



## THE ROLE OF AQIDAH AKHLAK INSTRUCTION IN INSTILLING CHARACTER VALUES AMONG MADRASAH STUDENTS

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### Abstract

This study aims to examine the role of the Aqidah Akhlak subject as an effective medium in instilling character values in students in madrasas. Amid the moral crisis currently affecting the younger generation, character education has become a major focus in the national education system. As an integral part of Islamic education, Aqidah Akhlak learning plays a strategic role in shaping the character of students who are faithful, honest, tolerant, and have noble character. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation. This study was conducted at MI Muhammadiyah Bolon with 1 Aqidah Akhlak teachers, 1 principal, and 15 students as participants. The results of the study indicate that Aqidah Akhlak learning is effective in internalizing character values through the integration of faith material with students' daily practices. Values such as honesty, trustworthiness, responsibility, discipline, as well as politeness and respect for teachers and parents were successfully instilled through teacher role models, habituation, and contextual learning. However, challenges were also identified, such as suboptimal learning strategies, the negative influence of digital media, and weak control over the implementation of values outside the madrasah environment. Therefore, curriculum strengthening, methodological innovation, and the increased role of teachers as character facilitators are needed to face the challenges of the times. Findings suggest the need for pedagogical innovation, teacher capacity building, and stronger home-school collaboration to sustain character internalization

**Keywords:** Aqidah Akhlak, Character Education, Islamic Moral Values, Teacher Role Modelling, Habituation

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## INTRODUCTION | مقدمة

While many studies have examined Aqidah Akhlak in secondary madrasahs, few have explored its implementation in elementary Islamic schools where character formation is most formative education is a central issue in human resource development in Indonesia to address the nation's moral crisis. Current education is considered incapable of shaping the nation's character. During this transformation, there has been a shift in some of society's values (Rofi'iie et al, 2019). In the context of Islamic education, instilling character values is not only the responsibility of families and communities but also an integral part of formal educational institutions such as madrasas (Islamic schools) through the teaching of Aqidah Akhlak (Islamic Aqidah) (Jannah et al, 2020). The role of Aqidah Akhlak learning in instilling character education values through the application of Aqidah Akhlak learning materials is examined from various perspectives (Jannah et al, 2020). Character education has strategic value in developing faithful

students, have noble character, and are independent, in line with national education goals (Fatimah, 2021).

Given the increasingly concerning moral decadence, character education must be implemented as a continuous process to improve the quality of the nation's character (Mulyasa, 2022). Various studies show that Aqidah Akhlak learning is effective in internalising students' moral and spiritual values (Mildawati, 2015; Rohimah, 2021). In addition, in the digital era full of negative media influences, Aqidah Akhlak learning plays a role as an important value filter, with teachers as facilitators and role models who determine the success of character formation (Fadli, 2022; Kristiana et al, 2025).

However, several issues remain in the implementation of character education through Aqidah Akhlak. First, the role of the Aqidah Akhlak subject in instilling character values in students in madrasas still requires further study. Second, the effectiveness of the Aqidah Akhlak curriculum in shaping student character has not been fully tested in terms of application and context. Third, the role of teachers is crucial to the success of character education, yet the learning strategies used are not yet optimal. Fourth, various challenges and obstacles remain in the implementation of character values, leading to the emergence of norm violations and deviant behaviour among students (Chandra et al, 2020). Fifth, in the current digital era, the role of Aqidah Akhlak as an effective value filter still needs to be strengthened and adapted to current developments. Therefore, research on the role of the Aqidah Akhlak subject in instilling character values is crucial for assessing the effectiveness of the curriculum, pedagogical approaches, and the role of teachers in shaping a young generation with integrity and noble character.

## METHOD | منهج

Participants included 1 Aqidah Akhlak teachers, 1 the principal, and 15 students from grades 4–6, selected through purposive sampling based on their active involvement in religious activities. The study used a descriptive qualitative approach to understand the role of the Aqidah Akhlak subject in instilling character values in students at the Muhammadiyah Bolon Elementary School (Sugiyono, 2010; Rahmawati et al, 2021). Primary data were obtained through observation, structured interviews, and documentation, as well as secondary data from the school's archives (Sujarweni, 2020; Moleong, 2014; Yakin, 2024). Data collection involved direct observation of learning activities (Sukmadinata, 2010), interviews with the school principal, teachers, and students (Arikunto, 2010; Sugiyono, 2010; Sutopo, 2006), and supporting documentation studies (Ardiansyah et al, 2023). Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and methods, as well as tests of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Sugiyono, 2010).

