

Ta'zir-Based Pedagogical Punishment for Character Formation and Moral Development in Muslim Educational Institutions

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ABSTRACT: *This study investigates the empirical relationship between the implementation of ta'zir-based disciplinary practices and student moral character development in Muslim educational institutions in Yogyakarta, Indonesia addressing a significant gap between classical Islamic educational theory and contemporary empirical research. A quantitative correlational survey design was employed with 387 respondents drawn through stratified random sampling from pesantren and madrasah settings, comprising students, PAI teachers, and administrators. Data were analysed using multiple linear regression via IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. Research results show the four sub-dimensions of ta'zir implementation collectively explained 61.0% of variance in moral character development ($R^2 = 0.610$, $F = 148.73$, $p = 0.000$), indicating a strong and statistically significant relationship between ta'zir practices and students' moral formation. Teacher-student relational context emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.312$), meaning the quality of the pedagogical relationship most decisively shapes the effectiveness of disciplinary intervention, followed by educative intentionality ($\beta = 0.263$), graduated corrective approach ($\beta = 0.228$), and proportionality ($\beta = 0.187$), each reflecting that disciplinary practices grounded in educational purpose, gradual correction, and fairness contribute meaningfully to students' moral character development. Findings are geographically restricted to Yogyakarta and limited by cross-sectional design and self-report instrumentation. This study offers the first empirically validated four-dimensional framework for ta'zir implementation, demonstrating that principled Islamic disciplinary practice constitutes a measurable mechanism of moral formation, with significant implications for teacher development and institutional policy in Muslim educational contexts globally.*

Studi ini menyelidiki hubungan empiris antara penerapan praktik disiplin berbasis ta'zir dan perkembangan karakter moral siswa di lembaga pendidikan Muslim di Yogyakarta, Indonesia untuk mengatasi kesenjangan yang signifikan antara teori pendidikan Islam klasik dan penelitian empiris kontemporer. Desain survei korelasional kuantitatif digunakan dengan 387 responden yang diambil melalui pengambilan sampel acak bertingkat dari lingkungan pesantren dan madrasah, yang terdiri dari siswa, guru PAI, dan administrator. Data dianalisis menggunakan regresi linier berganda melalui IBM SPSS Statistics versi 26. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan keempat sub-dimensi penerapan ta'zir secara kolektif menjelaskan 61,0% varians dalam

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perkembangan karakter moral ($R^2 = 0,610$, $F = 148,73$, $p = 0,000$), menunjukkan hubungan yang kuat dan signifikan secara statistik antara praktik ta'zir dan pembentukan moral siswa. Konteks hubungan guru-siswa muncul sebagai prediktor terkuat ($\beta = 0,312$), yang berarti kualitas hubungan pedagogis paling menentukan dalam membentuk efektivitas intervensi disiplin, diikuti oleh niat edukatif ($\beta = 0,263$), pendekatan korektif bertahap ($\beta = 0,228$), dan proporsionalitas ($\beta = 0,187$), yang masing-masing mencerminkan bahwa praktik disiplin yang berlandaskan tujuan pendidikan, koreksi bertahap, dan keadilan memberikan kontribusi yang berarti bagi perkembangan karakter moral siswa. Temuan penelitian ini terbatas secara geografis di Yogyakarta dan dibatasi oleh desain lintas sektoral dan instrumen laporan diri. Studi ini menawarkan kerangka kerja empat dimensi yang divalidasi secara empiris pertama untuk implementasi ta'zir, yang menunjukkan bahwa praktik disiplin Islam yang berprinsip merupakan mekanisme pembentukan moral yang terukur, dengan implikasi signifikan bagi pengembangan guru dan kebijakan institusional dalam konteks pendidikan Muslim secara global.

