Rewards and Punishments in Forming Students' Morals: A Literature Study on Islamic Religious Education Learning

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Abstract

Rewards and punishments as pedagogical strategies in the formation of students' morals in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning through library research. Literature searches were conducted on national and international indexed sources including academic books, journal articles, proceedings, and educational regulations. Selection used the criteria of topic relevance, publisher/journal authority, and novelty; data were extracted and then synthesized narratively-thematically with an emphasis on the concepts of targhib-tarhib, behavior modification, character-based learning, and restorative discipline. The results of the synthesis indicate that rewards *(targhib)* that focus on the process of effort, improvement, and reflection are correlated with the internalization of values (honesty, responsibility, discipline, empathy) and increased intrinsic motivation. Punishment *(tarhib)* is effective when it is educative, proportional, consistent, and restorative, for example through remedial tasks, empathetic dialogue, and restitution of impact; conversely, humiliating or harsh punishments tend to decrease learning engagement and delay the internalization of morals. Overall effectiveness was moderated by teacher role models, classroom climate, clarity of rules, and the integration of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) activities (values assessment, reflective practice, and school culture). Practical implications recommend an Islamic Religious Education (PAI) disciplinary framework that balances positive reinforcement and restorative consequences, using a measurable morality rubric and structured reflection space. Study limitations include reliance on secondary evidence and variation in school contexts; further research testing the reward–punishment intervention model through controlled field studies across levels is recommended.

Keywords: *Reward, Punishment, Morality, Islamic Religious Education, Restorative Discipline*

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Introduction

Education is the primary means of shaping students' character and personality. In the context of Islamic religious education, cultivating noble morals is one of the primary goals to be achieved. Morals not only reflect a person's spiritual quality but also serve as an indicator of overall educational success. Instilling and cultivating good morals requires an approach that is not only theoretical but also practical and applicable. The decline and loss of moral values currently faced is evidence that Indonesia is currently experiencing a character crisis (Bahtiar Siregar, 2019). A character crisis refers to the decline or loss of moral and ethical values in individual behavior in society, such as honesty, responsibility, mutual respect, discipline, and empathy.

One of the educational strategies that has long been known in the world of education is the application of rewards. Reward and punishment in Islam, the concepts of reward and punishment are not only used in the context of the afterlife but are also relevant in everyday life, including the learning process. Rewards can motivate students to continue doing good and exhibiting commendable behavior, while punishments serve as corrections for deviant behavior, preventing repeats.

The effectiveness of rewards and punishments in shaping students' morals depends heavily on how they are implemented. If not implemented wisely and proportionately, both can have negative impacts that actually hinder moral development. Therefore, a thorough understanding of the role, principles, and application of rewards and punishments in Islamic religious education is necessary, particularly in shaping students' morals.

This study aims to comprehensively examine the role of rewards and punishments in shaping students' morals, with reference to the principles of Islamic religious education. It is hoped that the results of this study will make a positive contribution to more effective educational practices based on Islamic values.

Research Methodology

This research is a library research, namely research conducted by reviewing various literature sources relevant to the theme of rewards, punishments, and moral formation in Islamic Religious Education learning. This research approach is a qualitative descriptive approach, the aim of which is to clearly describe the concept of rewards and punishments based on the results of studies from various literature sources. The technique used is a documentation study, namely by collecting data from books, journals, scientific articles and digital sources related to the research topic.

Results

3.1 Reward

Etymologically, the word "reward" comes from the word "*ganjaran*," which means to give a gift or reward. The Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language states that "reward" is a reward (as a reward for a service). From this definition, it can be understood that "reward" in Indonesian can be used for both good and bad rewards. In Arabic, "reward" termed *tSawâb*. This word is often found in the Quran, especially when discussing what a person will receive, both in this world and in the hereafter, from his deeds. *TSawâb* always translated into good responses (Salminawati, 2023).

