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## Strategies for Forming Student Discipline in Islamic Elementary Schools Malaysia: A Holistic Approach in Character Education

*Mahmudhassan<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Abuzar<sup>2</sup>, Shikdar Mohammad Riazul<sup>3</sup>, Obydur Rahman<sup>4</sup>, Abdulrohim E-sor<sup>5</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Islamic Education, Islamic Arabic University Dhaka, Bangladesh

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Phycology, University of Malakand, Pakistan

<sup>3</sup>Faculty of Computer Science, Lincoln University College, Malaysia

<sup>4</sup>Faculty of Arabic Language, Islamic University of Madina, Saudi Arabia

<sup>5</sup>Faculty of Islamic Sciences, Prince of Songkla University, Thailand

[hassanfaruky@gmail.com](mailto:hassanfaruky@gmail.com), [abuzarghafari885@gmail.com](mailto:abuzarghafari885@gmail.com),

[mohammadriazulshikdar2002@gmail.com](mailto:mohammadriazulshikdar2002@gmail.com), [obydurdk@gmail.com](mailto:obydurdk@gmail.com), [prfais@psu.ac.th](mailto:prfais@psu.ac.th)

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**Abstract:** *This study aims to analyze the strategy of forming student discipline in Islamic Elementary Schools in Malaysia through a holistic approach to character education. The main focus of this research is to identify the methods and practices used by these schools in shaping student discipline, as well as how a holistic approach can support balanced and sustainable character development. This study uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with teachers, principals, and parents of students, as well as through direct observation in several selected Islamic Elementary Schools in Malaysia. Data analysis was carried out using thematic analysis techniques to identify patterns and main themes related to discipline formation strategies. The results show that Islamic Elementary School students in Malaysia have adopted various discipline formation strategies that integrate Islamic values with the principles of character education. The holistic approach applied includes spiritual coaching, strengthening social relationships between students, and the application of fair and consistent discipline. The study also found that collaboration between schools and parents has an important role in shaping student discipline, with an emphasis on the values of togetherness, responsibility, and honesty. The novelty of this study lies in the disclosure of how a holistic approach to character education can have a positive impact on the formation of sustainable discipline in the primary school environment. The implications of this study show that a holistic approach that integrates religious, social, and emotional values can be an effective model in shaping student discipline in Islamic Elementary Schools. This research makes an important contribution to the development of student character education strategies in Islamic Elementary Schools in Malaysia and can be a reference for education practitioners in improving the quality of character education in other educational institutions.*

**Keywords:** *student discipline, Islamic elementary school, character education, holistic approach, Malaysia.*

## INTRODUCTION

Discipline is one of the important aspects in the formation of student character in the educational environment. In Islamic Elementary Schools, especially in Malaysia, the formation of discipline does not only focus on rules and punishments but also the development of comprehensive Islamic values. A holistic approach to character education emphasizes the importance of balancing students' spiritual, social, and emotional development. Through this approach, the school aims to create a conducive learning environment and support the growth of good character, so that students not only obey the rules but also understand and internalize the values that underlie the discipline. This study explores the strategies used by Islamic Elementary Schools in Malaysia in shaping student discipline through a holistic approach, as well as identifying the key indicators that play a role in the success of these strategies [\[1\]–\[3\]](#).

Indicators: 1). Spiritual Development: The school's efforts in strengthening religious values through religious activities, habituation of worship, and Islamic moral education. 2). Strengthening Social Relations: Implementation of programs and activities that encourage cooperation, empathy, and solidarity between students. 3). Consistent Discipline Implementation: Fair and consistent discipline policies, as well as the application of educational sanctions by Islamic principles. 4). School and Parent Collaboration: Parent involvement in the educational process and the formation of student character through effective communication and synergistic cooperation. 5). Development of Emotional Well-being: Approaches that support students' mental and emotional health, including through guidance and counselling, as well as the teaching of social skills [\[4\]–\[7\]](#).

Indeed, the current era influences the world of education. Changes in this era cannot be avoided by anyone, so human resources are needed who are ready to enter the global competition. Improving the quality of human resources is necessary to face increasingly fierce and competitive individual competition. Improvements in the world of education can be made starting from the level of primary, secondary, to tertiary education [\[8\], \[9\]](#).

Good education does not only form intellectual intelligence and skills, but also shapes students to become human beings who have faith, devotion, and noble personalities. Those who believe and have knowledge will be elevated by Allah SWT. So people who know have a higher degree than people who are not knowledgeable [\[10\]–\[12\]](#).

