

CRITICAL STUDY OF ABDULLAH NASHIH ULWAN'S THOUGHT ON THE CONCEPT OF PUNISHMENT IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION BASED ON *TARBIYATUL AULAD FI AL-ISLAM*

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the concept of punishment in Islamic education according to Abdullah Nashih Ulwan based on *Tarbiyatul Aulad fi al-Islam*, examine its theological, philosophical, and pedagogical foundations, and explore its relevance within the context of contemporary Islamic education. This research employed a qualitative approach using a library research design. The primary data source was *Tarbiyatul Aulad fi al-Islam*, while secondary data were obtained from books, scholarly journal articles, and other relevant academic literature. Data were collected through documentation techniques and analyzed using qualitative content analysis combined with critical-reflective analysis. The findings reveal that, according to Abdullah Nashih Ulwan, punishment is an educational method that serves corrective, preventive, and formative functions in fostering students' moral character, discipline, and responsibility. Punishment is positioned as a last resort after exemplary conduct, habituation, advice, and supervision have proven ineffective. This concept is grounded in the principles of *rahmah* (compassion), justice, and public welfare (*maslahah*), and remains relevant to contemporary Islamic education, although its practical implementation requires reinterpretation to align with developments in educational psychology, children's rights, and humanistic educational paradigms.

Keywords: Islamic Education, Educational Punishment, Character Education

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis konsep hukuman dalam pendidikan Islam menurut Abdullah Nashih Ulwan berdasarkan *Tarbiyatul Aulad fi al-Islam*, mengkaji landasan teologis, filosofis, dan pedagogis yang melandasinya, serta menelaah relevansinya dalam konteks pendidikan Islam kontemporer. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian kepustakaan (*library research*). Sumber data primer berupa kitab *Tarbiyatul Aulad fi al-Islam*, sedangkan sumber data sekunder berasal dari buku, artikel ilmiah, dan literatur yang relevan. Data dikumpulkan melalui teknik dokumentasi dan dianalisis menggunakan *qualitative content analysis* yang dipadukan dengan analisis kritis-reflektif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa hukuman menurut Abdullah Nashih Ulwan merupakan metode pendidikan yang bersifat edukatif, korektif, dan preventif untuk membentuk akhlak, kedisiplinan, dan tanggung jawab peserta didik. Hukuman ditempatkan sebagai alternatif terakhir setelah keteladanan, pembiasaan, nasihat, dan pengawasan. Konsep ini berlandaskan nilai rahmah, keadilan, dan kemaslahatan serta tetap relevan dengan pendidikan Islam kontemporer, meskipun implementasi bentuk hukumannya memerlukan reinterpretasi agar selaras dengan perkembangan psikologi pendidikan, perlindungan hak anak, dan paradigma pendidikan humanistik.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Islam, Hukuman Pendidikan, Pendidikan Karakter

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education is fundamentally a holistic process of human development that extends beyond the mere transmission of knowledge (ta'lim) to encompass the transformation of values (tarbiyah) aimed at nurturing individuals who possess faith, piety, noble character, and the ability to implement Islamic teachings in their daily lives. Consequently, every educational method employed should be directed toward achieving these character-building objectives. One of the methods that has long been embedded within the Islamic educational tradition is punishment, which is regarded as an educational instrument when persuasive approaches are no longer effective in correcting students' behavior. From the perspective of Islamic education, punishment is not intended as a form of retaliation or repression but rather as an educational mechanism designed to correct behavior, cultivate moral awareness, and guide learners back to the principles of Islamic law (Sharī'ah). This perspective indicates that the implementation of punishment cannot be separated from the principles of compassion (rahmah), justice, proportionality, and educators' responsibility for students' holistic development (Amaliati, 2020; Gil'adi, 1992; Memon & Alhashmi, 2018).

