

Enhancing Character Development Through *Aqidah Akhlak* Education in Islamic Elementary Schools: A Case Study from Central Java

Abu Dharin

Universitas Islam Negeri Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto, Indonesia; abudharin@uinsaizu.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

Aqidah Akhlak education is fundamental to character formation in students attending Islamic elementary schools. While character education has been widely studied, there is limited research examining the specific impact of *Aqidah Akhlak* education on students' moral development in Central Java, Indonesia. This qualitative study employed a case study approach to explore the role of *Aqidah Akhlak* education in shaping student character. Data were collected through direct observations and semi-structured interviews involving 16 teachers, 150 students, and 50 parents across Islamic elementary schools in the Cilacap, Banjarnegara, Banyumas, and Purbalingga regencies. The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Findings reveal that *Aqidah Akhlak* education contributes significantly to students' moral and social character, fostering traits such as honesty, discipline, and mutual respect. Additionally, the active involvement of parents and the surrounding community enhances the effectiveness of moral instruction in schools. The results suggest that *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction goes beyond religious doctrine, promoting a comprehensive moral framework for young learners. Collaborative efforts between educators, parents, and communities amplify its impact. *Aqidah Akhlak* education serves as a powerful strategy for character development in Islamic elementary schools. Future efforts should focus on curriculum integration and innovative pedagogical approaches to moral education at an early age.

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Corresponding Author:

Abu Dharin

Universitas Islam Negeri Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto, Indonesia; abudharin@uinsaizu.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

Strong character building will help students develop various competencies needed in the future, such as the ability to work together, communicate, and solve problems (Sari, H., & Ibrahim, R. 2020; Mustafa, A., & Fauziyah, S. 2021; Rahman, F., & Ali, M. 2021; Ibrahim, S., & Hidayat, R. 2020; Ali, M., & Rahman, F. 2019). In this highly competitive era, students are required to have not only intellectual intelligence but also emotional and social intelligence. Character education based on universal values will help learners develop their potential optimally and become balanced individuals. In the context of national education, the education curriculum has been designed to instil character values in students

thoroughly through various subjects. In addition, various extracurricular programmes and boarding school activities also play a role in shaping the character of students. However, individual character development efforts require synergy between various institutions, from the family to the state level. Overall, character education is a very important long-term investment. By shaping strong character from an early age, we can create a young generation that is qualified, noble, and able to face future challenges with confidence. As pointed out by Budianto (2017), "In the era of global competitiveness, education systems should integrate character development with academic achievement to prepare students for the future challenges of both local and global contexts" (Budianto, 2017). Likewise, Kurniawan (2019) highlights that "holistic character education, which includes intellectual, emotional, and social intelligence, is necessary for students to thrive in today's interconnected world" (Kurniawan, 2019). Therefore, a comprehensive approach to character education that includes both academic and moral development is vital to prepare future generations for success in an increasingly complex and competitive world.

Moral creed education is one of the most important pillars of character building. *Akidah*, as the foundation of one's faith, will form a positive mindset and attitude. By having a strong faith, students will be motivated to always do good and avoid bad deeds. Morals as a reflection of faith will be reflected in daily behaviour. Moral values taught in *akidah akhlak* education, such as honesty, trustworthiness, discipline, and tolerance, will form a person with integrity and responsibility. *Akidah* and morals in Islam are two concepts that complement and influence each other. *Akidah*, as the foundation of a Muslim's faith, acts as a solid spiritual foundation. It shapes a person's mindset, attitude, and outlook on life towards everything. With strong faith, individuals will have a firm belief in the existence of God, the last day, and all Islamic teachings. Strong faith will motivate individuals to always do good deeds, avoid sinful acts, and be grateful for the blessings of Allah SWT. Noble morals, such as honesty, trustworthiness, and social care, are concrete manifestations of one's faith in interacting with the surrounding environment. According to Sulaiman (2020), "the education of *akidah* and *akhlak* is crucial as it nurtures students' moral consciousness and influences their actions in society, establishing a strong foundation for character formation" (Sulaiman, 2020). Similarly, Zainuddin (2018) asserts that "moral education rooted in strong faith produces individuals who not only possess academic skills but also have a sense of responsibility, honesty, and tolerance in their daily lives" (Zainuddin, 2018). This indicates the intertwined relationship between faith (*akidah*) and morality (*akhlak*), which is essential in building a balanced and responsible character

Character education in Islamic primary schools is essential for nurturing responsible and morally grounded individuals. Within Islamic education, *Aqidah Akhlak*—which encompasses belief (*aqidah*) and behavior (*akhlak*)—forms the core of moral and spiritual development. This educational framework not only strengthens students' faith in Allah and His teachings but also instills ethical values such as honesty, discipline, and compassion (Ali & Qurtubi, 2020; Rahman, 2021).