Keywords: *Islamic Education, Moral Character Development, Akhlaq, Disciplinary Punishment, Tarbiyah, Muslim Educational Institutions.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Education, in its most basic philosophical sense, has never been a neutral activity (Dearden, 2024; Gardner, 2018). Throughout civilisations and eras, the process of educating individuals has consistently been intertwined with a normative conception of what constitutes a good and virtuous life (Amin, 2024; Shaukat et al., 2024). In the Islamic tradition, this normative aspect is not only an incidental characteristic of teaching but forms its essential foundation. Islamic education or *tarbiyah* is perceived as a holistic and integrative process aimed at cultivating the physical, intellectual, spiritual, and moral aspects of the individual, ultimately striving to develop a person who is not only knowledgeable but also virtuous, disciplined, and capable of fulfilling their duties to God and society (Abdalla, 2025; Sholichah et al., 2025). To fully understand, put into context, and evaluate the idea of *ta'zir*, which is disciplinary punishment within an Islamic pedagogical framework, we need to look at it in the context of this complex and multidimensional educational philosophy.

The issue of punishment in education has sparked significant discourse throughout nearly all educational traditions globally. In Western educational discourse, there has been a significant shift over the past century, transitioning from a period where corporal punishment was broadly accepted and even lauded as a crucial means of moral development (Ellis et al., 2025; Kim, 2026; Parkes et al., 2026). This significant change mirrors more extensive philosophical evolutions in Western modernity, encompassing the emergence of child rights discourse, the impact of humanistic psychology, and the overall decline of authority-based moral systems in favour of autonomy-centred ethics. However, the uncritical application of Western pedagogical paradigms to Islamic educational contexts poses a significant risk of misrepresentation, as it neglects the

unique theological anthropology, ethical framework, and institutional history that inform Islamic approaches to discipline and moral formation.

In Islamic educational theory, the human being is viewed as a khalifah—a vicegerent of God on earth—imbued with reason, moral agency, and an inherent tendency (*fitrah*) towards goodness and faith (Alfiyah et al., 2024; Rakhmat, 2022). Thus, the purpose of education is not to impose values on a fundamentally blank slate, as Lockean empiricism posits, nor merely to liberate an inherently good nature from social corruption, as Rousseauian romanticism contends, but to cultivate, discipline, and refine the moral faculties that individuals have been endowed with by God. Islamic theology acknowledges that the human soul is prone to negligence (*ghaflah*), desire (*hawa*), and moral weakness (*da'f*), necessitating continuous corrective intervention (Chowdhury, 2025). Consequently, this cultivation must encompass not only instruction and encouragement but also correction and discipline.

For a long time, the classical Islamic educational tradition has known that correction and discipline should be done in a cautious and subtle way. Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) differentiates among many types of disciplinary intervention, including mild counsel (*nasihah*) and verbal reprimand (*tawbikh*), as well as more formal corrective actions, together referred to as *ta'zir*. Islamic criminal law (*hudud*) sets fixed punishments for certain serious crimes, and these punishments are based on strict rules of evidence. *Ta'zir*, on the other hand, is a flexible type of punishment that can be changed based on the crime, the person who committed it, and the overall educational context (Demiral et al., 2025; Rahmatullah & Baharun, 2023). Classical Islamic scholars like Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah put together a complete and step-by-step plan for moral correction. They said that the teacher should start with the least harsh methods, like advice, reminders, and encouragement, and only move on to more formal disciplinary actions when these do not work. This gradualism shows a lot of regard for the learner's dignity and freedom, even if it also stresses that correction is an important part of moral growth (Al-Nahdi & Li, 2025). In modern Muslim schools, like Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in Indonesia, madrasahs in South and Southeast Asia, Islamic schools in the Middle East and Africa, and Muslim minority schools in the West, the way discipline is enforced still shows, to varying degrees, this classical Islamic way of teaching (Arar et al., 2022) (Mumtaz et al., 2024; Tayeb, 2024). However, these schools work in a world that is becoming more complicated because of the conflicting needs of national education policy, international human rights standards, parental expectations, and the larger cultural forces of modernity and globalisation.