Contemporary scholarship on Islamic education further emphasizes that punishment should be understood as an integral component of a character-building system that incorporates psychological, pedagogical, and spiritual dimensions. In Islamic education, punishment is not a tool

of domination but rather an element of disciplinary management intended to cultivate Islamic conduct and guide students toward obedience to Allah SWT. Numerous studies have demonstrated that the implementation of punishment must take into account ethical considerations, children's psychological conditions, developmental stages, and the ultimate objective of education, namely tazkiyah al-nafs (purification of the soul). Accordingly, punishment possesses an educational character that fundamentally distinguishes it from punitive, coercive, or retributive forms of discipline. This understanding also illustrates that Islamic education advocates a balanced integration of reward and punishment as complementary strategies for fostering students' moral and personal development (Gershoff, 2017; Hayatunnisa et al., 2024; Ihwani et al., 2023; Muis et al., 2022).

Among the prominent Muslim scholars who devoted considerable attention to the methodology of child education is Abdullah Nashih Ulwan through his monumental work *Tarbiyatul Aulad fi al-Islam*. This book is recognized as one of the classical references that comprehensively discusses child education by integrating the dimensions of faith (ʿaqīdah), worship (ʿibādah), morality (akhlāq), intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development. Within this framework, Ulwan identifies punishment as one of the educational methods of significant importance; however, its application is strictly regulated by the principles of Islamic law and educational

ethics. According to Ulwan, punishment should only be administered after gentler educational approaches—such as exemplary conduct, advice, habituation, care, and guidance—have failed to bring about behavioral improvement. Therefore, punishment is regarded as an *ultimum remedium* (last resort) that must be implemented proportionally, compassionately, without degrading the child's dignity, and solely for the purpose of behavioral correction rather than as an outlet for the educator's emotions. This perspective demonstrates that Ulwan's concept of punishment possesses a strong pedagogical dimension and cannot be separated from the broader Islamic educational system, which is fundamentally oriented toward character formation (Amaliati, 2020).

Although *Tarbiyatul Aulad fi al-Islam* has long been acknowledged as one of the influential references in Islamic educational studies, research specifically examining Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's concept of punishment remains relatively limited. Previous studies have predominantly focused on his general educational methodology, character education, or the concept of exemplary conduct, whereas punishment as a pedagogical construct has received comparatively little scholarly attention. Existing studies on Islamic pedagogy generally emphasize the broader relationship between Islamic values, teacher roles, educational ethics, and pedagogical practices rather than examining punishment as a distinct pedagogical construct (Ihwani et al., 2023;

Memon, 2011; Memon, 2021; Memon et al., 2021). Moreover, studies concerning Islamic educational ethics have highlighted the importance of moral formation and teacher conduct, indicating the need to examine disciplinary practices within a broader ethical framework (Hayatunnisa et al., 2024; Haditiyah et al., 2025). This condition indicates the existence of a research gap that warrants further scholarly investigation.

The urgency of this study becomes more apparent when viewed in light of current practices within Islamic educational institutions. In many schools and madrasahs, punishment continues to be implemented based on institutional traditions or educators' personal experiences rather than on a comprehensive theoretical framework. In numerous cases, disciplinary measures remain oriented toward creating a deterrent effect through physical or verbal sanctions, practices that may conflict with the fundamental principles of Islamic education, which regard compassion as the cornerstone of the educational process. At the same time, advances in educational psychology, increasing attention to children's rights, and the growing influence of humanistic educational paradigms necessitate a reinterpretation of the concept of punishment so that it remains relevant to contemporary educational contexts. The international literature on school corporal punishment has also demonstrated the importance of examining disciplinary practices in relation to students' developmental and educational

outcomes (Gershoff, 2017). Accordingly, classical Islamic educational thought should neither be accepted uncritically nor rejected outright; rather, it should be examined through a critical dialogue with contemporary educational theories to produce interpretations that are both contextually relevant and pedagogically applicable (Memon & Alhashmi, 2018; Memon, 2021).

Against this background, there is a need for a study that not only describes Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's concept of punishment but also critically analyzes its normative, philosophical, and pedagogical foundations. Such an analysis is essential for explaining how the concept of punishment is constructed based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah, how it is positioned within the broader methodology of Islamic education, and how its ethical implementation can remain consistent with the objectives of Islamic character formation. Furthermore, a critical examination is necessary to evaluate the relevance of this concept in addressing contemporary challenges faced by Islamic education, particularly those arising from developments in educational psychology, character education, children's rights protection, and the social transformations brought about by rapid digital technological advancement. The development of Islamic pedagogy itself requires educational practices to be examined in relation to the aims, values, ethical principles, and contextual needs of contemporary learners (Memon, 2021; Memon et al., 2021).

