

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DHUHA PRAYER PROGRAM IN
FOSTERING STUDENT DISCIPLINE: A CASE STUDY
IN ISLAMIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS**

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Abstract

This study explores the implementation of the Dhuha prayer program and its role in fostering student discipline at Islamic junior high schools. The research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, and validated using triangulation techniques to ensure reliability. The findings reveal that the Dhuha prayer program is conducted routinely before the start of classes and has become a distinctive feature of the school's religious culture. The program effectively cultivates student discipline, as reflected in punctuality, orderly participation in worship, and increased responsibility in academic tasks. Moreover, it enhances teacher-student relationships and promotes a spiritual atmosphere within the school environment. The main challenges encountered include student tardiness, lack of focus during prayer, limited facilities, a tight academic schedule, and insufficient parental support. Overall, the Dhuha prayer program significantly contributes to strengthening student character and discipline formation.

Keywords: Dhuha prayer program, student discipline, character education

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji implementasi program salat Dhuha dan perannya dalam menumbuhkan kedisiplinan siswa di madrasah tsanawiyah. Pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan desain deskriptif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi, kemudian divalidasi menggunakan teknik triangulasi untuk menjamin keabsahan data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa program salat Dhuha dilaksanakan secara rutin sebelum kegiatan belajar dimulai dan telah menjadi ciri khas budaya religius sekolah. Program ini efektif menumbuhkan kedisiplinan siswa, yang tampak dari kebiasaan datang tepat waktu, ketertiban dalam beribadah, serta meningkatnya tanggung jawab terhadap tugas belajar. Selain itu, kegiatan ini juga mempererat hubungan antara guru dan siswa serta menciptakan suasana spiritual di lingkungan sekolah. Adapun kendala yang dihadapi meliputi keterlambatan siswa, kurangnya kekhusyukan dalam salat, keterbatasan fasilitas, padatnya jadwal belajar, dan minimnya dukungan dari orang tua. Secara keseluruhan, program salat Dhuha memberikan kontribusi signifikan terhadap pembentukan karakter dan disiplin siswa.

Kata Kunci: program salat Dhuha, disiplin siswa, pendidikan karakter

Introduction

Education plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's personality and character. It is not merely a means of transferring knowledge but also serves as a vehicle for internalizing moral, ethical, and spiritual values that form the foundation of virtuous behavior (Fauzi, 2024). In the modern context, the advancement of science and technology is often not balanced with strong moral development, leading to a character crisis marked by declining discipline, responsibility, and respect for rules (Khairunnisa & Rahman, 2023). Therefore, education must aim to produce individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also possess integrity and discipline in their daily conduct.

Madrasahs, as Islamic educational institutions, play a strategic role in integrating academic learning with religious and moral education. In these institutions, education encompasses cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains through the cultivation of spiritual values via religious activities such as congregational prayers, Qur'an recitation, and Dhuha prayer. The Dhuha prayer in particular has great potential to instill discipline, as it trains students to manage time, demonstrate consistency, and develop a sense of responsibility in worship (Purnomosidi, 2022). Hence, worship activities serve as effective instruments in building students' disciplined character within the school environment.

Previous studies have emphasized the importance of religious habituation in shaping students' character. Saputra (2023) confirmed that religious activities in schools serve as effective strategies for instilling moral and spiritual values that foster discipline. Similarly, Khofi (2024) found that the habituation of congregational Dhuha prayer significantly improves punctuality and orderliness among students in Islamic schools. Widyawati et al. (2024) also reported that institutional policies encouraging Dhuha prayer practices foster greater adherence to school rules and routines among students in Muhammadiyah elementary schools.

However, most previous studies have focused only on the general relationship between worship activities and discipline, without providing an in-depth analysis of the implementation, supervision, and institutional support mechanisms within the Dhuha prayer program. For instance, the study by Nurdyansyah et al. (2024) highlighted the positive effects of Dhuha prayer on discipline but did not explore the underlying management and evaluation processes that sustain this program. Likewise, Santika and Ikhwan (2024) limited their discussion to the cultural aspects of discipline without examining the pedagogical potential of Dhuha prayer in fostering religiosity and social responsibility among students.