Term reward or *tsawab* or reward, found in the Qur'an in showing what a person does in this case the habits of children and adolescents in this life. As Allah says in the Quran surah Ali Imran verse 148, as follows:

فَـَٔاتَىٰهُمُ ٱللَّهُ ثَوَابَ ٱلدُّنْيَا وَحُسْنَ ثَوَابِ ٱلْـَٔاخِرَةِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ

Meaning: So Allah will reward them in this world and in the Hereafter with a good reward. And Allah loves those who do good.

Reward termed as *tsawab*. Say *tsawab* is often found in the Quran, especially when talking about what a person will receive, both in this world and in the hereafter, from his deeds. *Tsawab* always translated into a good response. As one of them can be seen in the word of Allah in Surah Ali Imran: 145, 148, and Surah an-Nisa: 134. From the three verses above, the word *tsawab* synonymous with good rewards. Along with this, the meaning intended by the word *tsawab* In relation to Islamic education, it is the giving of good rewards for good behavior from students. In a broader discussion, the meaning of the term reward can be interpreted as a fun preventive and repressive educational tool and can be a driving force or motivator for students to learn; and as a reward for good behavior from children in the educational process (Purnomo, 2012). In this case, it can be concluded that rewards and punishments in the Islamic perspective in the world of education are a response to the good or bad behavior of students in the educational process. If students do things that do not violate rules or orders, then students will receive the rewards that have been provided, and vice versa, if students do things that violate rules or orders, then students will receive the punishment that has been provided.

Various experts define rewards, awards, or rewards as a form of motivation in the process of achieving educational goals, both from Western and Islamic perspectives. According to Dafid L. Sills, rewards are defined as: reward is one educationstools with given to the pupil as appreciation toward accomplish men was he reached" (Sills, 1972). Prizes are an educational medium used as a means of rewarding students who have achieved academic and moral achievements. Al-Ghazali (p. 78) in his book *Ihya' Ulumuddin* Juz 3, explains that a reward is an award as follows: This reward or award or reward aims to motivate the perpetrators whenever a child has shown good character and commendable deeds, then he should be appreciated and rewarded with something joyful and praised in front of many people (given a reward)". Education or anyone who is learning, formally, informally, or non-formally. Learning here is learning during the ongoing process of human life, not the meaning of learning in the narrow sense, namely at the age of children or adolescents in formal education. The motivational context contained in this "reward or reward" is the essence of the human soul itself which wants to be given appreciation or recognition in achieving the perfection of life.

Reward has many purposes in learning, but the important thing is to reinforce appropriate behavior and provide feedback to students who have done it correctly. Overall, praise is a good idea, especially in classes with many low-achieving students. Then what is more important is how the praise is given to students (Slafin, 2011). John W. Santrock said that rewards is a consequence that increases the probability that a behavior will occur. Reinforcement means strengthening, in positive reinforcement the frequency of a response increases because it is followed by a supporting stimulus (rewarding), while in negative reinforcement, the frequency of responses increases because it is followed by the removal of a harmful or unpleasant stimulus. For example, a father nags his child to do his homework continuously, so that the child gets tired of the nagging and does his homework (Santrock, 2015).

Reward position in relation to education is part of the most important learning method to stimulate motivation for students (Ramazan Sak, 2016). In another explanation, rewards are encouragement carried out by teachers to achieve student achievement and success, both in the family, school, and community environment. Every reward given by a child does not have to be material, but positive moral values such as praise and appreciation are also rewards for children so that children know the essence of goodness. Education carried out for children covers a comprehensive area so that children feel comfortable in learning academically and understanding the meaning of life (Purwanto, 2006).

Although nearly all Muslim experts and educators agree on the use of rewards in education, they caution educators to exercise caution in their implementation. Failure to do so can result in rewards being counterproductive or misdirected from their intended purpose. In this context, Abdur Rahman Shalih Abdullah even requires that every educator first attain the

predicate of "*'alim*" before they give rewards to their students. Giving rewards to students requires paying attention to the following things:

1. Give rewards for the actions or achievements of students, not based on their personality.
2. Give appropriate or proportional rewards to the behavior or achievements of students.
3. Express appreciation for positive things, but not too often.
4. Do not give awards accompanied by expressions that compare a student with other people.
5. Choose a form of reward that suits the needs of students (Salminawati, 2023).