The novelty of this study lies in its effort to establish an academic dialogue

between Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's classical Islamic educational thought and contemporary educational paradigms through a critical analysis of punishment as a pedagogical construct. Unlike previous studies, which have tended to adopt a broader approach to Islamic pedagogy, this research treats the concept of punishment as a multidimensional subject encompassing theological, philosophical, pedagogical, and contextual perspectives. This approach is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role and position of punishment within Islamic education while offering a reinterpretation that is compatible with contemporary educational theories. Consequently, this study is expected not only to enrich the body of knowledge in Islamic educational studies but also to contribute conceptually to the development of educational policies and practices that are more humane, proportionate, and firmly grounded in Islamic values (Ihwani et al., 2023; Memon & Alhashmi, 2018; Memon, 2021).

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a library research design because the object of investigation consists of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's ideas, concepts, arguments, and intellectual construction regarding punishment in Islamic education as presented in *Tarbiyatul Aulād fī al-Islām*. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables an in-depth understanding of the meanings embedded within the text through interpretation rather than

quantitative measurement. Library research was considered the most appropriate method since all data were derived from written sources directly relevant to the research focus. Accordingly, the analysis was directed toward examining the conceptual, normative, philosophical, and pedagogical foundations underlying Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's conception of punishment in Islamic education.

The primary data source for this study was *Tarbiyatul Aulād fī al-Islām* by Abdullah Nashih Ulwan, which serves as the principal work discussing methods of child education, including the concept, objectives, stages, and ethical principles of implementing punishment. Secondary data consisted of books, scholarly journal articles, dissertations, and other academic works related to Islamic education, Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's educational thought, educational psychology, children's rights, character education, and contemporary pedagogical theories relevant to the research focus. These secondary sources served not only to complement the primary data but also to establish an academic dialogue between Ulwan's educational thought and contemporary educational theories, thereby enabling a more comprehensive and contextual analysis.

Data were collected through documentation techniques involving the identification, inventory, intensive reading (close reading), and systematic recording of information related to the concept of punishment in Islamic

education. The collected data were subsequently classified into major themes, including theological foundations, the objectives of punishment, principles and ethics of implementation, stages of application, and their relevance to contemporary Islamic education. This systematic process ensured that each concept was interpreted within the broader framework of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's educational philosophy rather than as an isolated textual statement.

The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis combined with critical-reflective analysis. Content analysis was employed to identify, categorize, and interpret the major concepts concerning punishment presented in *Tarbiyatul Aulād fī al-Islām*. The findings were subsequently examined through normative-theological, philosophical-pedagogical, and contextual approaches by comparing them with the principles of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, theories of Islamic education, contemporary findings in educational psychology, and perspectives on children's rights protection. In this context, contemporary scholarship on school corporal punishment provides an important comparative perspective for examining the educational and developmental implications of disciplinary practices (Gershoff, 2017). The analytical procedure involved an iterative process of data identification, categorization, interpretation, comparison, and conclusion drawing until consistent interpretations were achieved.

To enhance the credibility of the findings, source triangulation was conducted by comparing the primary text with classical literature and contemporary scholarly studies, ensuring that the interpretations were not only textually grounded but also academically valid and relevant to the current development of Islamic education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Punishment in Islamic Education According to Abdullah Nashih Ulwan as Presented in *Tarbiyatul Aulad fi al-Islam*

The findings of this study indicate that Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's concept of punishment in Islamic education constitutes an integral component of the Islamic educational system, which is fundamentally oriented toward character formation and the development of children's personalities. In *Tarbiyatul Aulad fi al-Islam*, punishment is not positioned as an instrument of retaliation or as an expression of an educator's anger; rather, it is regarded as an educational method (*uslūb al-tarbiyah*) intended to correct behavior, cultivate moral awareness, and guide learners back to Islamic values. This perspective demonstrates that Ulwan's concept of punishment should not be interpreted merely as a disciplinary measure but rather within the broader framework of Islamic education, which aims to nurture individuals' spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and social development (Amaliati, 2020; Memon & Alhashmi, 2018; Memon, 2021).