Recent scholarship emphasizes the need to link worship habituation with theories of character education and school-based management. Al-Harbi and Alqahtani (2024) argue that spiritual practices in schools have a significant effect on discipline formation through habituation and

reinforcement models. Similarly, Wulandari (2025) highlights the importance of collaborative engagement between teachers, parents, and institutions in developing a discipline culture rooted in religious values. These findings indicate a research gap in understanding how Dhuha prayer programs are systematically implemented and sustained in Islamic junior high schools.

The novelty of this study lies in its analytical approach, which not only describes the implementation of the Dhuha prayer program but also examines the mechanisms of discipline cultivation through this activity in the context of MTs Ubudiyah Pangkalan Brandan. This research seeks to uncover the interrelation between worship habits and student discipline through a descriptive qualitative approach, providing a deeper contextual understanding of the program. Furthermore, it explores the roles of teachers, principals, and parents in ensuring the program's success—an aspect rarely discussed in previous research.

Another distinctive contribution of this study is its integration of religious practices (Dhuha prayer) with Islamic character education implemented as a continuous pedagogical model. The study conceptualizes the Dhuha prayer not merely as an additional act of worship but as an educational tool for developing discipline through exemplary behavior (*uswah*), repetition (*ta'wid*), and value reinforcement. This approach can serve as an alternative model for fostering students' moral and behavioral development in contemporary Islamic education.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the implementation of the Dhuha prayer program at MTs Ubudiyah Pangkalan Brandan, to explain its mechanisms in fostering student discipline, and to identify the challenges encountered during its implementation. This research is expected to provide an empirical understanding of how voluntary worship practices can effectively support the development of student discipline and character in Islamic educational institutions.

From an argumentative standpoint, this study is based on the notion that character formation through worship is not solely a matter of religiosity but also a pedagogical strategy for cultivating school culture. Discipline developed through spiritual activities tends to be more enduring because it originates from internal awareness (self-discipline) rather than external enforcement. Thus, the habituation of worship such as the Dhuha prayer serves as a powerful foundation for long-term character development.

This research is significant because it offers both theoretical and practical contributions to Islamic education. Theoretically, it enriches the discourse on the relationship between religious practices and discipline formation in educational settings. Practically, it provides insights for educators, school administrators, and parents in designing effective religious habituation programs that promote discipline and moral integrity among students in the face of modern moral challenges.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design, aiming to obtain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the Dhuha prayer program and its role in fostering student discipline at MTs Ubudiyah Pangkalan Brandan, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra. The qualitative descriptive method was chosen to explore social and religious phenomena that occur naturally within the school environment without manipulating any variables (Sugiyono, 2022). The research was conducted at Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Ubudiyah Pangkalan Brandan, an Islamic junior high school recognized for its consistent implementation of the congregational Dhuha prayer program as part of its character and discipline development efforts. The study took place over a period of four months, from January to April 2024, encompassing the preparation, data collection, and data analysis stages.

The data sources of this research consisted of both primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through direct observations of the Dhuha prayer activities and in-depth interviews with the principal, Islamic education teachers, homeroom teachers, and students actively participating in the program. Secondary data were collected from official school documents such as activity schedules, attendance lists, and program evaluations, as well as relevant literature in books, journal articles, and previous studies that discuss religious habituation and discipline development in Islamic educational institutions (Widi, 2023). These diverse sources of information allowed the researcher to triangulate data and strengthen the credibility of the findings.

Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation. Participant observation was conducted by attending and observing the Dhuha prayer activities, focusing on students' punctuality, orderliness, and attitude during worship. In-depth interviews were held with selected participants to obtain comprehensive insights into the strategies of discipline cultivation, the values emphasized by teachers, and the challenges faced during program implementation. Documentation was used to collect supporting evidence such as photographs, school archives, and official reports related to the Dhuha prayer activities (Khofi, 2024). Each of these techniques complemented one another to ensure that the data represented authentic and holistic aspects of the phenomenon being studied.