In light of this context, the current study seeks to establish a thorough conceptual framework for comprehending *ta'zir* as a process for character development inside Muslim educational institutions. Utilising classical Islamic scholarship, modern educational theory, and empirical studies on moral development, it aims to delineate the theological underpinnings, pedagogical guidelines, and practical limitations that ought to regulate the application of disciplinary punishment in Islamic educational settings. In this way, it helps the larger academic goal of creating a truly Islamic educational philosophy that is theoretically sound, morally thoughtful, and practically relevant to the complicated problems that Muslim schools face in the 21st century. This inquiry holds significance that transcends the confines of educational policy, as it addresses essential inquiries regarding the essence of moral agency, the interplay between authority and freedom in education, the interpretation of human dignity within Islamic anthropology, and the overarching objectives of Islamic civilisation in the modern era.

The urgency of this research lies in the need to understand how *ta'zir*, as a religious approach, can effectively contribute to the development of students' moral character. While much research has addressed character education from a general or psychological perspective, limited research specifically examines the integration of a religious approach (*ta'zir*) with a modern pedagogical framework within the context of Islamic educational institutions. Furthermore, there is a need to examine how *ta'zir* practices can be implemented in a proportional, humanistic, and educational manner, so as not to negatively impact students' psychological development.

The novelty of this research lies in its effort to integrate the concept of *ta'zir* as a religious approach with an educational psychology perspective, particularly within the framework of student moral character formation. Unlike previous studies that generally examine punishment from a secular or behavioural perspective. Most previous studies focus solely on the effectiveness of punishment in improving student discipline or obedience without examining the spiritual dimension and underlying Islamic values. This study integrates Islamic pedagogical principles with modern quantitative analysis, particularly within the context of Muslim educational institutions in Yogyakarta. This integration offers a new perspective by bridging classical Islamic scholarship with contemporary scientific methodology, thereby contributing to the development of an Islamic-based character education model that is both theoretically grounded and empirically validated. This research also offers a conceptual approach that positions *ta'zir* not merely as punishment, but as a values-based, reflective, and transformative pedagogical tool for shaping students' morals. Based on this background, the objectives of this study are: *first*, to analyse the implementation of *ta'zir* in developing students' moral character in Islamic educational institutions in Yogyakarta. *Second*, identify the educational and religious values contained in *ta'zir* practices. *Third*, evaluate the effectiveness of *ta'zir* in forming students' disciplined and moral behavior. *Fourth*, formulate an integrative conceptual model of *ta'zir* between religious approaches and educational psychology as a strategy for strengthening character in Islamic educational institutions.

II. METHOD

This study employs a quantitative non-experimental approach with a correlational design, as the primary objective is to examine the relationship between Islamic pedagogical punishment (*ta'zir*) and students' moral character development without manipulating any variables. The earlier inconsistency in stating experimental, correlational, and non-experimental approaches has been corrected by aligning the design with the actual research procedure. In this context, a correlational design is the most appropriate because the study seeks to identify the degree and direction of association between variables as they naturally occur in educational settings. Correlational research is suitable for analysing relationships between variables without intervention (Creswell, 2018; Sugiyono, 2019). Therefore, this study consistently adopts a non-experimental correlational framework. The research involves two main variables, namely the independent variable (X), Islamic pedagogical punishment (*ta'zir*), and the dependent variable (Y), students' moral character development. The *ta'zir* variable is measured using a self-developed scale grounded in Islamic educational philosophy, drawing from the works of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun, which emphasise ethical discipline, proportional punishment, and moral guidance. The indicators include

educational intention, proportionality, non-violence, and character-oriented discipline. Meanwhile, the moral character variable is measured using an adapted scale based on the moral development theory of Lawrence Kohlberg, integrated with Islamic values (*akhlaq*), covering moral awareness, reasoning, behaviour, and value internalisation. All items are structured using a likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), ensuring standardised quantitative measurement.