The findings further reveal that Abdullah Nashih Ulwan considers punishment to serve both preventive and corrective educational functions. Its preventive function is reflected in efforts to prevent children from repeating behaviors that contradict Islamic teachings, while its corrective function is intended to reform deviant behavior so that children develop an internal awareness of the importance of adhering to religious norms. Accordingly, the effectiveness of punishment is not measured by the severity of the sanction imposed but by its ability to promote genuine behavioral change rooted in moral consciousness rather than fear alone. This perspective illustrates that Ulwan developed an educational paradigm that places greater emphasis on character formation than on the mere enforcement of formal discipline (Amaliati, 2020; Muis et al., 2022; Rinjani, 2021).

This concept is consistent with the essence of Islamic education, which views human beings as possessing an innate disposition (*fitrah*) that enables them to develop toward moral and spiritual perfection. From this perspective, behavioral deviation is not regarded as a justification for retaliation but as a condition requiring educational guidance and rehabilitation. Consequently, punishment functions as an educational instrument that redirects learners toward the right path while upholding the principles of compassion (*rahmah*), justice (*al-'adl*), and public welfare (*maslahah*). These findings support the argument of Nuseirat and Al-Zoubi (2024), who

maintain that punishment in Islamic education should be understood as an educational strategy aimed at moral formation rather than as a repressive measure that may inflict psychological harm (Nuseirat & Al-Zoubi, 2024; Natalia et al., 2025).

The study also demonstrates that Abdullah Nashih Ulwan places punishment at the final stage within the overall methodology of Islamic education. Before punishment is administered, educators are expected to maximize more persuasive educational approaches, including exemplary conduct (*uswah hasanah*), habituation, advice (*mau'izhah*), care, supervision, and dialogue. This sequence indicates that punishment is not the primary educational method but rather an *ultimum remedium* (last resort), employed only when preventive educational efforts have failed to produce meaningful behavioral change. In other words, punishment does not stand independently but forms part of an educational system that prioritizes the development of moral awareness through gradual and humanistic approaches (Amaliati, 2020; Memon, 2021; Memon et al., 2021).

These findings have important implications for the practice of Islamic education, where discipline has often been equated with the administration of punishment. From Ulwan's perspective, educational quality is determined not by the frequency of punishment but by the educator's ability to establish meaningful educational relationships with learners. Punishment acquires pedagogical

legitimacy only after all gentler educational methods have been implemented effectively. Consequently, educators are expected to demonstrate emotional intelligence, patience, and a thorough understanding of children's individual characteristics before deciding to impose punishment. This approach reflects the principle that Islamic education prioritizes the transformation of moral consciousness over the enforcement of obedience through coercion (Memon, 2011; Memon et al., 2021; Muis et al., 2022).

The study further finds that Abdullah Nashih Ulwan establishes clear limitations regarding both the form and implementation of punishment. Punishment must not be excessive, must never be motivated by anger, must not inflict physical injury or psychological harm, and must not undermine the dignity of the child. These restrictions indicate that although Ulwan recognizes punishment as a legitimate educational method, he consistently upholds respect for the dignity and worth of learners as a fundamental educational principle. Consequently, Ulwan's concept of punishment possesses a strong ethical dimension, as it is always linked to the educator's moral responsibility for the child's holistic development (Amaliati, 2020; Nafis et al., 2022; Nuseirat & Al-Zoubi, 2024).

These findings also challenge the common assumption that Islamic education is inherently associated with authoritarianism or violence. On the contrary, the results demonstrate that punishment, in Ulwan's perspective, is

firmly grounded in the values of compassion and responsibility. Its ultimate objective is not to produce children who obey out of fear but to cultivate individuals who possess moral awareness and the capacity for self-regulation based on Islamic values. Within this framework, punishment serves as an educational means through which children learn to understand the consequences of their actions, thereby fostering personal responsibility toward themselves and the wider community (Ihwani et al., 2023; Memon & Alhashmi, 2018; Qomariana & Fanani, 2025).