The data analysis process followed the interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman (2014), which involves three major stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction phase, the researcher selected and simplified relevant information related to the focus of the study. During data display, the organized data were presented in descriptive and thematic forms to reveal patterns and relationships among variables. Finally, conclusion drawing and verification were carried out continuously to refine the interpretation of the data and ensure analytical accuracy. This process was iterative, meaning that data collection and

analysis occurred simultaneously, allowing the researcher to adjust focus and confirm emerging findings throughout the study.

To maintain the validity and reliability of the findings, the researcher applied source and method triangulation by comparing data obtained from observation, interviews, and documentation (Moleong, 2021). A member-checking process was also conducted by asking participants to review the researcher's interpretations to ensure the accuracy and authenticity of the findings. This methodological rigor helped to ensure that the study's results accurately reflected the real experiences of the participants. Overall, this methodological framework enabled the researcher to construct a comprehensive understanding of how the Dhuha prayer program functions as an effective educational practice for cultivating discipline and religious character among students in Islamic junior high schools.

Results and Discussion

Implementation of the Congregational Dhuha Prayer Program

The congregational Dhuha prayer program at MTs Ubudiyah Pangkalan Brandan is one of the school's signature religious activities designed to foster a spiritual atmosphere and strengthen students' moral character. This activity is not merely a routine practice but part of the school's systematic effort to habituate students to perform voluntary worship (sunnah) from an early age. The Dhuha prayer itself is a recommended act of worship performed in the morning after sunrise until just before the time for the Zuhur prayer. It carries numerous virtues, such as expressing gratitude to Allah and serving as a source of blessings and sustenance. Therefore, the school institutionalizes the Dhuha prayer as a key spiritual development program conducted regularly and consistently.

The activity usually begins before the first lesson of the day. Students are directed to gather in the prayer hall (mushalla) or a large room prepared for the purpose, where they perform the Dhuha prayer in congregation led by an imam. The imam is typically one of the Islamic education teachers or occasionally a student who is deemed capable. Teachers remind students to perform ablution properly, maintain cleanliness, and prepare themselves with discipline before the prayer begins. This practice fosters discipline from the outset, as students are trained to arrive on time, maintain neatness, and adhere to established rules (Khofi, 2024).

Teachers who attend also monitor the worship to ensure that all students participate earnestly. The implementation of the Dhuha prayer has become an effective means of habituation. Many students who were initially reluctant or unfamiliar with the practice gradually became accustomed to it through repetition, to the point that they felt something was missing when they did not participate. Some even began performing Dhuha prayers independently at home during holidays, showing that the program had successfully instilled a positive habit.



Figure 1. Implementation of the Congregational Dhuha Prayer Program

The Dhuha prayer also strengthens the relationship between teachers and students. When they pray together, a sense of warmth and unity emerges. Students begin to see their teachers not only as instructors in the classroom but also as role models in worship. Conversely, teachers become closer to their students through this shared spiritual experience, fostering mutual respect and improving the overall learning environment.

The school administration provides strong institutional support for this program. The principal consistently emphasizes the importance of maintaining and developing this activity. Teachers play an active role in supervising, guiding, and participating in the prayer sessions. There is even a scheduled rotation for teachers to deliver short motivational talks (tausiyah) after the prayer, ensuring that the program functions not only as an act of worship but also as a medium for spiritual education (Santika et al., 2024).

The regular implementation of this program creates a distinctly religious atmosphere in the school. Students become accustomed to beginning their day with worship, which cultivates a sense of tranquility and readiness for learning. Many students report feeling more motivated and focused in their studies after participating in the Dhuha prayer, indicating that such simple spiritual practices can have a profound effect on students' learning motivation and overall discipline.

Guidance through the Dhuha Prayer Program in Fostering Student Discipline

The Dhuha prayer program at MTs Ubudiyah Pangkalan Brandan is conducted not merely as a ritual routine but as a structured character education initiative. The program involves careful planning, task distribution, and periodic evaluation. The school sets a consistent schedule for the prayer on specific days, allowing students to anticipate and prepare for participation. This time consistency serves as the foundation for developing punctuality and time appreciation among students.