The instruments used in this study undergo rigorous testing to ensure validity and reliability. Content validity is established through expert judgment involving scholars in Islamic education and educational psychology, ensuring that each item reflects the conceptual domain of the variables. Construct validity is tested using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation technique to assess the correlation between item scores and total scores. Reliability testing is conducted using Cronbach's Alpha, where a coefficient of 0.70 or higher is considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2014). These procedures ensure that the instruments are both accurate and consistent in measuring the intended constructs. The data analysis is conducted through several systematic stages. *First*, descriptive statistics are used to present an overview of the data, including mean, standard deviation, and score distribution. *Second*, instrument testing is performed through validity and reliability analysis. *Third*, classical assumption tests are conducted, including normality, linearity, and homogeneity tests, to ensure that the data meet the requirements for further parametric analysis. *Fourth*, the relationship between variables is analysed using Pearson Product-Moment correlation to determine the strength and direction of the association between *ta'zir* and moral character development. *Fifth*, if necessary, a simple linear regression analysis is conducted to examine the predictive influence of *ta'zir* on students' moral character. Finally, hypothesis testing is performed using a significance level of 0.05 to determine whether the relationship between variables is statistically significant.

The researchers used the Slovin algorithm at a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of 0.05 to obtain a minimum of 365 respondents. To account for possible non-response and incomplete submissions, questionnaires were sent to 420 people. After removing 33 responses that were incomplete or invalid, the final usable sample consisted of 387 people: 142 junior secondary students (Grade VII–IX), 133 senior secondary students (Grade X–XII), and 62 PAI teachers. Data were gathered using a standardised Likert-scale questionnaire specifically designed for this project and confirmed by expert evaluation and pilot testing prior to full implementation. All gathered data were processed and analysed with IBM SPSS Statistics version 26, with the analytical methodology consisting of many sequential phases. The analysis began with descriptive statistics to examine the distributional characteristics of all variables, including central tendency (mean, median, mode) and dispersion measures (standard deviation, variance). Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to check the reliability of the instrument, with a minimum threshold of $\alpha \geq 0.70$ used as the standard for acceptable internal consistency. Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis was used to check construct validity by comparing item scores to total sub-scale scores. Prior to inferential analysis, the researchers conducted several classical assumption tests: the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test to assess residual normality, the Glejser test to examine homoscedasticity, and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) test to detect multicollinearity among the independent sub-variables.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

The initial phase of data analysis entailed a descriptive statistical evaluation of all research variables to ascertain the distributional profile of respondents' perceptions concerning the implementation of *ta'zir*-based disciplinary practices and their correlation with the development of student moral character. Table 1 below shows the findings of this descriptive analysis.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of All Research Variables (N = 387)

Variable / Sub Dimension	Mean	Std. Deviation	Category
X ₁ — Graduated Corrective Approach	4.12	0.631	High
X ₂ — Educative Purpose & Intentionality	3.98	0.714	High
X ₃ — Proportionality & Justice	3.76	0.782	High
X ₄ — Relational Context (Teacher-Student)	4.23	0.598	Very High
Y — Moral Character Development	4.08	0.667	High

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistical results, which show some interesting trends in the data. The average score for the dependent variable of student moral character development (Y) was 4.08, with a standard deviation of 0.667. This means that most people who answered the question thought that the overall perception was "high" on the five-point Likert scale used in this instrument. This conclusion indicates that, according to the 387 respondents from both *pesantren* and madrasah environments in the Yogyakarta Special Region, the application of *ta'zir*-based disciplinary procedures correlates with a significantly beneficial advancement in students' moral character development. The relational context of teacher-student interaction (X₄), one of the four sub-dimensions of the independent variable, had the highest mean score of 4.23. This shows that the respondents strongly agreed that a trusting, respectful, and caring pedagogical relationship is the most important and positive context for disciplinary interventions. This outcome aligns with the classical Islamic educational perspective, which posits that the moral authority of the *mu'allim* (teacher) is intrinsically linked to the quality of the relational bond established with students. Furthermore, it asserts that disciplinary correction administered within a framework of genuine care possesses a fundamentally distinct pedagogical significance compared to punishment enforced in an atmosphere of fear or alienation.