Overall, the findings confirm that the concept of punishment presented in *Tarbiyatul Aulad fi al-Islam* constitutes an integral part of a holistic Islamic educational paradigm. Punishment is positioned as an educational instrument that may only be implemented proportionately, gradually, and compassionately after other educational methods have failed to achieve the intended educational objectives. This concept demonstrates that Abdullah Nashih Ulwan regarded punishment not merely as a mechanism for maintaining discipline but also as an essential component of character education aimed at nurturing learners who possess noble character, a strong sense of responsibility, and moral awareness grounded in Islamic teachings. Therefore, Ulwan's concept of punishment reflects a close integration of theological, pedagogical, and psychological dimensions, making it a conceptually valuable contribution to the development of Islamic educational theory (Amaliati, 2020; Memon, 2021; Memon & Alhashmi, 2018).

The Theological, Philosophical, and Pedagogical Foundations Underlying Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's Thought on Punishment in Islamic Education

The findings of this study indicate that Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's concept of punishment in Islamic education, as presented in *Tarbiyatul Aulad fi al-Islam*, is constructed upon three interrelated foundations: theological, philosophical, and pedagogical. These interconnected foundations establish a comprehensive conceptual framework in which punishment is not understood as an isolated act but rather as an integral component of the Islamic educational system, oriented toward character formation, the preservation of human *fitrah* (innate disposition), and the attainment of educational objectives in accordance with Islamic principles. The analysis of Ulwan's work demonstrates that his arguments concerning punishment are consistently linked to the overarching goals of Islamic education. Consequently, the implementation of punishment must remain within the framework of educational ethics, compassion, and the educator's moral responsibility (Amaliati, 2020; Memon & Alhashmi, 2018; Memon, 2021).

From a theological perspective, Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's educational thought is firmly rooted in the Qur'an and the Sunnah as the primary sources of Islamic education. The findings reveal that Ulwan's concept of punishment was not formulated from a pragmatic desire to

secure mere obedience; rather, it represents the practical application of the principle of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong), which assigns parents and educators the responsibility of guiding children toward righteousness. Within this framework, punishment is regarded as an educational endeavor intended to protect children from behaviors that may undermine their moral character and future well-being. Therefore, punishment is understood not as an expression of anger or retaliation for students' mistakes but as a manifestation of educational responsibility aimed at guiding children back to the right path (Amaliati, 2020; Ihwani et al., 2023).

The analysis of Ulwan's thought further demonstrates that this theological dimension is profoundly influenced by the concept of *rahmah* (compassion), which serves as a defining characteristic of Islamic education. Compassion is not merely a moral value governing the relationship between educators and learners; it also functions as the principal criterion for determining whether a particular form of punishment is educationally and ethically acceptable. Any punishment that undermines compassion, inflicts excessive suffering, or degrades the dignity of the child is considered inconsistent with the spirit of Islamic education. Accordingly, *rahmah* functions as a regulatory principle that ensures punishment remains educational in purpose rather than becoming a repressive practice. These findings suggest that Ulwan's concept of punishment is more closely aligned with the

paradigm of protective education than with that of punitive education (Nuseirat & Al-Zoubi, 2024; Nafis et al., 2022; Qomariana & Fanani, 2025).

Beyond its normative foundation, the findings also reveal that Ulwan's concept of punishment possesses a strong philosophical basis. Philosophically, education is understood as a process of nurturing the complete human being (*insān kāmil*) through the balanced development of spiritual, intellectual, moral, emotional, and social dimensions. Within this paradigm, punishment is not intended to impose external behavioral control but rather to cultivate internal moral awareness, enabling learners to distinguish between right and wrong according to Islamic values. In other words, the ultimate objective of punishment is not temporary compliance but the development of moral responsibility that arises from within (Memon & Alhashmi, 2018; Memon, 2021; Natalia et al., 2025).