Data analysis was conducted interactively using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, presentation, and verification to obtain valid conclusions (Miles et al, 1992; Setyowati, 2019; Wijaya, 2018). The data reduction process summarises and focuses important information, data presentation systematically organises information, and verification tests initial conclusions to achieve a high level of trustworthiness. Thus, this study provides a clear picture of the effectiveness of the Aqidah Akhlak subject as a medium for instilling character values in students (Surakhmad, 1990).

## RESULT | نتائج

### **The Role of The Aqidah Akhlak Subject in Instilling Character Values in Students.**

The Aqidah Akhlak subject contributes significantly to shaping students' religious character, particularly through the practice of worship, which is part of daily activities at the madrasah. (Aslan, 2025) In the learning process, students are not only taught theories about faith and noble morals, but are also accustomed to practising them directly. For example, students are involved in congregational prayers, reciting prayers before and after learning activities, and routine religious activities such as Quran recitation and commemorating Islamic holidays. (Awwalina, 2023). The Aqidah Akhlak teacher serves as a role model and guide in this practice. Through the teacher's exemplary practice of worship, students are encouraged to emulate these behaviours both inside and outside the madrasah environment (Al Ghofiqi et al, 2022). This activity not only creates a religious atmosphere in the madrasah, but also becomes a medium for internalising values such as obedience to Allah SWT, gratitude, and high spiritual awareness. Thus, religious character is not only formed from the cognitive aspect, but also from continuous practice. (Fahrudin, 2025)

The role of teachers in Aqidah Akhlak learning is crucial in instilling moral values such as honesty, responsibility, and courtesy. Teachers' exemplary behaviour is the most effective method in the character education process. Teachers who behave honestly, are disciplined, and have good morals will serve as concrete examples for students. Teachers demonstrate not only how these moral values are applied in their presentations but also in their daily interactions. (Munawwaroh, 2019). Madrasahs also foster a positive culture that supports character development, such as rewarding students for good behaviour, implementing firm yet educational rules, and cultivating mutual respect. (Ridho, et al. 2024). Social values such as empathy and mutual assistance are also taught in Aqidah Akhlak lessons through the topic of morality towards others. This fosters students' character, which is sensitive to their social environment and capable of being fair, honest, and respectful in social interactions. (Tamara, 2016).

The subject of Aqidah and Akhlak plays a role not only in the classroom but is also integrated into religious extracurricular activities. Activities such as da'wah training, lecture practice, short surah memorisation competitions, and short Islamic boarding schools are effective media for reinforcing the character values taught in class. In these activities, students are allowed to develop self-confidence, leadership, and responsibility directly. (Hasyim et al, 2022). Through real-life experiences in these activities, students not only understand moral and spiritual concepts but also internalise them in action. For example, students who participate in lecture training will learn to speak politely, responsibly convey the truth, and respect the opinions of others. This process is crucial for instilling character values in a contextual and applicable manner, so that students not only know what is good but are also able to practice it.

**Table 1. The Role of the Aqidah and Akhlak Subject in Instilling Character Values in Students**

Findings	Indicator	Information
The Role of Aqidah and Akhlak in Shaping Students' Personalities	Instilling religious, moral and social values in learning	The Aqidah Akhlak subject shapes the religious personality of students by strengthening their faith and morals, cultivating individuals who are honest, responsible, and respectful of others within the school environment.
Internalized Character Values	Honesty, responsibility, patience, courtesy, and discipline	Aqidah Akhlak learning consistently instils basic values that form a positive character, such as honesty in speaking, discipline in time, and politeness in interacting with teachers and friends.
The Role of Teachers as Facilitators of Character Education	Role model, active learning methods, contextual approach	Teachers act as role models and facilitators in linking the material of Aqidah Akhlak with the real lives of students, as well as providing direction through discussion methods, lectures, and social practices inside and outside the classroom.

Based on the information contained in the findings table, it can be concluded that the Aqidah Akhlak (Religious Awareness) subject plays a crucial role in instilling character values in students through a comprehensive approach combining teaching content, teacher examples, and daily learning practices. First, this subject not only provides students with an understanding of religion but also fosters a religious and social personality, demonstrated through honest, responsible, and respectful behaviour. Second, essential character values such as honesty, patience, discipline, courtesy, and a sense of responsibility have been consistently internalised throughout the learning process. Third, the teacher's role is crucial as a role model and guide, connecting the Aqidah Akhlak material to students' life situations, both in the classroom and in social activities, thus providing deeper meaning and application in shaping students' overall character.

