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EXPLORING THE INTEGRATION OF ISLAMIC VALUES ON STUDENTS' DISCIPLINE IN MALAYSIAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract:

Students' discipline is a serious concern in primary education, especially in cultivating students' behaviour through spiritual and moral awareness rather than depending entirely on regulations and punitive measures. This study examined the integration of Islamic values in the development of students' discipline at some selected primary schools. The study specifically investigated teachers' perceptions in handling discipline issues, the methods employed by the teachers to integrate Islamic values for maintaining students' discipline, the challenges encountered by the teachers and the influence of integrating Islamic values on students' discipline. Through a qualitative phenomenological approach, data of the study were collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with six teachers and four Year 6 students of a national primary school and a private primary school, observations and document analysis of the teachers' daily lesson plans. Through triangulation between the three sources, the data were examined thematically. The results show that teachers generally perceived that behavioural problems such as incomplete homework, lateness, talking during class, inappropriate language and peer conflicts were manageable but persistent. Lesson planning, classroom routines, reminders about Allah, sin and reward, storytelling, *adab*, discipline interventions, trustworthiness, peer responsibility and school programmes were all used to integrate Islamic values. The main challenges involved limited parental supervision, weak home-school continuity, media and peer influences, students' developmental readiness, limited instructional time and inconsistent implementation. The study's originality is in demonstrating the integration of Islamic values from structured lesson content into daily disciplinary procedures within both classroom and school culture at the primary level. The study suggests that Islamic values can enhance self-regulation, respect, responsibility, positive peer relationships, cleanliness and gradual

behaviour progress when systematically planned, modelled and continuously reinforced. Future research ought to encompass a greater number of schools, incorporate parental perspectives and provide longitudinal evidence to determine the continuing effect of Islamic value-based discipline.

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Keyword:

Adab, Islamic Values, Malaysian Primary Schools, Moral Education, Students' Discipline, Teachers' Practices



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Introduction

Discipline is the centre to the creation of a meaningful and safe learning environment, especially at the primary school level where the children's manners, habits and basic forms of self-control are still developing. In schools, discipline usually understood as compliance with rules, punctuality, proper usage of words, classroom attention and respect for teachers and peers. However, when discipline is only handled through punishment or external control, students may temporarily obey the rules without developing the inner moral awareness needed for sustained behavioral change. This issue is particularly important in primary education because early behavioral patterns have the tendency to continue into later schooling when they are not carefully guided (Stemmler et al., 2005).

In Malaysia, discipline is also closely connected with moral and spiritual formation. Islamic values such as *adab*, *akhlaq al-karimah*, *amanah*, *sabr*, respect, cleanliness and accountability to Allah SWT help in developing students who are not only obedient to the school rules and regulations but also have the awareness of the moral meaning of their behavior by providing a framework. These values are important as they deal with the inner part of discipline. Discipline is not only seen as an administrative matter in Islam, but it is related to *tarbiyah*, or holistic education in which the intellect, emotion, soul and conduct are nurtured together and supported each other. As it is stated by Al-Ghazali (2001), the formation of morality is achieved through purification of the soul, the repeated practice of good habits and the exposure to good role models. This perspective supports the idea that discipline should be built into the students' character and not simply remains as a response to fear of punishment.

In this process, teachers are particularly important. They function not only as subject teachers but also as moral educators and role models. Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory suggests that children learn behavior through observation, imitation and reinforcement. In the

classroom, students tend to observe closely the teachers' behaviour including on how their teachers speak, respond to conflict, correct mistakes, organize routines and demonstrate values in daily interaction. When teachers consistently show good behavior such as patience, fairness and respectful correction, students are more likely to internalize the same behavioral conduct. Thus, the integration of Islamic values into discipline is not only dependent on what teachers say but also on the teachers' actions.

Many studies have focused on curriculum integration, religious school culture, or secondary and higher education contexts, despite the importance of Islamic values in education. However, there is less attention that has been given to the primary school teachers' perception of discipline, how they integrate Islamic values in actual discipline practices, the challenges they face and how the process influences students' behavior. This inquiry is focused on the primary school setting as students at this stage are in the process of developing moral understanding, social competencies and self-regulation. Therefore, this study examines the integration of Islamic values on students' discipline in Malaysian primary schools. This study focuses on teachers' perceptions, practices, challenges and the influence of such integration on students' discipline.