This philosophical perspective reflects Ulwan's understanding of human beings as possessing an innate disposition (*fitrah*) toward goodness, while recognizing that this natural tendency may be influenced by environmental factors, habitual behavior, and weaknesses in self-control throughout the developmental process. Consequently, behavioral deviation is not viewed as an inherent characteristic of the child but as a condition requiring educational guidance and moral cultivation. Punishment is therefore positioned as one of the educational instruments designed to restore this innate

disposition through a continuous process of education. This understanding is consistent with the philosophy of Islamic education, which defines *tarbiyah* as a process of guiding, nurturing, and developing the entirety of human potential in order to achieve moral excellence (Amaliati, 2020; Natalia et al., 2025).

The findings further indicate that the pedagogical dimension constitutes the most prominent aspect of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's concept of punishment. This is evident in his strong emphasis on the procedures, stages, and ethical principles governing the implementation of punishment by educators. According to Ulwan, punishment must never be administered impulsively or in response to emotional impulses. Instead, it should be preceded by more persuasive educational approaches, including exemplary conduct, habituation, advice, dialogue, care, and supervision. Only when these educational methods fail to produce meaningful behavioral change should punishment be considered as a final alternative. These findings demonstrate that, in Ulwan's perspective, punishment forms part of a systematic educational process rather than a reactive disciplinary measure (Amaliati, 2020; Memon, 2021; Memon et al., 2021).

Further analysis reveals that Ulwan establishes strict pedagogical limitations regarding the implementation of punishment. Punishment must be adapted to the child's age, psychological development, individual characteristics, and the severity of the misconduct. Moreover, punishment must never be

administered when the educator is angry, as anger compromises objectivity and increases the likelihood of punishment degenerating into violence. Educators are likewise prohibited from imposing punishment that causes physical injury, psychological distress, humiliation, or the loss of a child's self-esteem. These limitations demonstrate Ulwan's sensitivity to children's psychological well-being and the importance of ethical relationships between educators and learners (Amaliati, 2020; Nafis et al., 2022; Nuseirat & Al-Zoubi, 2024).

The findings also reveal a significant convergence between Ulwan's educational thought and contemporary educational theories that emphasize the importance of positive emotional relationships between teachers and learners as a determining factor in educational success. From the perspective of modern pedagogy, effective discipline is established through positive interpersonal relationships, open communication, and consistency in behavioral guidance. These principles are fundamentally reflected in Ulwan's concept of punishment through his emphasis on compassion, justice, proportionality, and the educator's moral responsibility. This suggests that although Ulwan's educational philosophy originated within the classical tradition of Islamic education, it possesses pedagogical dimensions that remain compatible with the development of contemporary educational theories (Memon, 2011; Memon et al., 2021; Memon, 2021).

Overall, the findings confirm that Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's concept of punishment is founded upon the integration of theological, philosophical, and pedagogical principles that complement one another. The theological foundation provides normative legitimacy through the Qur'an and the Sunnah; the philosophical foundation explains the educational objective of cultivating individuals of noble character; while the pedagogical foundation regulates the procedures for implementing punishment so that it remains within the framework of humane education. The integration of these three dimensions demonstrates that, according to Ulwan, punishment is not an instrument through which educators exercise authority over learners but rather an integral part of an educational process intended to cultivate moral awareness, correct behavior, and guide children toward becoming responsible individuals with exemplary Islamic character. Therefore, Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's educational thought possesses substantial conceptual value as a foundation for the development of Islamic educational theory that remains relevant to the challenges of contemporary education (Memon & Alhashmi, 2018; Memon, 2021; Muis et al., 2022).

Relevance and Critical Analysis of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's Thought on Punishment in Islamic Education within the Context of Contemporary Islamic Education

The findings of this study indicate that Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's concept of

punishment in Islamic education, as presented in *Tarbiyatul Aulad fi al-Islam*, remains highly relevant to the development of contemporary Islamic education. This relevance is reflected in the fundamental orientation of his educational philosophy, which positions punishment as an integral part of character development rather than as an instrument through which educators exercise authority over learners. Within the context of modern education, which increasingly emphasizes student-centered learning, character education, and the development of social-emotional competencies, Ulwan's concept of punishment demonstrates substantial compatibility with contemporary educational objectives, although certain aspects of its implementation require reinterpretation in light of current educational research and regulatory frameworks (Memon, 2021; Memon & Alhashmi, 2018; Muhlis et al., 2023).