### **Character Values Are Instilled Through the Subject of Aqidah Akhlak.**

The subject of Aqidah Akhlak plays a strategic role in instilling the values of honesty and trustworthiness, which are part of the noble character of a Muslim. (Syafi'i, 2024) This institution begins with the delivery of material about faith in Allah SWT and His Messenger, followed by the teaching that honesty is one of the main characteristics of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The teacher conveys that a person who truly believes will always tell the truth and not deceive others. The value of honesty is instilled through contextual learning activities, such as providing examples of the lives of the prophets, stories of companions who refused to lie even under pressure, and discussions about the importance of telling the truth. In practice, students are trained to be honest in all aspects, such as not cheating on exams, admitting mistakes, and being responsible for the trust given. (Maryati et al, 2017). In addition, the value of trustworthiness is also an important point. Students are encouraged to understand that every task or responsibility, whether small or large, is a trust that must be fulfilled. Teachers assign duties, class assignments, and social responsibility as a way of implementing these values. Teachers also emphasise that trustworthiness is not only a responsibility to humans, but also to God as a form of worship.

Teachers' role models are the most effective method in shaping students' character, particularly in the areas of responsibility and discipline. In the Aqidah and Akhlak subject, teachers not only convey values verbally but also demonstrate consistency in their daily behaviour. Teachers who arrive on time, comply with school rules, are fair, and carry out their duties well serve as real examples for students. (Wardhani et al, 2017). The value of responsibility is instilled by assigning students roles in madrasah activities, such as being class president, prayer leader, or coordinator of religious activities. They are entrusted with completing their tasks effectively and are monitored by their teachers. This fosters self-confidence and an awareness that responsibility is an integral part of spiritual and social maturity.

Meanwhile, the value of discipline is reinforced through consistent habits, such as the obligation to perform Dhuha and Dzuhur prayers in congregation, dress codes, and regular attendance at class. The Aqidah Akhlak teacher acts as a guide who not only reminds but also provides educational sanctions for violations. Students learn that discipline is a form of obedience to rules and a sign of seriousness in living life. (Kasingku et al, 2024). The Aqidah Akhlak subject emphasises the importance of etiquette in daily life, especially in terms of politeness and respect for parents, teachers, and friends. These values are conveyed through lessons on etiquette towards fellow human beings (muamalah), as well as through hadiths that teach the importance of guarding the tongue, respect, and humility. (Marzukah, 2025).

The process of internalising values is carried out not only in the classroom but also in daily

activities. Teachers accustom students to greet, ask permission before entering the classroom, and express gratitude and apology in conversation. Behaviours such as lowering their voices when speaking to the teacher, giving priority to parents or teachers when walking, and being friendly to friends are indicators that the value of good manners has been instilled (Widiastuti, 2023). Teachers also link these values to social and spiritual consequences, such as the importance of maintaining good relationships with others for a peaceful and blessed life. With these habits, students not only understand the theory of good manners but are also able to practice them in real life.

**Table 2. Instilling Character Values through the Aqidah Akhlak Subject**

Findings	Indicator	Information
Instilling the Values of Honesty and Trust through Faith	Don't cheat, tell the truth, and complete tasks responsibly	Students are trained to be honest and trustworthy through learning about faith, supported by teacher examples and habits in class assignments and daily life.
Formation of Responsible and Disciplined Attitudes	Teachers set good examples, schedule activities, and collective assignments	Teachers serve as role models for discipline and responsibility; students learn through religious activities, group assignments, and the enforcement of school rules.
Internalisation of the Values of Politeness and Respect	Greeting, speaking politely, respecting teachers and parents	Students are guided to maintain good manners in speaking and behaving through the material on Aqidah Akhlak and daily habits in an Islamic madrasa environment.

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the Aqidah Akhlak subject plays a strategic role in instilling character values in elementary school students. First, the values of honesty and trustworthiness are instilled through faith material that is not only presented theoretically but also applied through daily habits. This is evident in concrete examples such as honesty during exams, not cheating, and being responsible for assignments given by teachers. Teachers play a crucial role in instilling these values by setting an example of honesty and trustworthiness in carrying out their duties.

Second, the values of responsibility and discipline are fostered through the example of teachers who consistently demonstrate discipline, punctuality, and a polite appearance, as well as setting an example in performing religious duties and complying with madrasah regulations. Third, the values of politeness and respect are internalised through Islamic social interactions within the madrasah environment. These values are evident in students' habits of greeting, speaking politely, asking permission politely, and showing respect to teachers and parents. Thus, the Aqidah Akhlak subject is not only a medium for imparting knowledge, but also an effective means of forming students' overall character.

## DISCUSSION | مناقشة

The results of the study indicate that the Aqidah Akhlak subject plays a strategic role in shaping and instilling character values in students at the Muhammadiyah Bolon Elementary School. This learning is not only oriented towards cognitive aspects, but also touches on the affective and psychomotor dimensions of students. This is in line with the concept of Islamic character education which emphasizes the balance between faith, knowledge, and good deeds in forming individuals with noble morals (Zubaedi, 2011). Through the integration of religious values into learning activities, students not only understand religious teachings but also internalize them in their daily behavior.