The organization of the activity involves multiple stakeholders within the school. Islamic education teachers and homeroom teachers serve as the main facilitators, while the principal reinforces the importance of the activity during teacher meetings and official school announcements. Each week, teachers and sometimes students take turns acting as imam or muadzin, fostering a sense of shared responsibility. The involvement of all school staff contributes to a disciplined environment where everyone models the same behavior.

Discipline education through the Dhuha prayer is conducted in a systematic and structured manner. Prior to the activity, teachers remind students via announcements or class communication groups. During the prayer, students must adhere to several simple rules: arriving before the appointed time, dressing neatly, performing ablution properly, maintaining proper rows during congregational prayer, and preserving solemnity and silence. These rules are introduced gradually, demonstrated, and reinforced until they become habitual.

Exemplary behavior (role modeling) serves as the core method of character formation. Teachers and the principal act as living examples by arriving punctually, maintaining proper manners, and showing sincerity in worship. Students tend to emulate the behavior they observe. When teachers demonstrate discipline and devotion during the Dhuha prayer, students perceive discipline not merely as an obligation but as a lived moral practice demonstrated by respected figures (Widyawati et al., 2024).

Value reinforcement is also implemented through brief religious talks (tausiyah) delivered after the prayer. The content of these talks emphasizes the virtues of discipline, time management, responsibility, and the relationship between worship and daily conduct. These talks are delivered in simple language to ensure comprehension and internalization by the students. Weekly repetition of these messages helps gradually instill the values of discipline and responsibility.

A reward-and-consequence system is used to strengthen consistent behavior. Students who attend regularly and actively participate receive direct praise, small certificates, or additional responsibilities, such as serving as imam or program host. Those who are frequently late receive special guidance or reflection tasks, such as assisting in the prayer hall or meeting with their

homeroom teacher for mentoring. The approach emphasizes awareness and growth rather than punishment.

Integration of the Dhuha prayer with other school activities further reinforces the value of discipline. For example, academic lessons begin immediately after the prayer, so latecomers naturally miss part of the material. This helps students realize the practical importance of punctuality. Other activities, such as flag ceremonies or extracurricular training, are also scheduled in alignment with the Dhuha prayer to maintain consistency and time discipline as part of the overall school culture.

Parental involvement receives significant attention in this program. The school regularly informs parents about the schedule and objectives of the activity. Parent-teacher meetings are used to seek parental cooperation in ensuring students wake up and arrive at school on time. This collaboration is crucial since time discipline begins at home; parental support accelerates positive behavioral changes in students.

Monitoring and evaluation are conducted regularly. Teachers record attendance, student engagement, and prayer decorum to assess individual and group progress. These evaluations also help measure the effectiveness of the rules, *tausiyah* content, and reinforcement strategies, enabling adjustments for continuous improvement. The results show clear positive impacts: students who consistently participate in the Dhuha prayer tend to arrive earlier, display greater readiness for learning, and behave more orderly in class. They also demonstrate higher responsibility—completing assignments on time and showing respect for teachers. Students report feeling calm and focused after performing the Dhuha prayer, which enhances their overall learning experience (Nurdyansyah, 2024).

The character development process extends beyond worship activities. The school integrates the values of discipline into academic subjects. Islamic education teachers include lessons on time management and etiquette in worship, while other subject teachers emphasize discipline in assignments and classroom participation. This cross-curricular approach helps students perceive discipline as a universal value applicable to all aspects of life.

Special attention is also given to students requiring additional support. For those who often arrive late due to transportation or family issues, teachers conduct home visits and collaborate with parents to find practical solutions. This empathetic approach ensures that the program does not merely enforce rules but helps students overcome real challenges.

The program is designed as a long-term initiative since character formation requires continuous repetition. The school envisions the congregational Dhuha prayer as an integral part of its institutional identity. The long-term commitment of the principal, teachers, and parents is recognized as the key factor for sustained success. Through consistent collaboration, small acts of worship like the Dhuha prayer can have a transformative impact on shaping students' discipline and moral character.

Challenges in Implementing the Congregational Dhuha Prayer Program

Every school program—especially those aimed at moral and spiritual development—faces various challenges despite good intentions. The Dhuha prayer program at MTs Ubudiyah Pangkalan Brandan, while beneficial, is not exempt from difficulties that hinder smooth implementation. These challenges arise from both internal and external factors, such as student behavior, parental support, and environmental conditions. Understanding these obstacles is essential for developing effective solutions that sustain the program's success.