One of the important aspects of education is building students' character. Character is not a new problem for the Malaysian nation. The founders of the nation realized that building character is one of the big problems that must be faced by the Malaysian nation. Because building character will make Malaysia a big, advanced, glorious, and dignified nation [\[13\]–\[15\]](#).

Character education has the same meaning as moral and moral education. To form a good person, citizen, and citizen. To live as a human being, does not only require intellectual intelligence and science and technology but must have a strong personality and morals. Many cases in Malaysia depict the degrading morals and personality of a person. Such as corruption cases that until now are difficult to eradicate. As another example, when Malaysia was faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, some irresponsible people hoarded masks and *hand sanitisers*. In fact, in this COVID-19 pandemic situation, these two objects are objects that are needed by almost the entire community. This is one example of the low responsibility, morals, and sense of empathy that some Malaysian citizens have [\[16\]–\[18\]](#).

Other behaviours that describe low morals also occur among students. It is still clear in our memories, there were many cases committed by one of the students, as a result of *bullying* behaviour carried out by her friends at school. Not only that, but bullying cases are everywhere. Where a student almost lost a limb due to being mistreated by his schoolmates. This greatly tarnished the name of students and also Malaysian educational institutions [\[19\]–\[21\]](#).

The root of the problem is none other than human character. The character has a strong influence on human self-control. Whatever a person faces, if he has a strong character, he will not fall into deviant behaviour and go beyond the limits [22]–[24].

The government has established a learning curriculum and various activities to be applied in schools in Malaysia. However, each school has the authority to adjust the curriculum or school activities, according to conditions in the field. The school has the right to add activity programs to be adjusted to the needs of the school, the needs of students, conditions, and the peculiarities of the potential that exist in the school environment. If the learning objectives are felt to be unattainable with the predetermined curriculum, then the addition of various activities can be carried out [25]–[27].

As well as educational institutions that innovate the addition of Islamic activities related to improving student discipline [28]–[31]. The researcher conducted research in the two schools because both of them added Islamic activities in the form of worship habits to improve and strengthen student discipline, which is not done in most other public schools. Based on the above background, interested in learning more about Islamic activities implemented in Islamic Elementary Schools in Malaysia. [32]–[35].

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**Table 1. Discipline Formation Strategies in Islamic Elementary Schools Malaysia with a Holistic Approach in Character Education.**

It	Author & Year	Heading	Research Objectives	Method	Key findings	Relevance to the Topic
1	Ahmad, 2020	<i>Character Education in Islamic Schools</i>	Examining the approach to character education in Islamic schools	Qualitative, case studies	The religious values-based approach is effective in shaping students' character	Providing a basis for understanding the role of religious values in the formation of discipline
2	Ismail & Rahman, 2021	<i>Implementation of Positive Discipline in Islamic Elementary Schools</i>	Assessing the effectiveness of positive discipline strategies in primary school	Quantitative, survey	Positive discipline increases student compliance and motivation	Provides insight into positive discipline techniques that can be applied holistically
3	Sulaiman, 2019	<i>The Role of Parents in Character Education</i>	Examining the influence of parental involvement on students' character	Qualitative, interview	Parent involvement contributes significantly to the development of student's character	Emphasizing the importance of cooperation between schools and parents in the formation of discipline
4	Hamid & Lee, 2022	<i>A Holistic Approach to Character</i>	Analyzing the holistic approach and its	Mixed methods, observation, and	A holistic approach that includes emotional,	Providing a holistic model for the formation of

		<i>Education in Malaysia</i>	impact on the character of students	interviews	social, and spiritual aspects is effective in character education	discipline in Islamic Elementary Schools
5	Grace, 2023	<i>Effectiveness of Discipline Programs in Islamic Elementary Schools in Malaysia</i>	Measuring the effectiveness of various disciplinary programs implemented in schools	Quantitative, secondary data analysis	Discipline programs integrated with Islamic values improve student discipline and well-being	Identify successful programs that can be used as a reference in a holistic approach

Based on the table above, the literature that is relevant to the research topic is clearly illustrated, including the objectives, methods, main findings, and relevance of each source to the topic of discipline formation strategies in Islamic Elementary Schools in Malaysia [36], [37].

## METHODOLOGY

The type of research used is *field research* using the *Phenomenology approach*. Researchers directly conduct research in the field by looking at the actual conditions that occur. This research was carried out at Islamic Elementary School Malaysia. The data collection technique uses observation, interview, and documentation techniques [38], [39].

