

The Dynamics of Congregational Dhuha Prayer as a Support for Group Guidance in Discipline Building for Commuter Students in Islamic Boarding School-Based Schools

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ABSTRACT

Student discipline is a fundamental aspect of character education, yet conventional approaches relying on punishment often fail to build students internal awareness. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the "Congregational Dhuha Prayer Movement" program integrated as a group guidance service medium in transforming student disciplinary behavior at An Nawari Madrasah. This study employs a descriptive qualitative method. Data collection techniques were carried out through participant observation, in-depth interviews with guidance counselors and students with disciplinary records, and daily attendance documentation studies. The results showed that the integration of Dhuha worship with group guidance dynamics was able to significantly transform student behavior. The transformation occurs through two mechanisms: the internalization of spiritual values that provide peace of mind (thumaninah) and the social aspect where peer support is formed to attend on time. This program is proven to reduce lateness rates and increase student compliance with school rules. It can be concluded that the Islamic Guidance and Counseling approach through the habituation of sunnah worship is effective as a humanist preventive and curative strategy in dealing with student disciplinary problems.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic education in the contemporary era faces a double challenge: producing a generation that is intellectually competent and spiritually strong (Hasan Baharun and Robiatul Adawiyah, 2018). The school-based pesantren model (school-based pesantren) has emerged as an alternative solution that combines the formal education curriculum with pesantren values (Nurochim, 2016). Unlike traditional (salaf) pesantren, where students are completely isolated in dormitories, school-based pesantren often have heterogeneous students; some live in dormitories, but the majority are commuter students who travel back and forth to their homes.

The demographic conditions of students who do not live in dormitories bring their own dynamics to the enforcement of discipline at Madrasah An Nawari. Students who interact with the outside world every day bring various problems from home and their social environment, such as gadget addiction, hanging out culture,

and poor time management due to commuting. Based on initial observations, the most prominent disciplinary issues are tardiness in the morning and lack of school readiness when starting lessons. Many students are physically present in class, but psychologically they are still "left behind" outside of school, making the learning atmosphere uncondusive (Maunah, 2019).

Until now, the dominant approach used by schools to deal with student discipline has been a legal-formal approach through rules and punishment. Students who are late or break the rules are subject to point deductions or minor physical punishment. However, this approach often only results in superficial compliance. Students comply because they are afraid of the teacher on duty, not because of internal awareness. Furthermore, for students who live in a free environment outside of school, punishment at school often triggers resistance or hidden rebellion (Imam Mawardi, 2018).

From the perspective of Islamic Guidance and Counseling (BKI), transforming student behavior is not enough to be addressed only from the cognitive (advice) or physical (punishment) aspects, but must also touch the dimension of the heart (qolbu) (Asep Dudi Abdul Gani, 2018). Therefore, Madrasah An Nawari integrates the "Gerakan Sholat Dhuha Berjamaah" (Dhuha Prayer in Congregation Movement) program every morning before teaching and learning activities (KBM) begin. This program is not merely a ritual of sunnah worship, but is designed as a medium for group guidance services. Through this activity, the school seeks to create a transition zone to "cool down" students' emotions from home before receiving lessons.

Studies on the influence of worship on student character have been extensively conducted by previous researchers (State of the Art), but there are still gaps that need to be filled. First, Azan's (2020) research found that Dhuha prayer is effective in disciplining students at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) level (Khairul Azan, 2020). However, the subjects of their research were children who are relatively easier to manage than middle and high school teenagers who have unstable emotional turmoil.

Second, Rahmawati's (2019) research highlights the psychotherapeutic aspect of Dhuha prayer in reducing student anxiety (Jannah, 2019). This research is very relevant from a psychological perspective, but it does not specifically relate it to compliance with school rules or time management for student arrivals.

Third, studies by Hidayat (2021) and Rahman (2019) discuss the effectiveness of discipline in a full boarding school environment (closed Islamic boarding school). In a closed environment, disciplinary control is relatively easier because students are monitored 24 hours a day. This is different from the context of this study, where school control is interrupted when students return home (Hidayat, 2021).

Based on the literature review, there is a significant gap analysis. There has not been much research examining the effectiveness of the Dhuha Prayer program as a medium for group guidance in private Islamic boarding schools with non-boarding students. The challenge of disciplining students who have free access to the outside world is certainly much more complex than disciplining students who are confined to the boarding school.