The Quran informs us that Allah SWT rewards His servants in two forms: physical or material and non-physical. These physical or material rewards are always described in the form of food, drink, fruit, livestock, rainwater sent down from the sky that is beneficial for revitalizing the soil and fertilizing plants, and so on. Meanwhile, in non-physical forms, the Quran always describes rewards in the form of inner peace or tranquility, steadfastness in doing good (*isyiqamah*), guidance from Allah, reward in the hereafter, heaven and various pleasures therein (Al Rashidin, 2016).

Based on the information in the Qur'an, in the context of Islamic education, the form of reward can also be classified into two types, namely:

1. Physical reward, namely pleasant treatment that someone receives in physical or material form as a logical consequence of good deeds. *'Amal al-salih* or the best achievements that have been successfully displayed or achieved. At the operational level, these forms of physical rewards can be given by educators in the form of gifts, souvenirs, or awards such as trophies, books or manuscripts, savings funds, scholarships, award certificates, taking students on field trips, and so on.
2. Non-physical rewards, namely pleasant treatment that someone receives in a non-physical form as a logical consequence of good deeds. *'Amal al-salih* or the best achievements that have been successfully displayed or achieved. At the operational level, non-physical forms of reward can be given in the form of praise or verbal touch, physical touch such as a thumbs up, a thank you, a smile, and various other positive reinforcements.

There are various ways that can be done to provide rewards, including:

1. Verbal Expression/Beautiful Praise This praise is given to increase children's enthusiasm for learning. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) used this technique when praising his grandsons, al-Hasan and al-Husein.
2. Material Rewards/Prizes, because quite a few children are motivated by giving gifts.
3. Love him, because among the noble feelings that Allah has placed in the hearts of both parents are feelings of love, kindness and gentleness towards him.
4. Look and Smile (Salminawati, 2023).

3.1 Punishment

Etymologically, punishment means torture and so on, which is imposed on people who break the law and so on. From this perspective, punishment is basically unpleasant treatment inflicted on someone as a consequence of bad behavior. *'Amal al-shai'ah* what he has done. When linked to the world of education, punishment is an action that is consciously and intentionally inflicted on a child, causing suffering, and through this suffering the child becomes aware of his actions and promises in his heart not to repeat them.

One of the terms that Allah SWT always uses to describe punishment is the word *"Iqab"*. Term *'iqâb* is widely used by Allah SWT in the contest of unpleasant treatment that will be inflicted on anyone who does bad or reprehensible deeds. One of them is as found in QS. al-Shâd verse 14, which is a statement by Allah SWT that he will definitely punish *('iqâb)* anyone

who denies the Messenger of Allah. In relation to Islamic Education, *'iqâb* has the following meaning:

1. The most unpleasant preventive and repressive educational tool.
2. Rewards for bad behavior from students.

Term *'iqâb* a little different from *tarhib*, Where *'iqâb* has taken the form of activities in giving punishment such as hitting, slapping, punching, and so on. Meanwhile *tarhib* is a form of threat to students if they commit an act that violates the rules. Regarding the negative consequences of a student's actions, educators must provide advice or warnings that will help the student evaluate their own behavior. These warnings and reprimands must be combined with a reasonable explanation of the reasons and an indication of acceptable alternatives. Some definitions of punishment according to Islamic scholars include:

1. Punishment According to Al-Ghazali

   According to Al-Ghazali, a distinction must be made between young and older children when it comes to punishment and education. Al-Ghazali disagreed with hastily punishing a child for a mistake. He advocated giving the child the opportunity to correct their own mistakes, allowing them to develop self-respect and accept the consequences of their actions.

2. Punishment According to Al-'Abadari's Opinion

   According to Al-'Abadari, the characteristics of the child who misbehaves must be examined, and a single glance and a glance at the child may be enough for prevention and correction. Al-'Abdari criticized the methods of using sticks, such as coconut fronds, wooden branches, or short wooden sticks to hit children as punishment.

