



CULTIVATING DISCIPLINE IN STUDENTS THROUGH REWARDS AND PUNISHMENT

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Abstrack

This study aims to analyze the implementation of reward and punishment in instilling discipline among students. This research employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, then analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of rewards in the form of praise, gifts, and appreciation was able to improve students' learning motivation, compliance with regulations, and enthusiasm in participating in boarding school activities. Meanwhile, educational punishments, such as warnings, additional assignments, and restriction of certain facilities, proved effective in controlling behavior and reducing disciplinary violations among students. The balanced implementation of reward and punishment was able to create an orderly and conducive boarding school environment while supporting the development of responsibility, independence, and discipline among students. This study also found that the implementation of reward and punishment has implications for character building and the development of a disciplinary culture within the boarding school environment. However, when applied excessively and disproportionately, rewards may lead to dependency and decrease students' intrinsic motivation. Therefore, a wise, educational, and sustainable strategy in implementing reward and punishment is needed so that the process of developing students' discipline can be carried out optimally. The research results show that the balanced implementation of rewards and punishments has a positive impact on increasing student learning motivation, compliance with regulations, and reducing disciplinary violations. Furthermore, this policy contributes to creating an orderly and conducive Islamic boarding school environment and strengthening the character development of responsibility, independence, and a culture of discipline among students. However, excessive implementation of rewards has the potential to create dependency and reduce students' intrinsic motivation, so proportional, educational, and sustainable implementation is needed.

Keywords: reward, punishment, discipline, students, Islamic boarding school

Abstrak



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Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penerapan reward dan punishment dalam menanamkan kedisiplinan santri. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui teknik wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldana yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan reward dalam bentuk pujian, hadiah, dan penghargaan mampu meningkatkan motivasi belajar, kepatuhan terhadap tata tertib, serta semangat santri dalam menjalankan kegiatan pesantren. Sementara itu, punishment yang bersifat edukatif, seperti teguran, penugasan tambahan, dan pembatasan fasilitas tertentu, terbukti efektif dalam mengontrol perilaku serta mengurangi tingkat pelanggaran disiplin santri. Penerapan reward dan punishment secara seimbang mampu menciptakan lingkungan pesantren yang tertib, kondusif, dan mendukung pembentukan karakter tanggung jawab, kemandirian, serta kedisiplinan santri. Penelitian ini juga menemukan bahwa penerapan reward dan punishment memiliki implikasi terhadap pembentukan karakter dan budaya disiplin di lingkungan pesantren. Akan tetapi, apabila diterapkan secara berlebihan dan tidak proporsional, reward dapat menimbulkan ketergantungan serta menurunkan motivasi intrinsik santri. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan strategi penerapan reward dan punishment yang bijak, edukatif, dan berkelanjutan agar proses pembentukan kedisiplinan santri dapat berjalan secara optimal. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan reward dan punishment secara seimbang memberikan dampak positif terhadap peningkatan motivasi belajar, kepatuhan terhadap tata tertib, serta pengurangan pelanggaran disiplin santri. Selain itu, kebijakan tersebut berkontribusi dalam menciptakan lingkungan pesantren yang tertib dan kondusif serta memperkuat pembentukan karakter tanggung jawab, kemandirian, dan budaya disiplin di kalangan santri. Namun, penerapan reward yang berlebihan berpotensi menimbulkan ketergantungan dan menurunkan motivasi intrinsik santri, sehingga diperlukan penerapan yang proporsional, edukatif, dan berkelanjutan.

Kata kunci: reward, punishment, kedisiplinan, santri, pesantren

Introduction

Education is a fundamental aspect in shaping human personality, both intellectually, spiritually, and socially. In the context of Islamic education, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) play a strategic role not only as institutions for transferring knowledge but also as environments for character-building among students through various daily activities. Pesantren function as educational institutions that play a role in shaping a generation of perfect human beings through the integration of religious values, education, and character development into daily life (Sauri et al., 2022). One important character trait that must be instilled in the pesantren environment is discipline, as it serves as the primary foundation for developing responsibility, independence, and adherence to social and religious norms. The communication and interaction patterns that occur within the pesantren environment also contribute to building a culture of discipline that supports the process of character education in students (Hastasari et al., 2022).

Discipline in the context of Islamic boarding school education is not only interpreted as obedience to rules, but also as a manifestation of spiritual awareness in practicing Islamic values. The implementation of moral values in the Islamic education process is an important means of fostering disciplined behavior based on personal awareness and responsibility (Zulkifli et al., 2022). Discipline in students

is not formed instantly, but rather through a consistent and ongoing process of habituation. Islamic education emphasizes the importance of character building through learning that integrates moral and social values into students' lives (Kaya Postema, 2022). However, in practice, various problems are still encountered, such as low compliance with rules, lack of motivation to participate in activities, and boredom due to the busy activities at Islamic boarding schools. This situation indicates the need for appropriate strategies to instill discipline so that educational goals can be optimally achieved (Fidaus, 2020).