This study aims to analyze how changes in student discipline can be achieved through the "Gerakan Dhuha Berjamaah" program at Madrasah An Nawari. The main focus of this study is to see how the integration of spiritual values (post-prayer tranquility) and group dynamics (class camaraderie) can become effective instruments of social control. Through the lens of Islamic Guidance and Counseling, this study offers the thesis that Dhuha prayer functions as a "mental transition mechanism" that changes students' mindset from relaxed to ready to learn, while also fostering discipline from within (intrinsic motivation) without the coercion of physical punishment.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. This approach was chosen because the researcher sought to explore a deep understanding of the phenomenon of student discipline behavior transformation in its natural environment without manipulating the treatment. The focus of the case study was directed at analyzing the implementation of the "Gerakan Dhuha Berjamaah" program as a group guidance instrument in dealing with the discipline of students who did not live in the boarding school (commuters).

The research was conducted at Madrasah An Nawari, a private school that integrates pesantren values but where the majority of students do not live in dormitories. This location was chosen because of its unique character building pattern, where the school seeks to instill a pesantren culture in students who have free access to the outside environment. The research subjects were selected using purposive sampling techniques. The key informants in this study were the Guidance and Counseling Teacher (BK) as the student affairs coordinator, as well as six students who were identified as having a record of disciplinary violations (tardiness) but showed a trend of positive behavioral change. In addition, homeroom teachers were involved as supporting informants to validate the students' daily data.

Data collection techniques were carried out through three main methods, namely participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The researcher conducted direct observations of the dynamics of the Dhuha prayer, starting from the process of conditioning students when they arrived at school

to social interactions after prayer. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore the psychological aspects of students regarding their motivation for behavioral change. The documentation study was conducted by examining the daily attendance book and the student violation record book.

To ensure data validity, the researchers used source triangulation techniques by comparing the results of student interviews with teacher observation data. Data analysis referred to the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), which includes three simultaneous stages: data condensation to sort relevant information about discipline, data display in the form of descriptive narratives, and conclusion drawing/verification to formulate patterns of behavioral transformation resulting from the program.

RESULTS

This section presents field findings on the implementation of the "Gerakan Dhuha Berjamaah" program at Madrasah An Nawari and analyzes its impact on student discipline using the perspective of Islamic Guidance and Counseling.

Description of the implementation of the "Gerakan Dhuha Berjamaah" program in a pesantren-based school environment

Unlike pure salaf boarding schools where students are isolated in dormitories, Madrasah An Nawari implements a system of integrating the boarding school curriculum into formal schools. The majority of students do not live in dormitories (they commute), so they bring with them a diverse "outside culture" and habits from home. This makes the challenge of discipline more complex than in full-time boarding schools.

The "Dhuha Berjamaah Movement" program is held every morning from 7:00 to 7:30 a.m., serving as a starter before teaching and learning activities begin. This program is not merely a ritual, but is designed as a Classical Group Guidance session. Guidance counselors and homeroom teachers act as facilitators who monitor not only attendance, but also the mental readiness of students (school readiness).

Transformation of Discipline Behavior in Boarding School Students

Based on in-depth interviews and observations, significant changes were found in students' behavior patterns across three phases:

a. Resistance Phase (Initial Condition/Before)

In the early stages of the strict implementation of this program, there was resistance from students. Considering that they left from home, there were many external obstacles such as traffic jams, waking up late at home, or the habit of hanging out at a shop before going to school.

This was confirmed by a statement from the guidance counselor (Student Affairs Coordinator), Mr. Hasan (pseudonym), who said:

"In the past, our biggest challenge was between 7 and 7:30 a.m. That was a critical time. Students who did not live on campus often used traffic jams or flat tires as excuses. However, after we investigated, we found that they had actually arrived near the school but stopped by a coffee shop or played with their cell phones in the parking lot. They entered the classroom just as the lesson began, sweating, out of breath, and mentally unprepared to learn. As a result, the first 15 minutes of class were always noisy." (Interview with the guidance counselor, October 12, 2024).