The data analysis used in this study is descriptive. The measurement of the validity and absence of this study uses *Credibility* (degree of trust) by using triangulation techniques to maintain the continuity of observation and checking of members. To obtain valid data, the researcher conducted triangulation. Data triangulation is a technique for checking the validity of data that utilizes something else [40]–[42].

**Table 2. Research Methods for Field Research with a Phenomenological Approach Conducted in Islamic Elementary Schools Malaysia**

Aspects	Description
Type of Research	Field Research
Pendekatan	Phenomenology
Research Location	Islamic Elementary School Malaysia
Data Collection Techniques	Observation: Observing conditions and interactions in the school environment directly. - Interviews: Conducting in-depth interviews with teachers, principals, and parents of students. - Documentation: Collecting documents related to discipline formation programs and policies.
Data Analysis	Descriptive Analysis: Compiling and explaining the data obtained to provide a comprehensive overview of the phenomenon being studied.
Data Validity	Credibility: Assessing confidence in the data obtained. - Data Triangulation: Using various data sources to ensure the continuity of observation and validity of the data. - Member Check: Confirming findings with respondents to ensure accuracy and consistency.

This table provides an overview of the research methods, including the type of research, approach, location, data collection techniques, data analysis, and how to ensure the validity of the data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the theory of Chapter II, it is explained that discipline is a condition where a person is willing to follow, obey, and even submit to the rules and regulations that bind him. Discipline is closely related to the rules or patterns that are formed. Discipline can also influence a person to be able to change and form behaviour by predetermined rules, values, or patterns. This is by the results of research conducted at Islamic Elementary Schools Malaysia which applies several forms of religious activities to foster student discipline [43]–[45].

Religious implementation to foster discipline can be carried out in four ways, namely formal structural, formal non-structural, the application of habituation in schools, and amaliyah ubudiyah. From the results of research in Islamic Elementary Schools in Malaysia, namely formal structural, formal non-structural, the application of habituation in schools, and amaliyah ubudiyah. Here's the explanation:

From the results of the study, it can be concluded that Islamic Elementary Schools Malaysia in foster student discipline by forming Islamic activities, namely formal structural, formal non-structural, and the application of habituation in schools. The form of Islamic activities to foster student discipline carried out in Islamic Elementary Schools in Malaysia is for formal structure, namely by giving time to children who have not yet performed the dhuha prayer to carry out the duhur prayer at school. Activities in the form non-structural, namely by holding outing classes to visit religious and special places that are Muslim, students who are Muslims, are equipped with knowledge about how to carry out worship while travelling and how to behave well in each place visited. The form of Islamic activities is by habituation. The habituation here is to get used to smiling, greeting, and greetings starting from the school gate when the teacher welcomes the arrival of students, to when meeting with school residents. This smile and greeting is to salute the Prophet (peace be upon him). This is to the theory that in fostering religious activities for discipline there are three ways, namely formal structural, formal non-structural, and the application of habituation in schools [46]–[48].

Islamic Elementary School Malaysia fosters student discipline by forming Islamic activities, namely formal structural, formal non-structural, and the application of habituation in school. The first form of Islamic activities to foster student discipline carried out in Malaysia Islamic Elementary Schools is for formal structural, namely by carrying out activities of Reading and Writing the Qur'an independently, independent tahfidz, and also joint tahfidz. The application of the second form of activity is formal non-structural in the form of spiritual Friday activities, this activity is carried out once a month with materials such as prayer, and devotion to parents.

The third form of activity is habituation, the habituation carried out is three, namely habituation for the 3s (smile, greeting, and greeting), the second is the dhuha prayer and duhur prayer at school and the third is the habit of reading the kafaratul majlis prayer. This follows the theory that in fostering religious activities for discipline there are three ways, namely formal structural, formal non-structural, and the application of habituation in schools [49]–[51].

The steps to growing discipline in Islamic Elementary Schools in Malaysia are preparing programs, socialization with parents, implementation, and structuring. Based on the previous theory, it was explained that the steps to discipline students are to make rules. Meanwhile, in the previous survey, it was shown that compiling a detailed program is the first step to fostering discipline.

Thus, it can be concluded that Islamic Elementary School Malaysia prepares a program as one of the steps to foster student discipline.

In the previous theory, it was explained that the step to foster discipline was to conduct a programmatic dialogue with the student's parents. Meanwhile, the results of the study show

that Islamic Elementary Schools in Malaysia conduct socialization with parents to establish good communication and to unite the same vision in terms of discipline. Thus, it can be concluded that the steps to foster discipline are carried out in Islamic Elementary Schools in Malaysia by developing a discipline program and conducting socialization with students' guardians [52]–[54].