3. Ibn Khaldun's Opinion Regarding *ta'dzir* (Punishment)

   Ibn Khaldun strongly opposed the use of violence and rudeness in the education of children. He said, "Whoever is accustomed to being educated with violence among students or assistants, he will always be influenced by violence, always feel narrow-minded, lazy, and cause him to lie and do bad things because he is afraid of cruel hands. This will then teach him to deceive and lie so that these traits become his habits and temperament, and the sense of humanity that still exists in him will be destroyed (Salminawati, 2023).

Essentially, punishment is given to children as a final measure for mistakes they have made. When a child has been given a warning and positive reprimand, but there has been no change in their behavior, then punishment is imposed. This means that punishment is given to children so that they are aware and aware of their mistakes. Every mistake or action carries the risk of being held accountable. Children must learn to take responsibility for repeated mistakes. The importance of character education is responsibility as an awareness of all obligations of students in accordance with applicable regulations (M. Yunan, 2022). Through this punishment, many values will be instilled in children, including responsibility, self-discipline, and caution. It is hoped that with this punishment, children will not violate the rules that have been agreed upon consciously (Indrakusuma, 1973).

Providing a deterrent effect on students who commit a mistake is the primary goal of punishment, as we commonly know. Many educational figures still debate the issue of punishment. Likewise, Muslim thinkers and educators have offered both pros and cons regarding the necessity of implementing punishment and education (Salminawati, 2023). Nevertheless, punishment must still be carried out; the only punishment acceptable to the educational world is one that is remedial and constructive (Aminullah, 2013).

The group that is in favor of punishment argues that punishment is needed as an instrument to maintain the behavior of students to remain in goodness and change the behavior of students who are less or not good towards good or praiseworthy behavior. In line with this,

Atiyah al-Abrasyi argues that punishment in schools is not made for revenge, but to improve the children who are punished and protect other students from the same mistakes. Children who have a frivolous attitude towards the rules in the classroom must be removed from other children because they do not respect the rights of the public and their welfare. Thus, this can protect other children from their evil traits (Salminawati, 2013).

Rewards and punishments in relation to the learning process are part of several methods that can increase students' learning motivation to achieve good achievements in accordance with what is expected in educational goals. Rewards and punishments are educators' reactions to actions carried out by students, and they are carried out in an effort to improve behavior and character. Thus, the provision of rewards and punishments in the educational process has specific aims and objectives, namely to further increase the will to be better and stronger in the students in carrying out the positive actions they have done.

Punishment is a preventative and curative educational tool that is unpleasant for children. However, punishment is expected to motivate children to abandon actions or things that are less beneficial to them and direct them to always behave well and benefit themselves and others. Thus, the expected pedagogical goal of punishment is to improve the character and personality of students, to educate children in a better direction. With the existence of rewards and punishments, we hope that students will have the following attitudes:

1. To develop in children a sense of respect for themselves and others.
2. To be motivated towards a normative, disciplined and responsible personality towards rights and obligations.
3. To eliminate unhealthy competition among other friends, and the feeling of laziness that exists within him.
4. To stimulate students' thirst for knowledge, so that they develop a love of knowledge and strive to study diligently and diligently.
5. So that children do not fall into immoral directions, so that students can learn well.
6. To help students to be able to heal themselves so that they can return to good and noble things.
7. To instill a sense of compassion for oneself and others.
8. So that with rewards and punishments, the door of his heart is touched to learn optimally (Kusuma, 2023).

From the perspective of Islamic educational philosophy, punishment is basically an instrument for several things below:

1. Maintaining the nature of students so that they remain pure, clean and bear witness to Allah SWT.
2. Developing the personality of students so that they remain consistent in making policies (*'amal shalihaat*) and have good morals in every behavior or action.
3. Improving students from various bad traits and bad deeds (*'amal syariat*) that he has done.