This phenomenon demands a development strategy that is not only effective but also humane and appropriate to the psychological developmental stage of adolescents. Adolescents aged 13–18 years old, who constitute the majority of students in Islamic boarding schools, students are in the process of discovering their identity and therefore require clear guidance and space to develop their potential positively (Hamdani, 2021). One strategy widely used in education to foster discipline is the application of rewards and punishments. Rewards have been shown to increase student learning motivation through consistent reinforcement of positive behavior (Dini et al., 2025). Rewards serve as positive reinforcement that encourages students to maintain disciplined behavior, while punishment serves as a control measure to prevent and correct violations. Research shows that rewards can increase student learning motivation, while punishment plays a role in fostering compliance with rules (Rosyid & Wahyuni, 2021). Other research also shows that the combination of rewards and punishments can significantly influence the development of student discipline in elementary education (Safitri et al., 2023).

However, the application of rewards and punishments does not always produce positive impacts if implemented inappropriately. Excessive rewards have the potential to create a dependency on external rewards, thus reducing students' intrinsic motivation. Conversely, disproportionate use of punishments can have negative psychological impacts and reduce the effectiveness of behavioral development (Perez & Okonofua, 2022). Disciplinary approaches that are too punishment-oriented also risk increasing antisocial behavior if not accompanied by adequate guidance (Nuntavisit & Porter, 2022). Therefore, various modern educational studies have begun to emphasize the importance of implementing a more educative, reflective, and self-awareness-oriented approach to discipline in students (Holden et al., 2022). In the context of Islamic education, the use of corporal punishment is also debated because its effectiveness needs to be weighed against educational principles that prioritize compassion, justice, and character development (Fitrianto & Layalin, 2025).

Research conducted by Syaifuddin shows that approximately 78% of Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia implement a reward and punishment system as part of their development management, but only around 42% implement it based on sound educational theory and principles (Syaifuddin, 2022). This situation indicates that the implementation of rewards and punishments is still often carried out traditionally and tends to be authoritarian, potentially triggering excessive fear or hidden forms of resistance from students. Therefore, it is important to examine how the implementation of rewards and punishments is implemented in educational institutions that are considered successful in building student discipline so that they can serve as models for other educational institutions.

This research was conducted, an Islamic educational institution that implements a reward and punishment system to foster student discipline through a structured and well-documented coaching system for over a decade. With its dense

activity system and strict rules, this Islamic boarding school is an interesting context for study, particularly regarding the application of rewards and punishments and their implications for student discipline. The focus of the research is directed at analyzing how rewards and punishments applied in the process of fostering student discipline and the implications it has for their disciplined behavior. Theoretically, this research is expected to enrich studies on strategies for developing disciplined character in Islamic education, particularly in Islamic boarding schools. Practically, the results of this study can serve as a reference for Islamic boarding school managers and educators in designing more effective and sustainable discipline development strategies.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus, which not only identifies the application of rewards and punishments but also analyzes their positive and negative implications contextually in a female Islamic boarding school based on memorization of the Quran (tahfidz), with a boarding school system and full-day activities. This research provides a more comprehensive perspective on the effectiveness of rewards and punishments in shaping the disciplined character of students while identifying various factors that support and hinder their successful implementation..

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study to understand in-depth the application of rewards and punishments in instilling discipline in students. The research location was chosen because the Islamic boarding school has implemented a structured reward and punishment system in fostering student discipline and has characteristics relevant to the research focus.

The research data sources consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with the head of the Islamic boarding school and female teachers, as well as observations of student activities within the Islamic boarding school environment. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from various supporting documents, such as Islamic boarding school archives, regulations, activity reports, and literature related to rewards, punishments, and student discipline. Data collection was conducted through interviews, observation, and documentation to obtain comprehensive information regarding the implementation of rewards and punishments and their implications for student discipline.

Data analysis used the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, which includes data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data condensation was performed by selecting and grouping relevant data, while data presentation was descriptive to facilitate interpretation. Furthermore, conclusions were drawn based on the results of the comprehensive analysis. Data validity was tested using triangulation techniques by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation to ensure the credibility and consistency of the research findings.

Results and Discussion

The research findings were obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation regarding the implementation of rewards and punishments in instilling discipline in students. The research findings indicate that the success of this system's implementation is inseparable from the role and competence of the educators involved in the development process. The Islamic boarding school has

set specific standards for educators authorized to administer rewards and punishments, namely having a good understanding of adolescent psychology, Islamic education, and the educator's code of ethics. Educators not only serve as providers of rewards or punishments, but also as facilitators and guides, explaining the purpose and meaning of each form of guidance provided to students. Furthermore, consistency and fairness are key principles in implementing this system. Based on observations, each student receives equal treatment regardless of family background or proximity to the educator. This is crucial for maintaining student trust in the guidance system implemented (Zainal Abidin, 2022).