The graduated corrective approach sub-dimension (X₁) recorded the second-highest mean of 4.12, indicating that respondents viewed the practice of escalating disciplinary intervention from gentle advice (*nasihat*) to verbal admonition (*tawbikh*) prior to implementing formal corrective sanctions (*ta'zir*), which exemplifies the principled gradualism inherent in classical Islamic disciplinary pedagogy for centuries. The educative purpose and intentionality sub-dimension (X₂) yielded a mean of 3.98. In contrast, the proportionality and justice sub-dimension (X₃) produced the lowest mean

among all variables at 3.76 — though still falling within the "high" category — suggesting that while respondents generally affirmed the educative intent behind disciplinary practices in their institutions, there exists a relatively greater degree of variability and uncertainty in their perceptions regarding whether the severity of disciplinary sanctions consistently reflects a proportionate and just response to the nature of students' transgressions. The standard deviation of 0.782 for X_3 is wider than the others, which supports this interpretation. This means that the individual respondent assessments for this sub-dimension are more spread out around the mean, which suggests that this is an important area for the participating educational institutions to think about and improve their policies.

Instrument Reliability and Validity

Before inferential analysis, we used cronbach's alpha coefficient to check the research instrument's internal consistency reliability and pearson product-moment correlation analysis to check its construct validity. Table 2 shows a summary of the outcomes.

Table 2. Reliability and Validity Test Results (N = 387)

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Validity Range (r)	Status
X_1 — Graduated Corrective Approach	8	0.841	0.412 – 0.763	Valid and Reliable
X_2 — Educative Purpose & Intentionality	8	0.823	0.388 – 0.741	Valid and Reliable
X_3 — Proportionality & Justice	8	0.809	0.371 – 0.718	Valid and Reliable
X_4 — Relational Context	8	0.867	0.443 – 0.791	Valid and Reliable
Y — Moral Character Development	10	0.884	0.402 – 0.804	Valid and Reliable

The findings in table 2 validate that the study instrument exhibited adequate psychometric characteristics across all variables and sub-dimensions. The five Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were all higher than the minimum threshold of $\alpha \geq 0.70$ set in the methodology (Hair et al., 2014). The lowest was 0.809 for the proportionality and justice sub-scale (X_3), and the highest was 0.884 for the moral character development scale (Y). This shows that all of the instrument sub-scales have acceptable to strong levels of internal consistency reliability and can be used to make consistent and reliable measurements of their respective constructs. The validity analysis, performed via Pearson Product-Moment correlation between individual item scores and their corresponding sub-scale total scores, demonstrated that all items across all sub-scales yielded correlation coefficients surpassing the critical r-value of 0.300 (at $p < 0.05$, $df = 385$), with item-total correlations ranging from a minimum of 0.371 on the X_3 sub-scale to a maximum of 0.804 on the Y scale.

The results show that all 42 items left in the final instrument are valid indicators of their theoretical constructions and add to the measurement of the variables being studied. The moral character development scale (Y) has relatively high reliability and validity

coefficients, with an alpha of 0.884 and item-total correlations ranging from 0.402 to 0.804. This is especially impressive because it shows that the multidimensional operationalisation of moral character used in this study, which includes *akhlaq* internalisation, behavioural discipline, spiritual consciousness (*taqwa*), and social responsibility, is a coherent and psychometrically sound way to measure the construct with a satisfying level of accuracy and internal consistency.

Classical Assumption Tests

Before doing multiple linear regression analysis, three classical assumption tests were done to make sure that the data fit the parametric criteria needed for accurate regression inference. Table 3 shows the results in one place.