Literature Review

Islamic Values and Discipline

Islamic values are moral and spiritual principles derived from the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the broader legacy of Islamic education. In terms of discipline, the students are motivated to good conduct through values like *adab*, *akhlaq al-karimah*, *amanah*, *sabr*, respect and self-control. According to Halstead (2004), Islamic education is more concerned with the development of the whole person rather than the mere transmission of information. This makes Islamic values relevant to discipline as they connect external behavior with inner intention, responsibility and accountability to Allah SWT.

Al-Ghazali's moral thought is especially helpful in understanding value-based discipline. Al-Ghazali (2001) considered education as a process of strengthening the human soul and developing firm moral qualities based on repeated practice. Thus, discipline should not be confused to punishment. It is to form habits which in time will become part of character. This is closely related to the concept of *ta'wid*, or habituation, where students are taught to internalize proper conduct by frequent reminders and repeated acts of goodness. In the setting of the primary school, the daily activities such as giving *salam*, reciting *du'a*, respecting teachers, completing work and helping peers can become practical forms of moral habituation. Islamic educational scholars also emphasize *adab* as a foundation of learning. Al-Attas (1995) defines that *adab* involves the recognition of the proper place of things, persons and actions. In the classroom, this means students learn the proper manner of interacting with their teachers, relating to peers, using school facilities, managing time and receiving knowledge at school. Discipline from this perspective is not only about the order but about placing behavior within a moral and spiritual framework.

Teacher Modelling and Social Learning

While Islamic moral theory explains the aim of discipline, Social Learning Theory helps explain the process by which students develop disciplined behavior. Bandura (1977) argued

that humans receive the knowledge through observation and modelling, especially when the model is respected or has authority. In school, teachers are among the most influential models for primary school students. For that, their speech, patience, consistency and fairness shape how students understand acceptable behavior. Bandura (1977) also emphasized on the role of reinforcement, suggesting the students' tendencies to replicate behavior that are recognized, guided or rewarded in meaningful ways.

This theory supports the Islamic concept of *qudwah hasanah*, or exemplary role modelling. Teachers who remind students about Allah, correct behavior with wisdom and exhibit respectful interactions provide the living examples of Islamic values. The integration of Islamic values therefore occurs through both formal education and daily social engagement. Values must be exemplified by teacher's conduct and classroom culture, rather than only included in lesson plans.

Previous Studies on Values Integration and Student Discipline

Islamic values have been shown in research to be infused into several fields of education. Recent works shows that Islamic and character values can be linked together and embedded in Islamic education textbooks, religious culture, school routines, value-based guidance, holistic education system and primary school practices (Hidayatullah & Arif, 2022; Elihami, 2023). Hidayat, Rizal, Abdussalam and Fawwaz (2020) showed that Islamic values can also be integrated into Sociology learning by linking academic concepts with tawhidic understanding. Similarly, Rashed and Tamuri (2021) found that Islamic education, teacher modelling and daily religious practices positively supported the formation of *akhlakul karimah* among students. These studies demonstrate that value integration can occur through curriculum, teaching practice and school culture.

Research on discipline also indicates that students' misbehavior is often related to classroom management, peer influence, teacher response and broader environmental factors. Rachel and Daniel (2011) reported that talking out of turn and disrespectful behaviour were commonly cited as disruptive classroom behaviors by the teachers. Sudaryono and Aryani (2021) also argued that misbehavior can be managed through clear rules and regulations, positive reinforcement, teacher's attitude and engaging instruction. In Malaysia, discipline problems have been linked to the wider school management issues and the demand for teacher leadership in managing students' behavior (Yaakob et al., 2023).

Although these studies are useful to support the idea of integrating Islamic values, there are still a need for research that focus specifically on the use of Islamic values by teachers to maintain discipline in Malaysian primary schools. Much of the existing work emphasizes on curriculum integration or general character formation and less is known about the everyday process of value-based discipline in classrooms. The current study fills this gap by studying the discipline of students at the primary level, the teachers' perceptions, practices, challenges and the influence of Islamic values.

Methodology

A qualitative phenomenological design was adopted in this study as it intended to understand the lived experiences and interpretations of teachers and students on the integration of Islamic values in discipline practices. Qualitative inquiry is appropriate when the researcher aims to

understand meaning, context and experience, not measure variables statistically (Creswell, 2012). The phenomenological approach allowed the researcher to explore how participants experienced discipline, Islamic values and classroom practices in their own school contexts.