The findings further reveal that Ulwan's principle of prioritizing exemplary conduct, habituation, advice, care, and supervision before administering punishment is consistent with contemporary educational psychology. Modern pedagogical approaches emphasize the importance of positive relationships, ethical teacher conduct, meaningful communication, and the development of learners' moral capacities. From this perspective, punishment is regarded as merely one intervention strategy to be employed when preventive educational approaches fail to produce the desired behavioral outcomes. This paradigm had

already been articulated by Abdullah Nashih Ulwan, indicating that his educational philosophy possesses pedagogical dimensions that remain relevant to contemporary educational theory (Memon, 2011; Memon et al., 2021; Muis et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the findings indicate that Ulwan's concept of punishment incorporates principles consistent with developmental considerations in education. Ulwan emphasizes that punishment must take into account learners' age, cognitive maturity, emotional condition, personal characteristics, and the severity of their misconduct. Such considerations reflect his recognition that each child possesses unique developmental characteristics and therefore should not be subjected to standardized disciplinary measures. This perspective is compatible with an educational approach that recognizes learners as individuals whose moral understanding and capacity for self-regulation develop progressively. Consequently, punishment administered without consideration of developmental factors may hinder the formation of a healthy and well-balanced personality (Amaliati, 2020; Natalia et al., 2025).

Within the framework of contemporary Islamic education, increasing attention has been devoted to students' mental health and well-being. Schools are no longer viewed merely as institutions for the transmission of knowledge but also as environments responsible for ensuring the psychological safety of every learner. The findings demonstrate that Abdullah Nashih

Ulwan's concept of punishment embodies this principle through his prohibition of disciplinary measures that inflict physical suffering, psychological distress, humiliation, or the loss of a child's dignity. In other words, the objective of punishment is not to instill fear but to cultivate moral awareness and personal responsibility. This principle suggests that Ulwan's educational philosophy is fundamentally closer to the concept of positive discipline than to punitive models of discipline centered on retribution (Nuseirat & Al-Zoubi, 2024; Nafis et al., 2022).

Nevertheless, the findings also reveal that certain aspects of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's educational thought require contextualization in accordance with contemporary educational policies, particularly those concerning the protection of children's rights. In *Tarbiyatul Aulad fi al-Islam*, Ulwan allows a very limited form of physical punishment as a final educational measure after all other methods have proven ineffective. However, such permission is subject to strict conditions: it must not cause injury, must never be motivated by anger, must avoid vulnerable parts of the body, and must be intended solely for educational purposes. Despite these restrictions, contemporary educational discourse has increasingly questioned and restricted corporal punishment because of its potential negative developmental consequences. Research on school corporal punishment demonstrates the importance of critically examining physical disciplinary practices in relation to children's developmental and

educational outcomes (Gershoff, 2017; Visser et al., 2022). Therefore, this aspect of Ulwan's thought requires reinterpretation so that the educational objectives he intended may be preserved without retaining the physical form of punishment itself.

The critical analysis undertaken in this study demonstrates that what should be preserved from Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's educational philosophy is not the specific form of punishment but rather the educational principles that underlie it. The essence of Ulwan's thought lies in fostering moral responsibility through a gradual process of guidance characterized by compassion, justice, fairness, and proportionality. Accordingly, within the context of contemporary Islamic education, the limited forms of physical punishment mentioned in classical literature may be reconstructed into educational consequences that are more compatible with developments in educational psychology, such as behavioral reflection, restorative tasks, individual counseling, character development programs, community service within the school environment, and other forms of restorative discipline. Through such an approach, the substantive principles of Ulwan's educational philosophy are preserved while their practical implementation becomes more consistent with contemporary child protection standards and modern educational policies (Memon, 2021; Muhlis et al., 2023; Qomariana & Fanani, 2025).

The findings also demonstrate that Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's concept of

punishment is compatible with the humanistic educational paradigm that has become increasingly influential in contemporary educational discourse. Humanistic education views learners as individuals possessing the inherent potential for growth when provided with supportive environments, empathetic relationships, and respect for their human dignity. These values have long constituted essential elements of Islamic educational philosophy through the emphasis on *rahmah* (compassion), justice, respect for children's dignity, and positive emotional relationships between educators and learners. This finding indicates that Ulwan's concept of punishment is not incompatible with humanistic educational principles, provided that it is understood as an integral component of an educational process aimed at guiding learners rather than punishing them in a repressive sense (Memon & Alhashmi, 2018; Memon et al., 2021; Ihwani et al., 2023).