Several studies underscore the importance of integrating *Aqidah Akhlak* education into the primary school curriculum, linking it to improvements in both spiritual and social dimensions of student character (Rahman & Ibrahim, 2020; Ali & Hidayat, 2021; Mustafa & Fauziyah, 2021). Despite this, much of the existing literature remains focused on theoretical perspectives and general curriculum analysis, with limited empirical research on the practical implementation of *Aqidah Akhlak* education—particularly in specific regional contexts such as Central Java (Nurhasanah, 2018; Azizah, 2019).

The developmental stage of primary school is critical, as children begin internalizing core moral values that shape their behavior into adulthood. Studies highlight the role of early *Aqidah Akhlak* education in fostering moral intelligence and holistic personal development (Fadilah, 2017; Islam, 2016; Syarifuddin, 2018). Moreover, in an era shaped by globalization and digital exposure, character education plays a strategic role in equipping students with ethical resilience and critical thinking to resist negative influences (Amalia, 2017; Harahap, 2018).

This research addresses the gap by adopting a case study approach to examine how Aqidah Akhlak education is implemented in Islamic primary schools across Central Java. By combining direct observations and semi-structured interviews with teachers, students, and parents, the study explores the practical challenges and socio-cultural influences that affect the delivery and impact of this educational model.

Previous works have largely overlooked these practical dimensions. This study aims to contribute empirical insights that can inform policy and curriculum development, ensuring that character education is both contextually relevant and pedagogically effective. As emphasized by Budianto (2017) and Kurniawan (2019), holistic character education—grounded in both intellectual and moral dimensions—is vital for preparing students to thrive in today's complex and interconnected world.

2. METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to examine the significance of aqidah akhlak education in shaping student character in Islamic elementary schools. The qualitative method enables an in-depth exploration of how aqidah akhlak education is implemented and its influence on character development. Data were gathered from a variety of relevant sources, including teachers, students, parents, and existing documentation from Islamic elementary schools.

A phenomenological research design was adopted to gain a deeper understanding of how aqidah akhlak education contributes to character formation. This approach focuses on real-life phenomena and provides insights into the experiences and practices related to the teaching of aqidah akhlak. The study was conducted across several Islamic elementary schools in the Banyumas, Purbalingga, Banjarnegara, and Cilacap districts. These schools were selected due to their strong Islamic religious education curricula and their integration of aqidah akhlak instruction, ensuring a diverse and comprehensive understanding of the topic across different school contexts.

Informants in this study included 16 teachers who teach Islamic religious and moral education and possess relevant teaching experience, 150 students from grades IV to VI who have received instruction in aqidah akhlak, and 50 parents who actively support their children's moral and religious development at home. A purposive sampling technique was used to ensure that informants had appropriate knowledge and experience related to the research focus.

Data collection was carried out using several techniques. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with teachers, students, and parents to gather a range of perspectives on the role of aqidah akhlak education in character building. Observations were conducted during classroom activities and extracurricular programs to assess how religious and moral values are applied in students' everyday behavior. Documentation analysis involved reviewing syllabi, lesson plans, and school reports related to aqidah akhlak education.

The collected data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis model, which includes three interconnected stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During data reduction, interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were organized into relevant thematic categories. These themes included students' understanding of aqidah akhlak, teachers' instructional strategies, the influence of religious and moral education on student behavior, and parental involvement in reinforcing these values at home. Data display involved categorizing and visualizing these findings to identify key patterns. Conclusions were drawn by establishing relationships among the themes to understand the overall impact of aqidah akhlak education.