Based on the research results, rewards are given in various forms, such as verbal praise, gifts in the form of snacks or additional facilities, the awarding of points, and formal awards in the form of certificates and trophies for students who excel. Rewards are given not only to students who achieve academic and non-academic achievements, but also to students who demonstrate increased positive behavior and discipline in participating in Islamic boarding school activities. Interview results indicate that providing rewards can increase students' motivation, self-confidence, and enthusiasm to maintain disciplined behavior in their daily lives.

In addition to rewards, Islamic boarding schools also implement punishments as part of their efforts to foster student discipline. These punishments include direct warnings for minor violations, educational assignments such as writing Quranic verses or participating in additional activities, restrictions on certain facilities, and tiered sanctions based on the category of violation committed. Observations indicate that the punishments applied are educational in nature and avoid physical punishment. The primary goal of punishment is not merely to provide a deterrent effect, but rather to help students understand their mistakes and encourage them to improve their behavior in the future.

The implementation of rewards and punishments is carried out through a systematic mechanism, starting from the socialization of rules and consequences to all students, supervision of activities by ustadzah and Islamic boarding school security officers (alharisul ma'had), recording of student behavior and violations, to the provision of rewards or punishments based on the results of periodic evaluations. In practice, rewards can be given directly when students demonstrate positive behavior, while punishments are given after identification and verification of violations that occur. The study also found that the provision of rewards and punishments is based on clear indicators. Rewards are given to students who actively participate in activities, demonstrate good behavior, and have certain achievements, while punishments are given based on the level of violations committed, whether minor, moderate, or severe.

The research results show that the implementation of rewards and punishments has various positive implications for student discipline. This system is able to increase compliance with Islamic boarding school regulations, foster motivation to learn and participate in activities, foster a sense of responsibility, and reduce the number of violations. However, the study also found several negative implications, such as the emergence of dependence on rewards among some students, excessive expectations of recognition, decreased intrinsic motivation in some students, and discomfort with the punishments received. These findings indicate that the effectiveness of rewards and punishments are greatly influenced by the accuracy and proportionality of their application.

The successful implementation of rewards and punishments is supported

by several factors, including full support from Islamic boarding school leaders, good communication between the boarding school and parents, and the availability of adequate facilities to support the development process. On the other hand, there are several inhibiting factors faced, such as differences in character and background of students, limited time and educators to carry out optimal supervision, and the increasingly strong influence of the external environment due to the development of technology and social media. These factors are challenges that need to be considered so that the reward and punishment system can be implemented more effectively in fostering student discipline.

The results of the study indicate that the success of implementing rewards and punishments in instilling discipline in students is greatly influenced by the role of educators as managers and mentors in the character-building process. This finding aligns with the concept of teachers as leaders put forward by Hasan Langgulung, who states that educators in Islamic education function as teachers, educators, and leaders who are responsible for guiding students towards good goals (Langgulung, 2018). The consistency and fairness demonstrated by the educators in this study also align with the theory of positive discipline, which emphasizes the importance of clear rules and consistent application as the foundation for developing disciplined behavior (Desmita, 2020). This finding is reinforced by research by Amelia and Dafit (2023), which shows that the success of instilling discipline is highly dependent on teachers' role models, consistency, and ability to build positive relationships with students. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, the role of leadership is also a crucial factor because the formation of student discipline takes place not only in the classroom but also throughout the day in the dormitory. This condition aligns with research by Marjuki et al. (2024) who found that democratic and communicative leadership was able to increase students' compliance with applicable rules.

Research findings indicate that rewards in the form of praise, prizes, and formal awards can increase student motivation and discipline. These results align with behaviorist theory, which explains that positive behavior can be reinforced through external reinforcement, encouraging individuals to repeat the same behavior. These findings also support research by Rosyid and Wahyuni (2021), which states that rewards play a crucial role in increasing learning motivation and compliance with rules. These research findings are also consistent with the findings of Martaki et al. (2023), which show that the planned implementation of rewards and punishments can improve student discipline in Islamic boarding schools. Research by Aisyah and Wardatushobariah (2025) also confirms that a reward-and-punishment system involving active student participation can strengthen both their discipline and positive character. Furthermore, research by Sukma et al. (2023) found a significant relationship between the provision of rewards and punishments and students' levels of learning discipline. Similar findings were also reported by Dini et al. (2025), which showed that rewards contribute in increasing learning motivation, which ultimately impacts student learning outcomes. Thus, rewards serve not only as a form of appreciation but also as an instrument for developing sustainable disciplined behavior.