Moreover, the digital era presents new challenges for implementing the concept of punishment within Islamic education. Contemporary student misconduct extends beyond conventional disciplinary violations to include the misuse of digital media, cyberbullying, the dissemination of harmful information, and various forms of unethical behavior in virtual environments. In this context, disciplinary approaches based solely on punitive sanctions are no longer adequate. Instead, educational strategies are required that foster digital literacy, moral responsibility, self-regulation, and ethical

awareness in the use of technology. These educational objectives are consistent with the broader aims of contemporary Islamic education, particularly the integration of moral values into learning processes in the context of technological transformation (Muhlis et al., 2023; Memon, 2021). Therefore, Ulwan's concept of punishment continues to provide a valuable conceptual foundation, provided that it is implemented through educational strategies capable of responding effectively to contemporary challenges.

Overall, the findings confirm that Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's thought on punishment in Islamic education remains highly relevant to the development of contemporary Islamic education. This relevance lies in its emphasis on character formation, discipline grounded in compassion, respect for the dignity of learners, and the positioning of punishment as a last resort within the educational process. Nevertheless, the study also demonstrates that the practical implementation of certain disciplinary measures proposed by Ulwan requires reinterpretation in accordance with developments in educational psychology, principles of children's rights protection, national educational policies, and humanistic educational paradigms. Consequently, Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's educational thought should not be regarded as a static concept but rather as an intellectual legacy of Islamic education that continues to evolve through contextualization, thereby contributing to the development of an Islamic educational

system that is humane, just, and responsive to the challenges of the twenty-first century (Memon, 2021; Memon & Alhashmi, 2018; Memon et al., 2021; Visser et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's concept of punishment in Islamic education, as presented in *Tarbiyatul Aulad fi al-Islam*, constitutes an integral component of the Islamic educational system, which is oriented toward the development of moral character (*akhlaq*), discipline, and students' sense of responsibility. Punishment is not regarded as a form of retaliation or an outlet for educators' emotions; rather, it is conceptualized as an educational method that serves formative, corrective, and preventive functions aimed at guiding learners back to Islamic values. Within the overall methodology of Islamic education, punishment is positioned as a last resort after exemplary conduct, habituation, advice, care, and supervision have failed to produce the desired behavioral change. Its implementation must be grounded in the principles of compassion (*rahmah*), justice, proportionality, and respect for the dignity of the child.

The study also demonstrates that Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's educational thought is founded upon an integrated framework of theological, philosophical, and pedagogical principles. From a theological perspective, the concept of punishment is rooted in the Qur'an and

the Sunnah as an expression of educators' responsibility to uphold the principle of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong) and to cultivate students' moral character. Philosophically, punishment is intended to achieve the objectives of Islamic education by nurturing individuals who possess faith, noble character, and a strong sense of responsibility through the holistic development of their innate human potential (*fitrah*). Pedagogically, punishment must be implemented gradually while taking into account learners' psychological condition, age, and the severity of their misconduct. Furthermore, it must never involve physical violence, psychological harm, or actions that undermine the dignity of the child. Accordingly, punishment is understood as an educational instrument designed to cultivate moral awareness rather than merely to enforce discipline. Furthermore, the findings confirm that Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's educational thought remains highly relevant within the context of contemporary Islamic education, particularly in its emphasis on character formation, humane disciplinary practices, and respect for human dignity. Nevertheless, certain forms of punishment that emerged within the context of classical Islamic education require reinterpretation to ensure their compatibility with developments in educational psychology, humanistic educational paradigms, principles of children's rights protection, and contemporary educational policies.

Therefore, the principal contribution of this study lies in establishing an academic dialogue between classical Islamic educational thought and contemporary educational theories, enabling the concept of punishment in Islamic education to be understood not merely in its textual sense but as a contextualized strategy for character development that is educational, proportionate, and responsive to the challenges of twenty-first-century education.

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