Based on this, Islamic education experts agree that punishment is unnecessary when there are other instruments available to maintain students' natural instincts to maintain faith or testify to Allah SWT. Punishment is only necessary and can be implemented when it is believed that there are almost no other instruments available to maintain, guide, or awaken students from their mistakes. An educator must observe the following principles:

1. Educators should not punish before they have made a serious effort to train, educate, and guide their students with knowledge, skills, and good mental attitudes.
2. Punishment should not be carried out before the educator informs or explains the logical consequences of an action.
3. Children should not be punished before the educator gives them a warning.
4. Children should not be punished before educators have made a serious effort to accustom them to praiseworthy behavior.

5. Punishment cannot be used before educators give their students the opportunity to correct themselves from the mistakes they have made.
6. Before deciding to punish, educators should try to use mediators to advise or change students' behavior.

After all of the above conditions have been met, then a new educator is permitted to punish students and this is subject to several conditions, including the following:

1. You can't punish when you're angry.
2. You should not punish because you want to take revenge or feel hurt.
3. Punishment must be commensurate with the degree of wrongdoing
4. Punish students fairly, without favoritism or bias.
5. Do not give punishment that can lower the self-esteem or dignity of students.
6. Don't get hurt
7. Choose a form of punishment that can encourage students to immediately realize and correct their mistakes.
8. Ask for guidance from Allah SWT (Salminawati, 2023).

Punishment is classified into two forms, namely physical and non-physical. In the Qur'an, physical punishment usually consists of: beating (*Dharaba*), whipped (*money*), hand cut (*qath*), killed (*qatl*), fined (*diyat*), imprisoned or isolated (*listen*). Meanwhile, non-physical punishment can be: being humiliated by Allah SWT in his life in this world, not being rebuked by Allah SWT in the afterlife, being afflicted with inner restlessness, sin, and others (Awwad, 1995).

In the context of Islamic Education, forms of punishment can also be classified into two types, namely:

1. Physical punishment, namely less than or unpleasant treatment received by a person in physical or material form as a logical consequence of bad behavior. *'Amal al-shai'at* or poor performance displayed or achieved. Physical punishment can be implemented by educators in the form of hitting, requiring physical tasks such as cleaning the bathroom, standing in front of the class, and so on.
2. Non-physical punishment, namely less than or unpleasant treatment that someone receives in a non-physical form as a logical consequence of bad behavior. *'Amal al-shai'at* or poor performance displayed or achieved. For example, in the form of scolding him, giving warnings accompanied by threats, and so on.

Schinner argues that there are three forms of punishment that can be carried out after a mistake is made, namely as follows:

1. Making students do something unpleasant (restitution)

    Restitutionary punishment is useful for developing a sense of responsibility and helping to protect the interests of others. Examples of this type of restitution include ordering students to do additional work related to their mistakes, ordering them to make restitution to make them feel more cared for, requiring students to pay to replace items or toys they've damaged, ordering students to clean the classroom, and so on.

2. Depriving a student of a hobby or a pleasant opportunity (deprivation)

    Depriving or excluding students from enjoyable experiences. Educators can do this by taking away their rights or possessions or isolating them.

3. Inflicting psychological and physical pain on students

    Punishing a student for his/her wrong behavior can be done by directly inflicting physical or psychological pain, for example by using reproaches and reprimands in the form of words, slapping, holding, shaking the body, pinching and so on.

Agreeing with Schinner, Awwad also believes that administering physical punishment is permissible in educating children and is done for the child's benefit, not to torture or seek revenge. The instrument used should not be one that has fatal consequences or injures the child

(Salminawati, 2023). Therefore, as educators, we must adapt the punishments given to students so that students feel the deterrent effect of the punishment given, and motivate them so that the punishment given can motivate and improve their attitudes and character.