The first challenge is student attendance. Some students often arrive late and miss the beginning of the prayer session. Causes include long travel distances, limited transportation, late waking habits, and insufficient parental encouragement. Such lateness disrupts the flow of worship and the atmosphere of order, making punctuality a recurring issue for teachers to address.

The second challenge involves lack of focus and reverence (*khushu'*) during prayer. While many students attend on time, some do not pray attentively, engage in conversation, or fail to internalize the spiritual significance of the Dhuha prayer. This behavior indicates that some students still perceive the activity as a school requirement rather than a meaningful act of worship.

Facility limitations also affect the program's effectiveness. The prayer hall is sometimes too small to accommodate all students comfortably, and facilities such as prayer mats, ablution areas, and sound systems are insufficient. These constraints lead to delays and discomfort, highlighting the need for better infrastructure to support the spiritual environment.

Another obstacle concerns tight academic schedules. Teachers must balance their teaching obligations with the time allocated for Dhuha prayer. When the prayer session extends, it may slightly delay subsequent lessons. This tension requires careful time management to ensure that both academic and spiritual goals are achieved harmoniously.

A further issue is insufficient parental support. Some parents do not emphasize punctuality or view the program as secondary to academic studies. However, parental involvement is vital to cultivating discipline at home. Without consistent encouragement, students struggle to sustain punctual habits outside of school.

Low student motivation also poses a challenge. Certain students participate only to comply with school requirements rather than out of personal conviction. Such extrinsic motivation weakens the transformative intent of the program, as genuine discipline must emerge from internal awareness and willingness.

Additionally, limited teacher supervision becomes an issue when the number of students exceeds the teachers' capacity to monitor effectively. This

can lead to distractions and lapses in order during prayer. Finally, environmental and weather factors, such as heavy rain, traffic congestion, or flooding, sometimes delay student arrivals and reduce participation rates.

Despite these challenges, the program remains successful and continues to evolve. The school addresses these obstacles through collaboration among teachers, parents, and administrators, as well as by improving facilities and refining strategies. These ongoing efforts demonstrate that difficulties are not failures but opportunities for continuous improvement in cultivating student discipline through religious habituation.

Conclusion

The congregational Dhuha prayer program at MTs Ubudiyah Pangkalan Brandan has proven to be a valuable initiative in fostering a religious atmosphere and cultivating worship habits among students. Its consistent implementation, under the guidance and supervision of teachers, has trained students to become disciplined, focused, and spiritually aware. Through this routine, students have come to understand the Dhuha prayer not merely as a ritual obligation but as a sincere expression of gratitude and a means of seeking divine blessings. Moreover, the activity has strengthened the bonds between teachers and students, creating a school culture characterized by piety, cooperation, and mutual respect.

The systematic guidance of the Dhuha prayer program has effectively instilled discipline through regular attendance, punctuality, orderliness during worship, and adherence to established rules. The exemplary conduct of teachers, combined with institutional support, parental involvement, and a structured reward system, has increased students' awareness of the importance of discipline in both spiritual and academic contexts. These efforts have resulted in observable behavioral changes, such as greater responsibility, improved time management, and enhanced enthusiasm for learning.

Despite its success, the implementation of the Dhuha prayer program also faces several challenges. These include student tardiness, lack of concentration during prayer, limited facilities, tight academic schedules, and insufficient parental support. Other obstacles arise from low student motivation, limited teacher supervision, and environmental or weather-related factors that sometimes disrupt attendance. However, these challenges do not diminish the value of the program; instead, they serve as opportunities for reflection and continuous improvement.

Overall, the Dhuha prayer program demonstrates that integrating religious practices into school routines can significantly contribute to developing student discipline and character. The sustained commitment of teachers, administrators, and parents is essential to maintaining the effectiveness of such programs. With ongoing collaboration and adaptation, the Dhuha prayer habituation can continue to serve as a model for nurturing disciplined, responsible, and spiritually grounded students in Islamic educational institutions.

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