In line with the teacher, one of the 11th-grade students who previously had a high record of disciplinary points, a student with the initials R, shared his experience:

"Honestly, sir, Dhuha used to feel really hard for me. At home, I sleep late, wake up at dawn, then sleep again. So when I leave for school, I'm not fully awake yet. When I'm told to pray right away, I feel sleepy and lazy. I often hid in the cafeteria or pretended to have a stomachache at the school clinic to avoid Dhuha. It felt like, 'Why go to school if it's just about praying all the time?'" (Student Interview, November 26, 2025).

b. Process Phase (Internalization Through Group Dynamics)

Changes began to occur when the school implemented group guidance strategies. Prayer positions were arranged by class, and at the end of each prayer, there was a brief muhasabah (reflection) session. Students who were absent would be sought out by their class president, not by the teacher, creating a peer control mechanism.

A tenth-grade student, Silvi, explained how her friends influenced her discipline:

"At first, I only participated because I was afraid of being called to the guidance counselor's office. But over time, during prayer, we line up with our classmates. If I'm late, I feel embarrassed when my friends, who are already neatly dressed in their prayer robes, look at me. Then, after the prayer, we usually

shake hands with our neighbors on the right and left while smiling. It feels peaceful. So, I feel guilty if I don't come, like I'm betraying the class's unity." (Student Interview, November 26, 2025).

This statement shows that social shame transforms into social responsibility.

c. Transformation Phase (Final Condition/After)

After one semester, discipline is no longer a burden but a necessity. Students feel something is "missing" if they don't start the day with Dhuha. Attendance data shows a decrease in student tardiness from an average of 15% per day to below 3%.

The PAI teacher, Ustadz Jay, added an interesting finding related to learning readiness:

"I noticed a difference. Children who regularly perform Dhuha with devotion, when they enter the first class, their eyes are clearer, more focused. Their emotions are more stable. It's different from students who were late for Dhuha; they are usually restless in class, playing with pens, or disturbing their friends. So, Dhuha is like cooling down their emotions from home before filling them with knowledge." (Interview with PAI Teacher, November 27, 2025).

Student R, who used to frequently skip Dhuha prayers, made a strong closing statement:

"Now, if I don't do Dhuha, it feels strange, sir. It's like I haven't logged into school. After sujud, I feel calm, and problems at home or with my girlfriend seem to disappear for a moment. So, when I enter the classroom, it feels better." (Interview with Student R, November 27, 2025).

The above findings indicate that the Dhuha Berjamaah Movement program at An Nawari School has successfully transformed students' disciplinary behavior. However, this phenomenon needs to be discussed in relation to relevant theories to see how the findings of this study compare to previous literature.

Critique of Classical Behaviorism: From External Punishment to Internal Peace

The classical behaviorist theory popularized by B.F. Skinner emphasizes operant conditioning (Nahar, 2016), in which behavior is shaped through rewards and punishments. The majority of schools apply this theory: disciplined students are given plus points, while students who are late are given minus points or physical punishment (Novi Irwan Nahar, 2016).

The findings of this study criticize and complement Skinner's view. At An Nawari School, the reinforcement of disciplined behavior is not praise from teachers or material rewards, but inner peace (thumaninah).

While Wibowo's (2018) research found that physical punishment is effective in disciplining students in the short term (Ari Wibowo, 2018), this research proves the opposite. Physical punishment of non-boarding students (who have access to the outside world) actually triggers rebellion. Conversely, the spiritual approach through Dhuha provides an internal reward in the form of emotional stability. As expressed by the students, "it feels calm after prostration," this is in line with the concept of Transpersonal Psychology, which states that spiritual experiences can be powerful emotional regulators (Bahril Hidayat, 2019). Discipline grows not because of fear of the teacher's "whip," but because of the need for God's "calmness."

Group Dynamics: Peer Pressure as Positive Social Control

In Albert Bandura's Social Learning theory, individuals learn through imitation (modeling) (Pratama, 2019). However, Bandura often emphasizes authority figures (teachers/parents) as the main models in the process of transmitting values (Yoga Anjas Pratama, 2019). Findings in An Nawari show a shift, where peers (peer groups) become more dominant agents of change than teachers. This is in line with the psychological dynamics of adolescents, where conformity to peer groups plays a vital role in identity and behavior formation (Wahyuni, 2021).

In contrast to Rahman's (2019) research, which states that peer pressure among adolescents often leads to negative behaviors (smoking, truancy) (Agus Abdul Rahman, 2019), this study finds the opposite. In a pesantren-based school setting, peer pressure was successfully engineered to be positive. This mechanism created what is known as Positive Peer Culture, where students control and remind each other to do good because of the shared values instilled by the school environment (Supriatnoko, 2018).