### **Implementation of Discipline in Islamic Elementary Schools in Malaysia**

The steps implemented in Islamic Elementary Schools Malaysia to foster student discipline are compiling programs, socializing programs with students' parents, piloting, habituation, and punishment for violators.

In the previous theory, the steps used to foster student discipline were explained, namely by developing a program. Meanwhile, in the previous theory, it was mentioned that the first step taken by Islamic Elementary Schools Malaysia to foster discipline was to develop a regulatory program. Thus, it can be concluded that the first step used to cultivate discipline in Islamic Elementary Schools in Malaysia is to develop programs to foster discipline.

Based on previous theories, the step used in fostering discipline is to conduct a programmatic dialogue with the student's parents. Meanwhile, in the previous theory, it was explained that Islamic Elementary Schools in Malaysia carried out socialization with parents about the discipline program. Thus, it can be concluded that Islamic Elementary Schools Malaysia conducts programmatic dialogues with parents by conducting socialization.

In the previous theory, it was explained that the steps used to foster discipline were by creating an example from above, the principal, teachers, and staff. Meanwhile, in the previous lesson, the steps used in fostering student discipline with teachers gave a good example to students [55], [56]. Thus, Islamic Elementary Schools Malaysia created an example, namely with teachers giving a good example to students.

In the previous survey, it was explained that the steps that can be applied to foster student discipline are by applying sanctions for each violator. In the previous lesson, it was explained that the steps used to foster discipline in Islamic Elementary Schools in Malaysia are to provide educational punishment for students who violate. Thus, it can be concluded that the steps used by Islamic Elementary Schools Malaysia in fostering discipline are developing programs to support discipline, holding socialization with students' parents, familiarizing teachers with good examples, and providing educational punishments for students who violate [57], [58].

### **The Effectiveness of Islamic Activities to Foster Student Discipline in Islamic Elementary Schools in Malaysia**

The effectiveness of activities carried out in Islamic Elementary Schools Malaysia such as the 3s habituation will have a long impact because students will be accustomed to being friendly to all school residents and the community, habituation activities for dhuha prayers and dzuhur prayers regularly at school will make students accustomed to carrying out dhuha prayers and carrying out dzuhur prayers in congregation and the integration of maple activities by teaching students to perform prayers when in Travel will have an impact in the future on students will be accustomed to praying when they are travelling long distances (travellers) [59]–[62].

The effectiveness of Islamic activities to foster discipline has a long term the first, namely BTA (Reading and Writing the Qur'an), independent tahfidz, and joint tahfidz will familiarize and train students who cannot reading the Qur'an or who are not used to memorizing will become accustomed to it, the second activity, namely the habit of Dhuha prayer and Dhuhur prayer at school will make students diligent to carry out Dhuha prayer and Dhuhur prayer when outside the school for the third The familiarity of the Kafaratul Majlis prayer will make students accustomed to sitting at an event when they finish reading the prayer so that what is done at the ceremony will be a blessing and beneficial [63]–[67].

Thus, it can be concluded that Islamic Elementary Schools Malaysia in carrying out Islamic activities to foster discipline have long-term effectiveness.

## CONCLUSION

Research on discipline formation strategies in Islamic Elementary Schools in Malaysia with a holistic approach shows that this approach is effective in improving student discipline. The integration of Islamic values with the principles of character education involving spiritual, social, and emotional aspects has a positive impact on student behaviour. A holistic approach focuses not only on the application of rules but also on the development of a well-rounded character, which supports the formation of more consistent and sustainable discipline. The findings of this study confirm that spiritual coaching through religious activities, strengthening social relationships between students, fair and consistent application of discipline, and collaboration between schools and parents, all contribute to improved discipline. Approaches that involve the development of students' emotional well-being also play an important role in creating a positive and supportive learning environment. Implications: These findings imply that Islamic Elementary Schools in Malaysia can strengthen discipline-building strategies by implementing a holistic approach that integrates Islamic values. Thorough character education can increase the effectiveness of discipline strategies and build deeper and more sustainable discipline. In addition, close collaboration between schools and parents is a key factor in supporting the success of discipline formation programs.

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## Author Contribution

Mahmdulhassan and Muhammad Abuzar: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing–review & editing, Article administration. Shikdar Mohammad Riazul, Obydur Rahman, and Abdulrohim E-sor: Methodology, Writing – review & editing, and Investigation.

## Conflicts of Interest

All authors declare no conflict of interest.

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