The crucial role of the Aqidah Akhlak subject is reflected in the learning approach used by

teachers. Teachers not only act as transmitters of knowledge but also as role models and moral guides for students. Teachers' exemplary behavior is a dominant factor in the success of character education because elementary school students tend to imitate the behavior of the adults around them (Lickona, 2013). In this context, Aqidah Akhlak teachers in madrasas consistently demonstrate disciplined, honest, and responsible behavior, thus serving as real-life role models for students to emulate. This aligns with Sauri's (2017) view that role-modeling-based character education has a significant influence on shaping students' morals.

In addition to role models, the active and contextual learning methods employed by teachers also play a role in internalizing character values. The learning process, which involves discussion, reflection, and social practice, enables students to better understand the meaning of the values they learn and to apply them in real life. For example, practicing greetings, maintaining honesty during exams, and performing congregational prayers at the madrasah are concrete forms of implementing the values of Aqidah Akhlak in daily life. This aligns with the research findings of Ardiansyah et al. (2023), which confirmed that contextual learning based on religious values is effective in shaping students' positive character because it connects theory with everyday life practices.

The core values internalized through learning Aqidah Akhlak (Islamic Creed) include honesty, trustworthiness, responsibility, discipline, courtesy, and respect. Instilling the values of honesty and trustworthiness begins with an understanding of faith in Allah and His Messenger, where the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) character is exemplified. Activities such as not cheating on exams and admitting mistakes serve as concrete examples of honesty. Meanwhile, the value of trustworthiness is instilled through duty and social responsibility at the madrasah. Students are trained to fulfill every trust as a form of worship to Allah, in accordance with the teaching that responsibility is not only to humans but also to the Creator (Rahmawati & Fatchuriza, 2021).

The values of responsibility and discipline are formed through consistent practice and supervision. Teachers entrust students with being class leaders or those responsible for religious activities, so they learn to be punctual, carry out tasks, and respect rules. This process of habituation strengthens the disciplined character that is an essential part of Islamic education (Sujarweni, 2020). Discipline is also instilled through routine activities such as the Dhuha prayer, proper dress code, and regular attendance at lessons. Teachers' exemplary behavior in these areas reinforces students' understanding that discipline is a manifestation of obedience and moral responsibility.

Furthermore, the values of politeness and respect for teachers and parents are important pillars in the teaching of Aqidah Akhlak (Islamic creed). Teachers instill Islamic etiquette, such as speaking softly, asking permission politely, and showing respect to elders. Internalization of these values is achieved through the study of hadiths on social etiquette and the practice of polite behavior within the madrasah environment. This supports the findings of Pratiwi et al. (2022) that moral education that emphasizes etiquette in social interactions can simultaneously enhance students' emotional and spiritual intelligence.

Overall, the results of this study reinforce the theory that Aqidah Akhlak (Islamic creed) learning is an important instrument in holistic Islamic character education. The approach used involves integrating cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects through habituation and role modeling. The results are evident in the changes in students' attitudes, leading to greater discipline, honesty, responsibility, and respect for others. Thus, the Aqidah Akhlak subject is not

merely a means of transferring religious knowledge, but also an effective medium for developing a generation with character and noble morals (Sugiyono, 2010; Moleong, 2014).

## CONCLUSION

## خاتمة

This study is limited to a single elementary school; future research should compare multiple Islamic schools across regions. Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the Aqidah Akhlak (Islamic Creed) subject plays a significant and strategic role in instilling character values in elementary school students. This role is evident in how Aqidah Akhlak teachers not only deliver theoretical material but also serve as role models in attitudes and behaviour, guiding students through habituation approaches, moral strengthening, and Islamic social interactions within the madrasah environment. Aqidah Akhlak learning is an effective means of comprehensively shaping students' character, both in academic and social contexts. The main character values instilled through Aqidah Akhlak lessons include honesty, trustworthiness, responsibility, discipline, courtesy, and respect for parents and teachers. The values of honesty and trustworthiness are instilled through strengthening faith and practical application in students' lives. The values of responsibility and discipline develop through the practice of orderliness, punctuality, and commitment to tasks. Meanwhile, the values of courtesy and respect are developed through civilised social interactions, both in communication between students and between students and teachers. Thus, Aqidah Akhlak is not only a religious subject, but also an important instrument in forming the character of a generation with noble morals. Schools should develop a character education handbook for Aqidah Akhlak teachers that includes lesson plans, assessment rubrics, and parent engagement strategies.

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