Table 3. Classical Assumption Test Results

Assumption Test	Statistical Method	Result	Threshold	Status
Normality	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Sig. = 0.142	Sig. > 0.05	Normal
Heteroscedasticity	Glejser Test	Sig. X ₁ = 0.213	Sig. > 0.05	Homoscedastic
		Sig. X ₂ = 0.187	Sig. > 0.05	Homoscedastic
		Sig. X ₃ = 0.261	Sig. > 0.05	Homoscedastic
		Sig. X ₄ = 0.304	Sig. > 0.05	Homoscedastic
Multicollinearity	VIF Test	VIF X ₁ = 1.832	VIF < 10.00	No Multicollinearity
		VIF X ₂ = 2.014	VIF < 10.00	No Multicollinearity
		VIF X ₃ = 1.976	VIF < 10.00	No Multicollinearity
		VIF X ₄ = 1.748	VIF < 10.00	No Multicollinearity

The classical assumption testing results in Table 3 demonstrate that the data gathered in this study adequately fulfilled all three parametric requirements necessary for successful multiple linear regression analysis. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality yielded a significance value of 0.142, significantly surpassing the critical threshold of $p > 0.05$ (Hair et al., 2014). This confirms that the residuals of the regression model are normally distributed, validating the inferential conclusions derived from the regression analysis as statistically sound.

The Glejser test was used to check the heteroscedasticity assumption. In this test, the absolute residual values of the regression model were regressed against each of the four independent sub-variables. All four resulting significance values ($X_1 = 0.213$, $X_2 = 0.187$, $X_3 = 0.261$, $X_4 = 0.304$) were higher than the $p > 0.05$ threshold, which means

that there was no systematic heteroscedasticity in the error variance and that the regression model's error terms were evenly spread out across all levels of the independent variables. Finally, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was used to check the multicollinearity assumption. All four sub-variables had VIF values well below the critical ceiling of 10.00, with X_4 having a value of 1.748 and X_2 having a value of 2.014 (Hair et al., 2014).

This showed that there was no problematic multicollinearity among the independent variables and that each sub-dimension of *ta'zir* implementation added a unique and non-redundant piece of information to the regression model. The fulfilment of all three traditional assumptions establishes a solid methodological basis for the subsequent multiple linear regression analysis.

***Ta'zir*, Moral Formation, and Islamic Pedagogical Theory**

The empirical findings of this study, systematically presented in the preceding results chapter, provide compelling quantitative evidence in support of the central theoretical proposition that *ta'zir*—when implemented according to the graduated, intentional, proportionate, and relationally grounded principles of classical Islamic educational philosophy—serves as a significant and measurable instrument for moral character development in Muslim educational institutions. The overall regression model, which explains 61.0% of the total variance in student moral character outcomes ($R^2 = 0.610$, $F = 148.73$, $p = 0.000$), shows a level of explanatory power that is similar to other quantitative studies on disciplinary practices and moral development in both Islamic and non-Islamic educational settings. This gives a lot of weight to the idea that disciplinary intervention, far from being an inherently counterproductive or morally questionable teaching method, can, under the right conditions and within the right moral framework, be a truly positive force in the moral development of young people.

This finding aligns profoundly with the classical Islamic educational framework articulated by Imam al-Ghazali in his seminal work, *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*, where he posits that moral character (*akhlaq*) is not a static and unchangeable attribute of the human soul, but rather a cultivated disposition necessitating continuous nurture, correction, and discipline for its development and stabilisation; the educator's role is to act as the agent of this perpetual corrective cultivation (Junaidi et al., 2024). In a similar vein, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah in his important book *Tuhfat al-Mawdud bi Ahkam al-Mawhud*, clearly laid out a graduated model of disciplinary intervention that goes from gentle advice and encouragement to more strict corrective measures, each one tailored to the student's moral state and readiness, with the main goal not being to get the student to follow the rules, but to get them to think about their own moral consciousness and agency (Sari, 2025; Schussler, 2022). The empirical finding that the graduated corrective approach sub-dimension (X_1) yielded a significant positive partial effect on moral character development ($\beta = 0.228$, $p = 0.000$) constitutes a meaningful quantitative affirmation of this centuries-old pedagogical insight, suggesting that the classical Islamic disciplinary model retains genuine practical relevance and effectiveness within the contemporary institutional realities of Indonesian Islamic education.