The study was conducted in Ipoh, Perak and involved two types of primary schools: one national primary school and one private primary school. These sites were purposefully selected to provide insight into how Islamic values integration in different school contexts. There were six teachers and four Year 6 students who acted as the informants. The teachers involved included administrators, a counselling teacher, a subject teacher, an Arabic teacher and a discipline unit representative. The upper primary students were selected because they are normally more articulate of their experiences and reflections on school discipline.

The data of this study were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and document analysis of the teachers' daily lesson plans. The semi-structured interviews format allowed the participants to elaborate freely and in detail on their perceptions, experiences and practices. Observations allowed the researcher to observe the real classroom interactions, teacher correction strategies, student responses and the presence of Islamic values during teaching and discipline management. By using document analysis, the study sought to identify the appearance of Islamic elements in lesson planning, such as *Asma'ul Husna*, Qur'anic references, moral values and the Islamic integration factor.

The data were analysed thematically for this study. Interview transcripts, observation notes and lesson plans were organized, coded and compared for recurring patterns. The themes were developed in relation to the four research questions: teachers' perceptions, teachers' integration practices, challenges and the influence on students' discipline. Triangulation of data across interviews, observations and document analysis increased the credibility of the findings. Ethical considerations were strictly followed by the permission from the relevant school authorities, informed consent from teachers and parents or guardians, student assent, confidentiality and the use of pseudonyms.

Table 1: Informants of the Study

Informant	Gender	Position	Experience
T1	Female	Assistant Principal Of Administration	10 Years
T2	Male	Counselling Teacher	2 Years
T3	Female	Science Teacher	10 Years
T4	Male	Arabic Teacher	11 Years
T5	Female	Assistant Principal of Student Affairs	20 Years
T6	Male	Discipline Unit	18 Years
S1	Male	Student	Year 6
S2	Male	Student	Year 6
S3	Female	Student	Year 6
S4	Male	Student	Year 6

Source: Research Data (2026)

Findings

The findings are presented according to the four research questions. Four major areas emerged from the thematic analysis: teachers' perceptions of discipline issues, methods of integrating Islamic values, challenges faced by teachers and the influence of Islamic values on students' discipline.

Teachers' Perceptions in Handling Discipline Issues

Teachers generally perceived students' discipline issues as manageable but persistent. They did not describe the problems as critical or highly severe. Instead, the discipline issues were viewed as everyday school behaviors that require constant attention by the teachers. The common issues included incomplete homework, talking during lessons, lateness, teasing, inappropriate language, peer conflict and lack of focus. One teacher explained that the discipline level of the students was not critical yet, while another described the cases as mild and manageable. This indicates that teachers understood discipline problems as normal, but it is also considered as an important aspect of primary school development.

Teachers also perceived discipline as a developmental process. Younger students were seen to have needed more nurturing, repetitive and direct guidance, while upper primary students were expected to show greater responsibility and self-control. This perception shaped the teachers' responses. For lower primary students, teachers tended to use persuasion, affection and close support, trying to make a connection with the student. For older students, teachers used firmer reminders, discussion of consequences and when necessary, structured follow-up such as parent meetings or agreement forms.

The teachers identified several causes of discipline issues. These included individual student habits, curiosity, peer influence, media and technology, family background and lack of parental supervision. Teachers repeatedly emphasized that discipline could not be managed by the school alone. Instead, there should be a great teamwork between teachers and parents. When values taught at school were not reinforced at home, students struggled to maintain consistent behavior. This finding highlights the importance of home-school continuity in value-based discipline.

Integration of Islamic Values in Maintaining Discipline

Teachers integrated Islamic values through formal and informal practices. Formally, Islamic values appeared in daily lesson plans through Islamic integration elements, Qur'anic references, *Asma'ul Husna* and moral values. For example, a science lesson plan linked the topic of solids and liquids with Surah Al-Ankabut and the idea that Allah has power over all things. This shows that academic subjects can become a platform to strengthen Islamic worldview and discipline. Informally, teachers integrated Islamic values through advice, storytelling, classroom routines, reminders and discipline correction. Islamic values were not restricted to Islamic Education lessons only. Teachers also linked Bahasa Melayu subject with *adab*, Science subject with Allah as Al-Khaliq, History subject with the Charter of Madinah and unity with the story of the *Muhajirin* and *Ansar*. These strategies helped students understand that Islamic values are relevant to learning, relationships and daily conduct.