On the other hand, the punishment applied in this study emphasized the educational aspect through reprimands, assignments, facility restrictions, and graduated sanctions according to the level of violation. This finding aligns with the view of Siregar and Siregar (2022), who stated that punishment in Islamic education should be directed at fostering and improving behavior, not as a form of revenge or repressive action. The results of this study also support the findings of Soleyadi

(2024), who explained that the concept of reward and punishment, from the perspective of the Qur'an and Hadith, aims to foster moral awareness and individual responsibility for their behavior. The implementation of educational punishment in this study also aligns with research by Aquil et al. (2025), who found that rewards and punishments in Islamic educational institutions can be effective if implemented proportionally and oriented towards character development. Similarly, research by Chaniago and Nahar (2025) shows that punishment administered wisely can help students improve behavior while strengthening moral formation.

The characteristics of punishment that avoid physical punishment in this study indicate a shift in the development paradigm toward a more humanistic approach. These findings are relevant to research by Visser et al. (2022), which concluded that physical punishment has various negative impacts on child development and does not provide significant long-term benefits. Research by Yang et al. (2023) also showed that harsh discipline has the potential to increase aggressive behavior in adolescents if not balanced with approaches that support their emotional development. Therefore, the use of educational punishment, as found in this study, can be seen as an adaptation to the development of the modern educational paradigm that emphasizes awareness-building rather than coercion of behavior. These findings also support the research by Akbari and Aali (2025), which showed that educators tend to be more accepting of a disciplinary approach that combines rewards and educational consequences compared to harsh punishment.

The success of the implementation of rewards and punishments in this study was also influenced by parental support, the availability of facilities, and the involvement of Islamic boarding school leaders. These findings indicate that the formation of discipline is not only the responsibility of educational institutions, but also requires synergy between various parties involved. This condition aligns with the concept of the three centers of education proposed by Ki Hajar Dewantara, which places family, school, and community as the three main environments for character formation of students. The results of this study are also in line with the research of Berkah and Zamroni (2023), which stated that the success of the formation of the disciplined character of students is greatly influenced by Islamic boarding school management that is able to create a culture of discipline as a whole. Furthermore, research by Mauludin et al. (2025) shows that strengthening moral education integrated into Islamic boarding school life can increase students' awareness of discipline more deeply. However, the differences in student character factors found in this study indicate that the development strategy is not can be applied uniformly. This finding aligns with research by Mahmudin (2023), which asserts that the effectiveness of coaching will increase if it is tailored to the needs and characteristics of individual students.

Despite its positive impact on improving discipline, this study also found negative implications in the form of some students' dependence on rewards and decreased intrinsic motivation if rewards are given excessively. This finding supports Setiawan's view that disproportionate rewards can cause students to focus on external rewards rather than self-awareness. The results of this study also align with Solehati and Riadi (2025), who emphasized that the effectiveness of rewards and punishments is largely determined by the balance of their application so that the goals of developing discipline and religious commitment can be optimally achieved. Therefore, rewards and punishments should be positioned as a means of development that supports the growth of intrinsic motivation, rather than as the ultimate goal of the educational process.

Although this study successfully uncovered the implementation, mechanisms, and implications of rewards and punishments in instilling discipline in students, it has several limitations. First, the study was conducted in only one Islamic boarding school (pesantren), so the results cannot be generalized to all Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, which have different characteristics. Second, the study used a qualitative approach, so the findings focused more on in-depth information than quantitative measurements regarding the effectiveness of rewards and punishments. Third, the study did not include a broader perspective from students, so it focused solely on the views of Islamic boarding school administrators and educators. Therefore, further research is recommended to involve more research locations, use a mixed-methods approach, and examine the influence of rewards and punishments on other aspects such as intrinsic motivation, character development, and student achievement in a more comprehensive manner.

Conclusion

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of rewards and punishments is an effective strategy for instilling discipline in students. Rewards given in the form of praise, gifts, and awards can increase motivation and encourage students to behave in a disciplined manner. Meanwhile, educational punishments, such as reprimands, assignments, and restrictions on facilities, function as behavioral controls that help students recognize and correct mistakes. The systematic and gradual implementation of these two strategies has been proven to create a more orderly and conducive environment and increase students' responsibility and compliance with rules. However, this study also found negative implications, such as the potential for dependence on rewards and a decrease in intrinsic motivation if not implemented proportionally. Therefore, the balance in the application of rewards and punishments is a key factor in the successful formation of students' disciplined character.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that Islamic boarding school administrators and educators optimize the use of rewards and punishments wisely, proportionally, and oriented toward character development, not just behavior control. Furthermore, a more holistic approach is needed emphasizes intrinsic motivation, such as role modeling, emotional development, and internalization of disciplinary values, so that the resulting discipline is more profound and sustainable. Further research is recommended to examine other strategies for developing a disciplined character to obtain a more comprehensive approach to Islamic boarding school education.

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