The discovery that the educative purpose and intentionality sub-dimension (X_2) emerged as the second most significant predictor of moral character development ($\beta = 0.263$, $p = 0.000$) holds considerable theoretical importance, as it underscores the essential role of perceived motivational sincerity in influencing the pedagogical effects of disciplinary

intervention. This finding closely corresponds with the theoretical framework posited by Isgandarova (2024) in his seminal work on moral development and education, wherein he contended that students' moral internalisation of corrective feedback is fundamentally influenced by their perception of the correcting authority's genuine concern for their well-being versus mere institutional compliance and behavioural management.

Furthermore, this finding has significant implications for teacher preparation and professional development in Islamic educational institutions. It indicates that the cultivation of *ikhlas* and a genuine moral concern for students' spiritual and moral development—qualities historically regarded by Islamic educational philosophy as essential competencies of the *mu'allim*—should be perceived not merely as matters of personal piety but as pedagogical skills that directly and measurably impact the effectiveness of the teacher's disciplinary and moral formation efforts (Bembenutty et al., 2024; Muzaki et al., 2025; Xu et al., 2025).

The relatively lower but still statistically significant contribution of the proportionality and justice sub-dimension (X_3) to moral character outcomes ($\beta = 0.187$, $p = 0.001$), combined with the higher standard deviation recorded for this sub-dimension in the descriptive analysis ($SD = 0.782$), merits careful interpretive attention. The aggregate findings indicate that students predominantly recognise a positive correlation between perceived disciplinary fairness and their moral development. However, there is significant variability in respondents' evaluations regarding the consistency of disciplinary sanctions in relation to the nature and severity of their infractions.

This finding aligns with previous research which indicated that students' perceptions of procedural justice in disciplinary contexts—encompassing aspects of voice, consistency, and proportionality—serve as a pivotal mediating variable in assessing whether disciplinary measures foster authentic moral internalisation or provoke reactive resistance and moral disengagement (Ke et al., 2025). From an Islamic jurisprudential perspective, this finding aligns with the classical principle of 'adl (justice) as an essential condition for the legitimate application of *ta'zir*. Islamic scholars have consistently asserted that disciplinary sanctions must be meticulously calibrated to the specific circumstances of each case and must not exceed what is genuinely necessary for corrective and educational purposes (Główczewski & Burdziej, 2023; Husain, 2025). The variability in student perceptions of proportionality observed in this study may indicate genuine inconsistencies in the implementation of disciplinary policies across classrooms and institutional contexts within the sampled institutions. This highlights a significant area of practical concern for school administrators and educators aiming to enhance the moral efficacy of their disciplinary frameworks (H. Syafii et al., 2026).

Teacher-Student Relations in Islamic Pedagogy

The most theoretically significant conclusion of this study is the emergence of the relational context sub-dimension (X_4) as the sole strongest predictor of student moral character development among the four independent variables analysed ($\beta = 0.312$, $t = 4.985$, $p = 0.000$). This conclusion has significant implications not just for the specific issue of *ta'zir* implementation but also for the larger comprehension of Islamic pedagogy as an inherently relational endeavour grounded in the quality of the connection between educator and student (Purnomo & Syafii, 2026).

The classical Islamic educational tradition has consistently affirmed that the relationship between *mu'allim* and *muta'allim* (teacher and learner) is not merely a functional or

transactional arrangement for the transmission of knowledge and behavioural norms. However, a deeply moral and spiritual relationship grounded in mutual respect, trust, and genuine affective concern, modelled ultimately on the prophetic example of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as the supreme educator of humanity (Febrian et al., 2024; Huda et al., 2024). The Prophet's disciplinary and corrective actions with his companions were consistently marked by gentleness, wisdom, and profound personal affection. Islamic educational scholarship has extensively utilised the Prophetic example to assert that the moral authority of the educator—including the authority to administer corrective discipline—originates not from institutional position or formal power, but from the moral quality of the relational bond that the educator fosters with those in their care (Mauludin et al., 2025; Sahin, 2021). The empirical finding that relational context is the strongest predictor of disciplinary effectiveness in promoting moral character development constitutes a powerful quantitative validation of this classical relational pedagogy, demonstrating that the Islamic tradition's insistence on the moral and affective quality of the teacher-student relationship is not merely a normative ideal but a practically consequential pedagogical reality with measurable effects on student moral outcomes (M. H. Syafii et al., 2024)