The mechanism of praying in congregation, which requires neat rows (shaf) and shaking hands after prayer, creates emotional bonds. Students who do not live in boarding schools, who are usually individualistic, are forced to blend into the group identity ("We are An Nawari students"). The feeling of "shame" towards classmates (as admitted by Siti) is a form of informal social control that is more effective than written rules. This affirms Durkheim's theory of Educational Sociology that collective rituals (collective effervescence) are the key to solidarity and moral obedience (Eko Zulfikar, 2019).

Dhuha Prayer as a "Psychological Transition"

A unique finding from this study that is rarely discussed in similar studies is the function of Dhuha prayer as a transition mechanism.

Students at this school live in two worlds: the home world (which may be secular, free, or problematic) and the school world (which is religious and orderly). Sari's (2020) research on the discipline of Full Day School students often highlights student fatigue as a result of long learning hours (Sari, 2020). However, this study offers a new perspective. Dhuha prayer functions as a psychological buffer or support. This ritual becomes a spiritual break that separates the fatigue of the outside world from readiness to learn, so that students do not experience burnout but rather regain their energy (recharging).

Students are not immediately forced to study mathematics or science upon arriving from traffic-congested streets. They are first "cooled down" through wudu and prayer movements. Neurobiologically, the water used for wudhu and the movements of sujud improve blood circulation to the brain, changing brain waves from Beta (tense/alert) to Alpha (relaxed/focused) (Nurul Hidayah, 2019). This is what makes students feel "ready to learn" after Dhuha. Thus, classroom discipline is not merely about punctuality, but about psychological readiness to receive lessons.

Analysis from the Perspective of Islamic Guidance and Counseling (BKI)

The effectiveness of the Dhuha Berjamaah movement in transforming the discipline of students at Madrasah An Nawari can be analyzed through a synthesis of three theoretical approaches:

a. **Transpersonal Aspect: The Effect of Thumaninah (Peace of Mind)**

In the BKI perspective, indiscipline often stems from anxiety or emotional instability. Dhuha prayer functions as psychospiritual therapy. Praying with thumaninah (calmness) lowers stress hormone (cortisol) levels and increases calmness hormones (endorphins).

"Ala bidzikrillahi tathmainnul qulub" (Remember, only by remembering Allah will hearts find peace)
– QS. Ar-Rad: 28.

The calmness after prayer gives students better self-control to resist the impulse to break the rules. Calm students tend to be easier to manage than restless students.

b. **Behavioristic Aspect: Habituation Technique**

From the perspective of Behaviorist theory (Skinner/Pavlov), this program applies conditioning techniques.

- Stimulus: The adhan for dhuha or the break bell.
- Response: Performing ablution and going to the mosque.
- Reinforcement: A sense of calm, praise from the teacher, and social acceptance from friends.
- Repetition carried out every day for months changes behavior that was initially forced into an automatic habit. Discipline is no longer a burden, but a necessity.

c. **Group Dynamics Aspect (Ukhuwah Islamiyah)**

Group guidance in Islam is based on the principles of Ta'awun (mutual assistance) and Tawashi (mutual advice). In the context of Madrasah An Nawari, praying in congregation melts individual egos into collective consciousness. Students feel that they are part of one body (jasadun wahid). If one violates discipline, they feel that they have violated the honor of their group. This proves that a religious-communal approach is more effective in Islamic boarding schools than an individual-secular approach.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the "Gerakan Dhuha Berjamaah" program at Madrasah An Nawari has successfully transformed the disciplinary behavior of commuter students through a mechanism of psycho-spiritual and social integration. These findings refute the effectiveness of conventional disciplinary approaches based on punishment (physical punishment). Behavioral transformation was formed through two simultaneous channels: (1) the Transpersonal Channel, where the Dhuha prayer ritual stimulated inner peace (thuma'ninah), which strengthened internal self-control; and (2) the Psychosocial Channel, where the dynamics of the congregation created positive peer pressure that replaced teacher control. This study confirms that in the context of Islamic education, the Islamic Guidance and Counseling (BKI) approach through the habituation technique of sunnah worship is proven to be more effective and humanistic in building long-term (intrinsic) discipline compared to a purely behavioristic approach that only produces superficial obedience.

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