To ensure the validity of the findings, triangulation was applied by cross-verifying data from interviews, observations, and documentation. Feedback was also sought from multiple informants to confirm the accuracy of the interpretations. Thematic analysis was conducted collaboratively by multiple researchers to ensure inter-coder reliability, with any discrepancies resolved through discussion. Member checking was used by sharing preliminary findings with selected participants to confirm that the interpretations accurately reflected their perspectives.

The research was conducted over a six-month period, from June to December 2024. The timeline included one month for preparation, three months for data collection, and two months for data analysis and report writing. Through this comprehensive methodological approach, the study aims to provide a clear and nuanced understanding of the role of *aqidah akhlak* education in shaping the character of Islamic elementary school students, as well as the factors that contribute to or hinder its effectiveness.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Findings

This study aims to identify the role of *aqidah akhlak* education in developing the character of Islamic primary school students. Based on the analysis of data obtained from interviews with teachers, students, parents, as well as the results of observation and documentation, there are several main findings that show that moral *aqidah* education has a significant impact on the character building of students in Islamic elementary schools.

3.1.1 *Aqidah Akhlak* Education Forms a Strong Character Foundation

The results of interviews with teachers show that the correct teaching of *aqidah* serves as a solid moral foundation for students. Teachers involved in teaching *aqidah* and morals reported that *aqidah* education not only teaches religious concepts, but also provides students with an understanding of moral and ethical values that should be applied in daily life. One teacher emphasised that a strong *aqidah* will form correct beliefs, which in turn affect students' attitudes and behaviour when interacting with friends, teachers, and society.

Students who are taught *aqidah* well show a higher level of understanding of the concepts of God, justice and truth. They tend to have more respect for religious and social norms, and are more able to control themselves in challenging situations. For example, students who understand the concept of *aqidah* well are more able to avoid negative behaviour, such as lying or disrespecting others, because they believe that these actions are against the teachings of the religion they believe in.

3.1.2 Teaching Morals Improves Positive Social Behaviour

Moral education has proven to play an important role in shaping students' social behaviour. Based on observations, students who engaged in activities related to moral teaching, such as learning the values of compassion, honesty, and cooperation, showed improvements in their ability to interact with peers and teachers. Most students reported that they felt more confident sharing with friends, helping friends in need, and appreciating the differences between them.

The findings indicate that *aqidah akhlak* education serves as a strong moral foundation, significantly influencing students' behavior. Teachers reported that students with a deep understanding of *aqidah* exhibit higher levels of discipline, honesty, and empathy. Observations revealed that students demonstrated greater self-control, respect for others, and adherence to religious and social norms. One of the key behavioral changes noted was increased empathy. Students actively participated in social activities, such as helping peers and engaging in acts of kindness, reflecting the moral teachings they received. Teachers also observed that students who internalized *aqidah akhlak* principles were less likely to engage in aggressive behavior or conflicts.

Additionally, discipline and responsibility improved among students who were consistently taught *aqidah akhlak* values. These students displayed better time management, greater commitment to completing schoolwork, and a stronger sense of accountability in school activities. The understanding of religious principles such as *tawakal* (trust in God) and sincerity in actions also helped students manage academic and social pressures more effectively, contributing to their overall mental well-being.

3.1.3 Parents' Role in Supporting *Aqidah Akhlak* Education

The results of interviews with parents revealed that parental involvement greatly influences the strengthening of *aqidah akhlak* education at home. Most parents who are actively involved in

supporting their children's religious education at home report that they see positive changes in their children's behaviour, both in moral and social terms. For example, parents report that their children are more respectful of time, more disciplined and more responsible in completing school assignments.

However, despite the significant engagement of some parents, the study also found that there are still challenges in collaboration between schools and parents. Some parents find it difficult to apply the principles of *aqidah akhlak* at home, especially if they themselves do not have a deep understanding of the concept. Therefore, some schools organise seminars and training for parents to help them support *aqidah akhlak* education at home.