1. **The Influence of Rewards To wards the Formation of Student Character**

Reward can encourage students to repeat good behavior that has been done. When students receive rewards for the good things they do, students will be encouraged to continue to maintain that attitude. In the long term, giving appropriate and appropriate rewards to students can form good habits, making it part of self-awareness, building self-confidence because students feel appreciated so that students are not only expecting gifts or awards, but are always encouraged to repeat them continuously and instill good habits and morals in students and build moral awareness. Giving rewards by educators to students that are carried out fairly and wisely will make students feel that their teachers care about and appreciate the efforts made by them. Thus, a conducive learning environment is created in the formation of character and morals in students.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is undoubtedly the best role model and example in developing character and morals in everyday life. He frequently used words of praise and appreciation to foster the morals of his companions and children. This is something we can emulate in educational methods that emphasize compassion. Emulating the Prophet's morals can strengthen students' morals through optimizing the teaching of Islamic religious education materials (Panggabean, 2022), including the instilling of rewards and punishments in the school environment.

Allah has said in Surah Al Ahzab verse 21, as follows:

لَّقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِى رَسُولِ ٱللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَٱلْيَوْمَ ٱلْءَاخِرَ وَذَكَرَ ٱللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

Meaning: Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have a good example to follow, for those who hope in Allah's mercy and the Last Day and remember Allah often.

In Surah Al Qalam verse 4 it is also mentioned as follows:

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

Meaning: Indeed, you are truly of great moral character.

The two verses above explain that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) possessed a good personality and morals. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was tasked with conveying God's religion to humanity so that they could practice it in their daily lives and thus develop commendable morals. Islamic religious education plays a strategic role in shaping students' morals. It serves as a means of developing values and norms, fostering positive attitudes and aspects that contribute to behavioral change, as well as psychomotor aspects that can create a well-rounded human personality (Habiburahman, 2020).

Wise and gentle is the educational method that the Prophet Muhammad used in the educational process. Rewards are one of the things that are very effective in shaping the morals of the companions, children and teenagers in the time of the Prophet Muhammad. The way that the Prophet Muhammad did in giving rewards was in the form of praise, giving responsibility, trust, and praying for goodness. This can be used as an example, a role model and can be done in the process of giving rewards to students so that it has an effect on the formation of the character of students in Islamic religious education.

Appropriately administered rewards will build intrinsic motivation and self-confidence in students. Research shows that through rewards, students become more courageous in making decisions and confident in their actions (Anita et.al, 2023). Furthermore, ethical and proportional rewards in the context of Islamic education can encourage positive character development without relying on material things as the sole motivator (Anzar Aquil et.al, 2025). In the context of Islamic religious education (PAI), educators can emulate the Prophet Muhammad by offering praise, appreciation, and prayers as forms of non-material rewards. The Prophet Muhammad often used gentle and appreciative methods in nurturing his companions

and descendants (Mahmud, 2025). Praise and appreciation are not merely praise, but also provide trust, mandate, and responsibility as a form of recognition of students' potential and good behavior (Rahmat, 2022).

However, it should be noted that giving rewards too frequently and externally can reduce intrinsic motivation, known as overjustification effect. In motivational psychology, if someone is accustomed to doing a good deed solely for a reward, when that reward is removed, the internal drive can weaken. Therefore, students need to balance material and non-material rewards and guide them to do good deeds not just for the reward, but also out of moral awareness and a desire to do good.

The conclusion is that if rewards are managed proportionally, wisely, fairly and contextually, then this can be an effective strategy in forming good morals in students, especially when combined with the example of the Prophet Muhammad as the main model in Islamic education.

2. The Effect of Punishment To wards the Formation of Student Character

The effect of punishment The role of punishment in the formation of student character is crucial in education, particularly in fostering discipline, responsibility, and moral awareness. However, its application must be wise, proportionate, and educational, not hurtful or demeaning. The impact of punishment on the formation of student morality in Islamic religious education is to help students realize that every action has consequences, foster discipline and obedience, and create a moment of reflection or introspection on past mistakes, thereby fostering positive change. Through the influence of punishment, students can develop responsible, respectful, and obedient characters, thus fostering admirable character and morals.