Classroom routines were also important. Students held *salam* and *du'a* recitation, listened to hadith reminders, recited *Asma'ul Husna* and took part in school activities such as *usrah*, *tadarus* and congregational prayers. These routines were repeated to expose Islamic values to the students and to help students connect discipline with spiritual practices. Students reported that reciting *du'a* gave them a sense of calm and prepared them for learning.

In addition to that, discipline interventions often involved reminders about Allah, sin, reward, *adab*, *amanah* and *barakah*. For example, teachers reminded students that Allah sees every of their actions even when the teachers do not see them. Such memories of the past moved discipline from mere external control to moral reflection. Instead of humiliating students, many teachers used *hikmah*-based correction, speaking calmly and advising students respectfully. However, observation also showed that integration depended on teacher's consistency. When teachers were under pressure or when the class needed intensive task support, Islamic integration became less visible.

Challenges in Integrating Islamic Values

The main challenges were related to home and parental factors, external influences, students' readiness, limited time and inconsistency in implementation. Teachers repeatedly stated that values taught at school need to be reinforced at home. Without parental supervision, students may continue habits that conflict with school values. For example, teachers described how unsupervised gadget use, excessive online games and social media exposed students to inappropriate language and aggressive behavior, which were later brought into school.

Another challenge was peer influence. Sometimes students imitated each other or teased or argued about things like football clubs. Teachers reported that upper primary students are often responsive to their peers, which can either support or weaken discipline depending on the peer group. This is to show that Islamic values of *sabr*, *ukhuwah* and respect need to be strengthened not only individual basis but also on social basis in peer culture.

The integration process also depends on the developmental readiness of the students. Younger students sometimes misunderstood Islamic concepts because of their developing cognitive and emotional maturity. Some students also dissociated religious knowledge from academic subjects, and could not understand how lessons in Science, History or language lessons could be related to Islam. Time constraints and teacher workload particularly when teachers had to meet syllabus requirements or deal with demanding classroom tasks, also limited the depth of integration.

Influence of Islamic Values on Students' Discipline

The integration of Islamic values has influenced students' discipline in several ways. It first strengthened internal self-regulation. Students reported avoiding lying, controlling anger, refraining themselves from talking back and picking up rubbish because they remembered sin, reward and Allah being aware of their actions. This suggests that Islamic values may have a role in students' self-regulation of behavior even when teachers are not directly supervising them.

Secondly, Islamic values strengthened *adab* and respect. Students linked *barakah* in knowledge to respect for teachers. They knew that listening to teachers and speaking politely were not only school rules but part of Islamic manners. Observations revealed that students asked for permission to speak, responded to teachers' reminders and gave *salam* to teachers and other members of the school community. This indicates that discipline was considered to be polite behaviour towards others.

Third, Islamic values enhanced responsibility in learning. Teachers linked homework, punctuality and task completion to *1285manah* and time discipline. Students also linked discipline to helping friends, keeping the school clean and caring for shared property. Fourth, there were cases where the Islamic reminders resulted in immediate behavioral correction. For example, when students were reminded that Allah is watching them, they stopped talking. In other cases, behaviour change was slow and required repeated guidance, involvement of the parent and structured follow-up. Hence, the influence of Islamic values was positive but not immediate. It emerged from meaningful modelling and consistent reinforcement.

Table 2: Summary of Key Themes and Findings

Research Focus	Themes	Key Findings
Teachers' Perceptions	Manageable But Persistent Discipline Issues	Teachers perceived discipline problems as mild but recurring and requiring continuous guidance.
Integration Practices	Lesson Planning, Routines, Storytelling and <i>Hikmah</i> -Based Correction	Islamic values were integrated through subject content, <i>du'a</i> , <i>salam</i> , stories, reminders about Allah, <i>adab</i> , sin, reward and school programmes.
Challenges	Home-School Continuity, Media, Peers, Time and Readiness	Teachers faced difficulties when school values were not reinforced at home, when students were influenced by media or peers, and when time or resources were limited.
Influence On Discipline	Self-Regulation, Respect, Responsibility and Behavioral Change	Students showed greater awareness of Allah, respect for teachers, responsibility in learning, peer support and gradual improvement in behavior.

Source: Research Data (2026)

Discussion

The findings support the view that discipline is both a moral-spiritual process and a socially learned behavior. From Al-Ghazali's perspective, discipline develops when students internalize values through repeated practice, advice and purification of conduct (Al-Ghazali, 2001). The findings show that teachers repeatedly used reminders, *du'a*, stories, *adab* correction and school routines to guide students. These repeated practices reflect *ta'wid*, or habit formation, where students gradually learn to behave properly through consistent moral reinforcement.