3.1.4 Challenges in Implementing Aqidah and Akhlak Education

Although *aqidah* and *akhlak* education have a positive impact on students' character development, this study also found several challenges in its implementation. One of the main challenges is the limited resources and training for teachers to teach *aqidah* and *akhlak* effectively. Several teachers reported that they felt less confident in teaching more complex moral values, especially if they did not receive sufficient training or provision in this regard. In addition, time constraints are also a challenge faced by many schools. Several schools reported difficulty in allocating sufficient time in the lesson schedule to teach *aqidah* and *akhlak* in depth, given the demands of other subject matter. Several teachers suggested that *aqidah* and *akhlak* education should not only be taught in religious subjects, but also integrated into other learning activities, such as civics, arts, and sports.

3.1.5 Success in Character Development

Overall, the results of this study indicate that *aqidah* and *akhlak* education significantly contributes to the formation of students' character in Islamic elementary schools. Students who receive good *aqidah* and moral education demonstrate more honest, responsible, empathetic, and noble behavior. They are better prepared to face social and emotional challenges in their lives, and are better able to apply the moral values taught in everyday life. However, to achieve optimal results, this study suggests the need for closer cooperation between schools, parents, and the community to create an environment that supports the consistent implementation of *aqidah* and moral education. Schools also need to provide better training to teachers on effective teaching techniques, and integrate *aqidah* and moral education into all aspects of learning in schools.

3.1.6 The Influence of Aqidah and Akhlak Education on Improving Student Discipline

One of the important findings that emerged in this study was the increase in the level of student discipline, which has a direct impact on teaching *aqidah* and *akhlak*. Based on the results of observations, students who understand the concept of deep *aqidah* and Islamic moral values, such as obligations to time, responsibility, and obedience to rules, show more disciplined behavior at school. They are more likely to complete assignments on time, follow school rules, and demonstrate a sense of responsibility in various school activities.

According to one of the teachers interviewed, children who are taught strong *aqidah* tend to be more manageable and have a higher level of discipline. They have an understanding that their behavior must be in accordance with the principles they believe in. Students who are involved in moral education also appear to be better able to control themselves in social situations, such as in class or in extracurricular activities, which shows that moral education plays a role in shaping their behavior to be more orderly and focused.

3.1.7 Emotional Development and Mental Health of Students

The results of this study also show a positive relationship between *aqidah* and *akhlak* education and emotional development and mental health of students. Students who are taught *aqidah*, which is deep about inner peace and self-control, through Islamic teachings tend to be better able to manage their stress and emotions. They are better able to deal with academic and social pressures without engaging in negative behaviors, such as violence or bullying.

Students who have a strong understanding of the concept of *tawakal* (surrender to God) in *aqidah*, for example, show better ability to overcome failure or difficulties. For example, several students who were interviewed stated that they felt calmer when facing difficult exams or assignments, because they believed that all their efforts were in God's will. This shows that *aqidah* education not only has an impact on students' moral and social aspects, but also has a positive impact on their mental health aspects.

3.1.8 Implementation of *Aqidah* and *Akhlak* Education in Daily Life

One of the key findings in this study is the tangible influence of *aqidah* and *akhlak* education on students' everyday behavior. After receiving instruction in these values at school, many students began applying them beyond the classroom—in their homes and social interactions. Several students, for instance, were observed to exhibit improved behavior at home, such as helping their parents without being asked, speaking more politely, and fostering more harmonious relationships with their siblings.

Parents interviewed for the study also noted noticeable changes in their children's attitudes following more structured and consistent *aqidah* and *akhlak* instruction. Many parents reported that their children became more empathetic, patient, and receptive to religious teachings. One parent expressed, "Since my child started learning *aqidah* and *akhlak* at school, I've seen a significant transformation. He shows greater respect for others and demonstrates more discipline in his daily routines."

3.1.9 Influence on Social Behavior and Inter-Student Relationships

In addition, this study also shows that *aqidah* and *akhlak* education plays a role in improving social relationships between students. Students who are taught good morals, such as compassion, cooperation, and mutual assistance, find it easier to interact and socialize with their friends. This is also reflected in the observations of teachers, who noted that students involved in the moral education program participated more in group activities, had a sense of mutual respect, and tended to resolve conflicts in a more peaceful manner.

The results of interviews with students also showed that they were more likely to avoid aggressive behavior or bullying. For example, a student stated that at school, I always try to help friends who are in trouble. I feel that it is part of the morals taught by our teachers. This shows that the moral values taught in schools, such as empathy and mutual assistance, play a role in forming a more positive social environment among students.