The verses of the Qur'an that specifically discuss the influence of punishment in the context of education are not explicitly mentioned, but there are several verses that generally explain the concept of education, development, and behavioral correction that are closely related to the function of punishment as a means of developing humans to become better, namely in the Qur'an, Surah Al Isra', verse 36, which means: *"And do not follow that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart, all of these will be questioned."*

The verse above emphasizes that humans will be held accountable for their behavior, so education requires a process of guidance and correction (including punishment if necessary) to hold them accountable for their actions. In the context of Islamic education, the Quran teaches educational principles that include correction, supervision, and moral development. Punishment, as part of education, aims to prevent repeated mistakes, build self-awareness, and instill good values and piety. However, punishment must be administered with wisdom, justice, and compassion to truly educate, not simply to frighten.

Furthermore, punishment in Islamic education is not intended to harm, but rather to guide students toward moral awareness and self-improvement. Proportional punishment can be an effective learning tool, especially when accompanied by moral explanations and spiritual encouragement. In practice, educators must understand that each student has a different character and level of understanding, so the form of punishment needs to be tailored to the individual's circumstances and the context of the offense. A humanistic and Islamic approach will help students accept punishment as an expression of love and concern, rather than as violence or humiliation (Mahmud, 2025).

Beyond its normative perspective, punishment also has significant psychological and pedagogical functions in education. Punishment administered through an educational approach can be a tool to instill moral awareness, foster personal responsibility, and control negative behavior in students. However, the effectiveness of punishment depends heavily on how educators implement it. If administered harshly or humiliatingly, punishment can actually have a traumatic effect and reduce learning motivation. Conversely, punishment administered with

empathy, moral explanation, and opportunities for reflection can strengthen self-awareness and foster a sense of responsibility (Sulaiman, 2021).

In the context of Islamic education, punishment has spiritual value, aiming to return students to the path of goodness. Punishment is not merely a sanction, but also a means. *Tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul) so that students are able to control their lusts and improve their behavior (Hidayat & Ramadhani, 2020). Therefore, educators are required to understand the essence of punishment as a process *islah* (correction), not revenge. This approach aligns with the principle of compassion in Islamic education, which prioritizes gentleness in correcting mistakes.

Furthermore, research by Syahputra (2023) shows that punishment accompanied by rational and moral explanations can foster discipline and social empathy in students. Students who receive educational punishment show increased levels of responsible behavior and concern for others. These findings confirm that punishment can be a means of moral development when applied with principles of justice and proportionality.

From a modern pedagogical perspective, punishment also needs to be balanced with rewards so that students learn not only from fear but also from positive encouragement to do good. The appropriate combination of rewards and punishments will create a conducive learning climate and strengthen the internalization of moral values in students (Faridah, 2024).

Thus, the application of punishment in character building for students must be inseparable from spiritual, moral, and psychological values. Punishment should be a means of development, not oppression, and should be aimed at building self-awareness so students can control their behavior and develop noble morals.

3. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of Rewards and Punishments to Shape Students' Morals

The formation of students' morals through the application of rewards and punishments certainly has supporting and inhibiting factors. The supporting factors in the application of rewards and punishments in shaping students' character are as follows:

a. Teachers who are consistent in applying rewards and punishments, this makes students understand the boundaries of expected behavior and the consequences of their actions.
b. Students who understand Islamic religious values, this certainly makes students tend to more easily accept rewards and punishments as part of moral development.
c. A conducive environment, such as positive peers and clear school rules, strengthens the effectiveness of rewards and punishments.
d. If educators have a good and loving relationship, students will be more receptive to direction, rewards, and punishments.
e. The application of various rewards and punishments (praise, prizes, reprimands, additional assignments) and adapted to the character of the students is more effective.
f. Parental support in reinforcing rewards and punishments at home helps students understand the importance of good morals across the board. Collaboration between educators and parents can minimize the phenomenon of moral decline in students. Schools, where educators play a primary role in shaping morals through rewards and punishments, while parents contribute to the development of good morals by supporting educators in their implementation (Napsiah & Bahtiar, 2025).

