors but also as exemplary figures who demonstrate the practical embodiment of Islamic values. Students observe, imitate, and ultimately adopt the teachers' attitudes and behaviors as moral references in their own lives.

In this regard, role modeling (*uswah hasanah*) functions as a highly effective educational medium, as it provides learning through direct experience. Conversely, the implementation of *ta'zir*, a form of disciplinary measure in Islamic education, is not intended to inflict harm but rather to educate and correct mistakes. *Ta'zir* is part of an Islamic educational strategy designed to cultivate a sense of responsibility and moral awareness concerning violations of established rules (Jannah and Meisya, 2023). Within the pesantren context, *ta'zir* is applied proportionally, with



the aim of educating rather than punishing, and is always accompanied by thoughtful explanation to ensure that students understand the moral essence behind each corrective action.

The pesantren itself serves as a highly effective social and spiritual environment for character formation. As a traditional Islamic educational institution, it provides a comprehensive space for students to learn, interact, and practice Islamic values in a supportive and disciplined setting (Akhyar et al., 2024). This closely monitored yet familial environment positions the pesantren as a “moral laboratory”, where the theory and practice of ethical values are harmoniously integrated (Wijayanti and Abdurrahman, 2025).

Students do not learn discipline merely from textbooks but experience it directly through their daily routines waking up early, performing congregational prayers, participating in teaching and learning activities, maintaining cleanliness, and fulfilling collective responsibilities (Mili and Winch, 2019). These activities, both directly and indirectly, shape students’ character to become obedient to rules, independent, responsible, and capable of living within an Islamic social order.

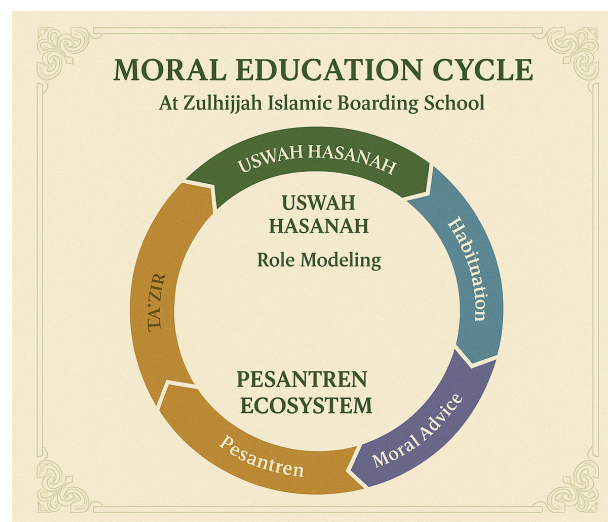


Figure 4. Implementation Of Moral Education

Nevertheless, the implementation of moral education in pesantren is not without challenges. One of the most evident difficulties lies in the powerful influence of social media and the digital world among adolescents (Rissanen et al., 2018). The vast flow of information circulating through digital platforms often carries values that are inconsistent with the moral spirit of pesantren education. Students who lack strong self-



control can easily be exposed to negative content that distorts their mindset and behavior.

In addition, the limited number of qualified educators presents another challenge, particularly in terms of supervision and guidance, given the relatively large number of students. To address these obstacles, pesantren must develop new strategies, such as strengthening the role of teachers as both spiritual mentors and social supervisors, providing professional training for educators, and utilizing technology wisely to support moral education. Collaborative approaches among pesantren, parents, and the wider community are also essential to build a strong, sustainable, and contextually responsive moral education ecosystem capable of meeting the challenges of modern times.

Thus, it can be understood that moral education implemented in a structured manner grounded in habituation and exemplary conduct, and supported by a conducive pesantren environment and an effective system of supervision has proven effective in shaping students who are disciplined and possess noble character. The discipline cultivated through this process is not merely a matter of rule compliance but a reflection of moral awareness and personal responsibility that arises from within the students themselves. This embodies the ultimate goal of moral education in Islam: to nurture individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent but also spiritually mature and socially responsible.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal that moral education plays a crucial role in shaping students' discipline at Zulhijjah Islamic Boarding School, Batanghari. Discipline is not only formed through theoretical instruction but is also internalized through consistent habituation, exemplary modeling (*uswah hasanah*), and the application of educational sanctions (*ta'zir*). The combination of these three approaches establishes a comprehensive system of moral education that instills the values of honesty, responsibility, obedience, and respect for teachers. Daily routines such as congregational prayers, Qur'an recitation, learning activities, and communal social practices serve as concrete avenues for students to develop time management, self-control, and social responsibility reflecting the successful internalization of moral values.

The strength of this study lies in its deep contextual exploration of the pesantren environment as a moral laboratory, where the theory and practice of ethical values are harmoniously integrated. The use of a qualitative-descriptive method allows for a broader understanding of how moral values are manifested in daily behavior and institutional practices.

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Conceptually, this study reaffirms the relevance of classical Islamic educational theories such as *tazkiyatun nafs* (spiritual purification) and *uswah hasanah* (exemplary conduct) in addressing contemporary challenges in character education. It also provides empirical evidence that moral education grounded in habituation, role modeling, moral advice (*nasihah*), and educational sanctions remains an effective framework for developing disciplined, ethical, and socially responsible individuals.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. First, its scope is confined to a single Islamic boarding school, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other Islamic educational institutions with different cultural and administrative contexts. Second, although the study presents an in-depth qualitative description, it lacks quantitative data that could more precisely measure the level of discipline or the impact of moral education implementation. Therefore, future research is recommended to employ a mixed-methods approach to enhance analytical depth and broaden comparative perspectives, making the findings more widely applicable to Islamic education contexts.

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