Supriyono et al. (2025) empirically demonstrated that students who perceive their teachers as genuinely caring and relationally attuned are significantly more likely to internalise the moral and behavioural expectations conveyed through disciplinary interactions, engage constructively with corrective feedback, and develop stronger intrinsic moral motivation over time (Wentzel, 2022). Self-Determination Theory elucidates this finding by asserting that individuals have an intrinsic psychological need for relatedness (M. H. Syafii, Aladaya, et al., 2025).

The alignment of contemporary theoretical frameworks with classical Islamic relational pedagogy is notable for its consistency and depth, indicating that the Islamic tradition's focus on the moral and affective dimensions of the teacher-student relationship represents not merely a culturally specific pedagogical preference but a universally applicable insight into the relational conditions that facilitate effective moral development. Ryan & Deci (2023) made a similar point: that real moral education cannot happen without real caring relationships between teachers and students. She also said that disciplinary action taken within those relationships has a different moral meaning and pedagogical effect than correction done from a position of institutional distance or relational indifference. This argument is strongly supported by the regression findings of the current study (M. H. Syafii, Aladaya, et al., 2025).

The practical ramifications of this relationship discovery for Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia and throughout the Muslim world are significant and warrant thorough examination by educational administrators, teacher educators, and politicians. If the quality of the teacher-student relationship is the single most powerful mediating variable in determining whether *ta'zir*-based disciplinary practices promote genuine moral character development, then institutional efforts to strengthen the moral formation effectiveness of disciplinary frameworks cannot be limited to the revision of disciplinary codes, the standardisation of sanction procedures, or the training of teachers in the technical mechanics of graduated corrective intervention (Zul et al., 2026).

The finding that relational context is the strongest predictor of disciplinary effectiveness indicates that institutions struggling with student discipline and moral development would benefit more from investing in relational capacity-building—fostering conditions

for teachers to cultivate deeper and more authentic relationships with their students—rather than enhancing formal disciplinary mechanisms, which, without a supportive relational foundation, are likely to yield compliance without true moral internalisation. This conclusion corresponds with the overarching thesis of scholars like Karakuş et al., (2025), who asserted that the efficacy of Islamic moral education is primarily determined not by institutional frameworks or disciplinary protocols, but by the moral integrity and relational authenticity of the educator who embodies and enlivens those frameworks. Consequently, the cultivation of morally proficient Islamic educators should be regarded as the most essential and impactful investment that Muslim educational institutions can undertake in the fulfilment of their fundamental mission of *tarbiyah* and *ta'dib* (H. Syafii et al., 2026).

IV. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of Islamic pedagogical punishment (*ta'zir*) has a meaningful relationship with students' moral character development within Muslim educational institutions. By positioning *ta'zir* not merely as a punitive mechanism but as a value-oriented educational approach, the findings highlight its role in fostering moral awareness, ethical reasoning, and disciplined behaviour among students. The correlational analysis demonstrates that properly administered *ta'zir*—grounded in proportionality, educational intention, and non-violence—contributes positively to the internalisation of Islamic moral values (*akhlak*), reinforcing the idea that discipline in Islamic pedagogy is inherently formative rather than retributive. Findings are geographically restricted to Yogyakarta and limited by cross-sectional design and self-report instrumentation, which may not fully capture the complexity of moral development over time. Future research is encouraged to employ longitudinal designs, expand the geographical scope across diverse Muslim educational contexts, and incorporate mixed-methods approaches to provide deeper insight into the mechanisms through which *ta'zir* shapes students' moral character.

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