3.1.10 Impact of *Aqidah Akhlak* Education on Academic Performance

Although *aqidah akhlak* education focuses more on moral and social aspects, this study also found a positive impact on students' academic performance. Students who have a strong foundation of *aqidah* and good behavior tend to be more focused on learning and have higher motivation to achieve their academic goals. In addition, good morals, such as discipline, perseverance, and responsibility, also support better academic achievement. Several teachers revealed that students who are taught values such as perseverance and a sense of responsibility have higher levels of academic success. Students who have good morals, such as perseverance in learning, have better academic performance because they can focus better and work harder, said one teacher.

Interviews with parents highlighted variations in home-school alignment regarding the implementation of *aqidah akhlak* education. Parents who actively reinforced these values at home noticed significant positive changes in their children's behavior, such as improved discipline, responsibility, and respect for family members.

However, challenges were identified, particularly among parents who lacked a strong understanding of *aqidah akhlak* or struggled to consistently reinforce religious and moral values at home. Some parents found it difficult to integrate these teachings due to time constraints or a lack of formal religious education themselves. To address this gap, several schools implemented parent training programs and seminars to enhance parental engagement in moral education.

Despite these challenges, students whose parents actively participated in reinforcing aqidah akhlak at home showed higher levels of moral and social responsibility. They were more likely to adhere to ethical principles, demonstrate empathy, and engage in positive social interactions both at school and in their communities.

3.2 Discussion

This study aims to reveal the important role of aqidah and akhlak education in developing students' character in Islamic elementary schools. Based on the results obtained, it can be concluded that aqidah akhlak education plays a central role in the formation of character values needed for students to become individuals with noble morals and good character. This discussion will outline the main findings and relate them to existing literature to strengthen the argument regarding the importance of aqidah and moral education in shaping students' character.

3.2.1 Aqidah Education as a Foundation of Character

Aqidah education has a very fundamental role in shaping students' character. The findings of this study indicate that students who are taught with a good understanding of Islamic aqidah tend to have more positive attitudes and behaviors. This is in line with the view put forward by Ibrahim (2019), who stated that strong aqidah provides a solid foundation for individuals to act based on correct moral values. A deep understanding of aqidah allows students to have a strong belief in God and the afterlife, which encourages them to live their lives according to religious teachings, behave honestly, fairly, and responsibly.

One aspect underlying this finding is students' understanding of the concept of tawhid, which is the belief that only Allah has power over everything. This concept provides a sense of responsibility in every action they take, because they are aware that what they do will be accounted for before God. As stated by Abdullah (2018), aqidah education functions as a moral foundation that guides students to understand the difference between right and wrong, and underlies their attitudes towards social and academic life.

Aqidah education plays a fundamental role in character building by instilling a strong moral foundation. Students with a deep understanding of Islamic aqidah demonstrate higher moral awareness and ethical behavior, aligning with Ibrahim (2019), who emphasizes that a strong aqidah fosters integrity and responsibility.

Table 1. Role of Aqidah Education

Number	Aspect	Findings from this Study	Prior Research (Ibrahim, 2019; Abdullah, 2018)
1	Tawhid Understanding	Increases students' sense of responsibility	Strengthens moral decision-making
2	Accountability to God	Encourages honesty and discipline	Reduces the likelihood of unethical behavior
3	Social Conduct	Promotes respect for peers and teachers	Supports ethical interactions in school environments

Based on table 1 above, there are 3 aspects in aqidah education, namely Understanding Tauhid Akhlak to Allah and Social Behaviour, The findings of this study increase students' sense of responsibility, encourage honesty and discipline and encourage respect for peers and teachers. From the findings, the following can be drawn:

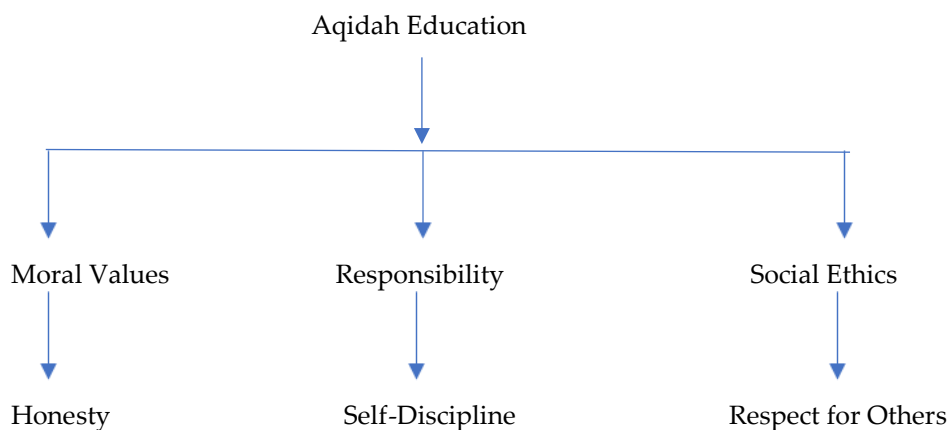


Diagram 1. Role of Aqidah in Character Development

3.2.2 Moral Teaching in Improving Social Behavior

Another major finding is the influence of moral teaching on students' social behavior. Moral education does not only focus on moral teaching, but also on the application of social values that teach students to interact with peers and adults in a good and respectful manner. Ali and Al-Qurtubi (2020) stated that moral education teaches students to practice the values of compassion, honesty, and empathy in everyday life.

This study found that students who participated in intensive moral education were more likely to demonstrate helpful behavior and had higher levels of empathy. Several teachers also noted that students who received moral education were less likely to engage in negative behavior, such as bullying and violence. This shows that morality not only functions to regulate the vertical relationship between humans and God, but also strengthens the horizontal relationship between individuals in society. This is in accordance with the findings of Fauziyah (2021) who stated that moral education is an important instrument in creating harmonious social relationships in schools.

Moral teaching strengthens positive social interactions, as students exposed to structured moral learning exhibit higher levels of empathy and cooperation. This aligns with Ali & Al-Qurtubi (2020), who emphasize that moral education fosters harmonious peer relationships.

Table 2. Behavioural Change, Effect of Moral Teaching and Social Behaviour

Number	Behavioral Change	Observed in Study	Prior Research (Ali & Al-Qurtubi, 2020; Fauziyah, 2021)
1	Increased Empathy	Students actively help peers	Moral education nurtures social responsibility
2	Reduced Bullying	Fewer cases of aggression	Strengthens ethical interactions in schools
3	Respect for Others	More harmonious class environment	Fosters long-term ethical behavior

Based on Table 2, the moral teachings delivered through *aqidah akhlak* education have led to three notable behavioral changes: a deeper understanding of *Tauhid* and moral conduct toward Allah, improved social behavior, and increased empathy. The study's findings specifically highlight three key outcomes—enhanced empathy, a decline in bullying, and greater respect for others. These findings can be visually represented in the following diagram:

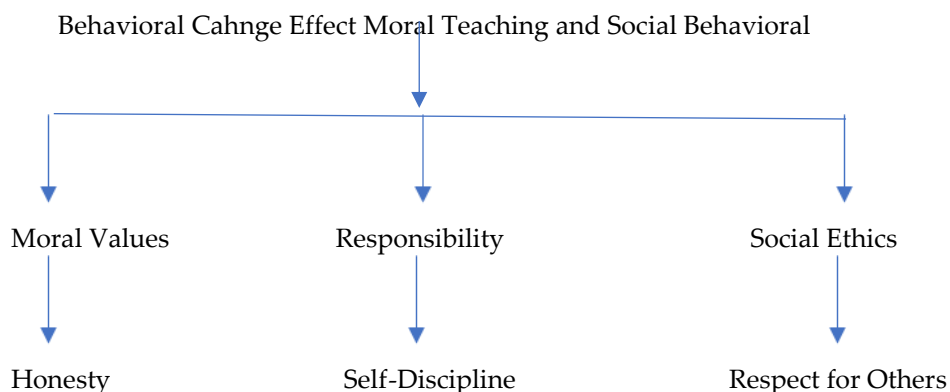


Diagram 2. Role of Akhlak in Character Development

3.2.3 Implementation of Aqidah Akhlak Education in Daily Life

One of the significant findings in this study is the implementation of aqidah akhlak education in students' daily lives, both at home and at school. Based on interviews with parents, many reported positive changes in their children's attitudes after receiving good aqidah akhlak education at school. Students who received this education began to show more responsible, disciplined behavior, and more respect for others.