The inhibiting factors in the application of rewards and punishments in forming students' character are as follows:

a. Students are inconsistent so that students become confused and not serious about following the rules.
b. Students who do not understand religious and moral values tend to ignore rewards and punishments.

c. Negative peer influence or an unsupportive environment can also weaken the effectiveness of rewards and punishments. This requires collaboration between the student's home environment, family, school, and community (Sari & Bahtiar, 2023).

d. Punishments that are too harsh or excessive rewards can cause students to feel stressed or even take advantage of the reward system.

e. If there is no good communication, students cannot understand the meaning of rewards and punishments, so they are not effective.

f. Negative information or inappropriate behavior spread through social media can hinder moral development, even when rewards and punishments are available. Advances in digital technology have presented significant challenges for parents. One particularly significant challenge is the dependence on gadgets, which impacts students' social and emotional well-being and moral decline (Dewi Agustin, 2025).

The application of rewards and punishments to shape students' morals is effective when supported by consistency, an understanding of religious values, a positive environment, and good relationships between teachers, students, and parents. Conversely, inconsistency, a negative environment, and the wrong approach are major obstacles to the moral development process.

In addition to the factors mentioned above, the success of implementing rewards and punishments in developing students' morals also depends heavily on the pedagogical approach employed by educators. Teachers who are able to integrate Islamic values into their learning strategies, including the administration of rewards and punishments, will be more effective in instilling moral values and character. An approach that emphasizes compassion, open communication, and role modeling has a significant impact on students' moral awareness. As explained by Hasanah & Nurhadi (2022), teachers who apply the principles of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* in the learning process is able to form a positive learning atmosphere, where rewards and punishments are no longer seen as a form of control, but as a means of character education that fosters sincerity and responsibility.

Another factor that contributes to the effectiveness of rewards and punishments is the support of a school system that instills a culture of discipline and rewards for good behavior. Schools that implement a character assessment system, a program *reward-based learning*, and continuous moral development will be more successful in forming positive habits in students. According to research by Fitriani and Mulyadi (2024), implementing a reward and punishment system based on Islamic values can increase learning motivation, moral awareness, and reduce deviant behavior among secondary school students.

In addition to internal school support, parental involvement plays a strategic role in strengthening moral development. Parents who understand Islamic educational methods will follow up on rewards and punishments at home with a similar approach, creating continuity in character development between the school and family environment. This is reinforced by research by Lestari & Kurniawan (2023), which found that effective collaboration between parents and educators increases students' moral awareness by up to 40% compared to a siloed educational environment without active communication.

However, the influence of modern technology remains a major challenge in implementing rewards and punishments in the digital age. Easy access to social media and negative content can undermine the effectiveness of character education if not balanced with moral supervision and digital control. According to a study by Ramli (2024), exposure to age-inappropriate digital content increases the risk of decreased social empathy and weakens student discipline. Therefore, strengthening religious values, digital literacy, and moral guidance from teachers and parents are strategic steps to address this challenge.

Thus, the application of rewards and punishments in developing students' morals cannot be done in isolation. Its success requires synergy between teachers, parents, and the social environment, as well as adaptation to the challenges of the times. Educators must be able to

balance the spiritual, emotional, and rational aspects of educating students so that rewards and punishments truly function as effective and sustainable means of moral development.

Conclusion

Rewards and punishments in Islamic religious education play a crucial role in shaping students' morals. Rewards reinforce good behavior, while punishments discourage bad behavior. When applied wisely, fairly, and educationally, both are effective tools for instilling Islamic character traits such as honesty, trustworthiness, discipline, and responsibility. Rewards and punishments are important and effective methods in students' moral education, particularly in the context of Islamic religious education. Rewards serve to motivate and reinforce good behavior, while punishments serve as a means of correction and prevention against bad behavior.

When applied wisely, proportionately, and infused with Islamic values, rewards and punishments can help shape students' character with noble morals, such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, and respect for others. However, their successful implementation depends heavily on: consistency and exemplary behavior from educators, support from the environment (family and school), and an understanding of the purpose of moral education itself. With the right approach, rewards and punishments not only shape outward behavior but also instill moral and spiritual awareness in students as a whole.

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