The findings also support Bandura's Social Learning Theory. Students observed teachers' tone, actions, fairness and patience. When teachers corrected students calmly and linked behavior to Islamic values, students were more likely to accept the advice. This demonstrates the

importance of teacher modelling and reinforcement (Bandura, 1977, 1986). The role of the teacher as *qudwah hasanah* was evident because students learned not only from direct instruction but also from the way teachers managed discipline.

The study also expands previous findings on Islamic values integration. Similar to Fauzi, Sutoyo and Purwanto (2023) and Elihami (2023), this study found that Islamic values can be integrated across subjects and not only in Islamic Education. However, this study adds that integration becomes more meaningful when it is connected to discipline and daily behavior. It is not sufficient to include Islamic elements in lesson plans. The values must be translated into classroom routines, teacher-student interaction, peer responsibility and follow-up when misbehavior occurs.

The challenges identified in this study show that value-based discipline requires collaboration. Teachers cannot develop students' discipline effectively if the home environment, peer culture and digital exposure contradict the values taught at school. This finding is consistent with research showing that student behavior is affected by multiple environments and that discipline problems are often influenced by classroom, family and social factors (Yaakob et al., 2023; Ijaz et al., 2024). Therefore, schools should strengthen communication with parents and develop programmes that help families reinforce Islamic values at home.

The influence of Islamic values on students' discipline was clear but gradual. Some students demonstrated internal self-regulation when they remembered Allah, sin, reward and adab. Others still needed repeated reminders and external guidance. This suggests that discipline formation should be understood as a long-term educational process. Immediate obedience may occur after reminders, but stable discipline requires repeated modelling, consistent routines, parental support and age-appropriate explanation.

Implications

The findings have some implications for teachers, school administrators and parents. Teachers should deliberately integrate Islamic values into lesson planning and daily classroom management. The integration must not be limited to religious subjects but must concern the behavior of students in all subjects and school activities. Teachers also need support and professional development to employ *hikmah*-based discipline, moral reasoning, storytelling and age-appropriate explanations of Islamic values.

School administrators should strengthen school culture with consistent routines such as *du'a*, *salam*, *usrah*, congregational prayer, *tadarus*, leadership programmes and assemblies that reinforce *adab* and responsibility. Discipline programmes should not purely about punishment, but they need to balance structure with moral reflection. Parents should also pay an active role, since the continuity between home and school is essential for value internalization. Regular communication between teachers and parents can help ensure that the values taught in school are practiced at home, especially with regard to gadget use, speech, prayer, respect and homework responsibility.

Conclusion

This study explored the integration of Islamic values on students' discipline in selected Malaysian primary schools. The findings show that teachers perceived discipline issues as manageable but persistent. The problems included incomplete homework, talking during lessons, teasing, lateness, inappropriate language and peer conflict. Teachers generally responded through advice, moral reminders, role modelling, parental involvement and structured follow-up when necessary.

Islamic values were integrated through lesson planning, classroom routines, subject content, storytelling, reminders about Allah, sin and reward, *adab*, *amanah*, peer support and school programmes. These practices influenced students' discipline by strengthening self-regulation, respect, responsibility, cleanliness, positive peer relationships and gradual behavioral change. However, the integration process was affected by challenges such as limited parental support, media and gadget influence, peer pressure, students' developmental readiness, time constraints and inconsistent implementation.

The originality of this study resides in its practical explanation of the transformation of Islamic values from written lesson plans, school procedures and teachers' beliefs into tangible disciplinary practices within the classroom. This study demonstrates how teachers directly integrate Islamic values in addressing daily disciplinary matters, utilising *hikmah*-based corrections, reminders of Allah SWT, *adab*, *amanah*, peer responsibility and home-school collaboration, in contrast to studies that primarily focus on Islamic values at the curriculum or general character-formation level.

The study concludes that Islamic values can contribute meaningfully to discipline formation when they are intentionally planned, consistently modelled and reinforced by teachers, parents and the school environment. Therefore, discipline should be interpreted as a continuous process of moral, spiritual, emotional and behavioral growth and not only as obedience to rules. Future studies should extend the scope of the study to include other schools in different states in Malaysian, with parents and school administrators as informants and adopt a longitudinal or mixed method designs to determine whether punishment based on Islamic values can lead to a sustainable behavioural change over time. Future research also may compare national, private Islamic and non-Islamic school environments to discover which educational techniques most effectively enhance students' internal self-regulation.

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