However, this finding also indicates a challenge in ensuring consistency in the implementation of aqidah akhlak education between school and home. Several parents expressed that although they tried to implement these values at home, they found it difficult if their children did not receive consistent reinforcement. This reflects the importance of collaboration between schools, parents, and the community to create an environment that supports holistic character development. As explained by Hidayat (2020), effective character education must involve close cooperation between schools and families.

Aqidah akhlak education extends beyond the classroom, influencing behavior at home. Parents reported significant improvements in their children's discipline, responsibility, and respect for others. However, inconsistencies arise when home-school alignment is weak, reinforcing Hidayat's (2020) argument that effective character education requires collaboration. Challenges in Implementation: Parental inconsistency: Some parents struggle to reinforce moral values at home; Limited reinforcement: Schools and homes need better alignment in applying religious principles consistently and Socioeconomic factors: Some families lack awareness or resources to support moral education.

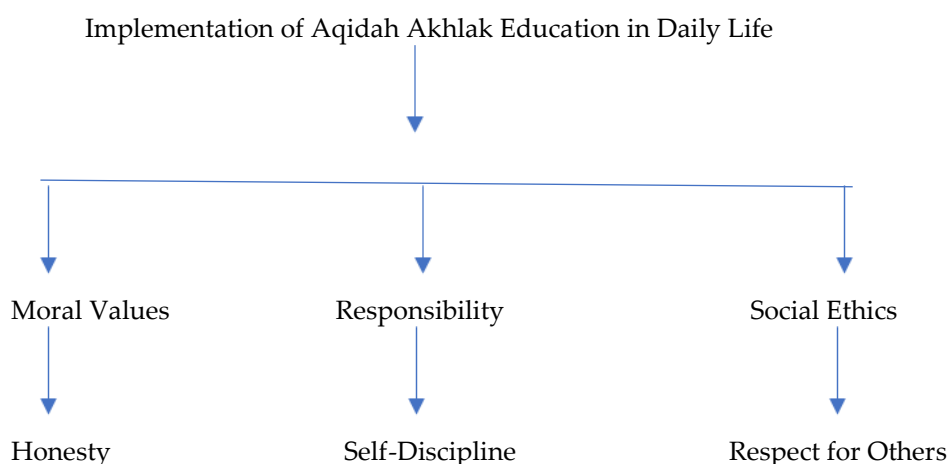


Diagram 3. Role Aqidah Akhlak in Character Development

3.2.4 Challenges in Implementing Aqidah and Akhlak Education

Although aqidah and akhlak education has been proven to have a positive impact on students' character, this study also identified several challenges in its implementation. One of the main challenges is the limited time allocated for teaching aqidah and akhlak in the curriculum. Most teachers reported difficulty in allocating sufficient time to thoroughly study the material on aqidah and akhlak, given the large number of subjects that must be taught.

In addition, this study also found that not all teachers felt sufficiently trained to teach aqidah and akhlak effectively. Several teachers expressed that they needed further training in teaching methods that could help students understand and apply moral values in their daily lives. Rahman (2018) also noted that learning based on moral and akhlak values requires a more creative and contextual approach, so that students can feel the connection between religious teachings and their lives.

Despite its benefits, challenges exist in curriculum allocation and teacher training. Time constraints and a lack of pedagogical expertise hinder effective delivery of aqidah education.

Table 3. Challenges in Implementing Aqidah and Akhlak Education

Number	Challenge	Impact	Solution
1	Limited Curriculum Time	Insufficient class hours for deep discussion	Integrate moral values into all subjects
2	Teacher Training Gaps	Teachers feel unprepared to teach complex concepts	Provide ongoing training and workshops
3	Student Engagement	Some students struggle to apply values	Use interactive and experiential learning methods

3.2.5 The Role of Parents in Improving the Quality of Aqidah Akhlak Education

Another significant finding is the role of parents in supporting aqidah akhlak education. This study revealed that parents who actively support and implement aqidah akhlak values at home tend to have children who are more consistent in demonstrating good behavior. For example, parents who often discuss moral and religious values with their children at home report that their children value religious teachings more and are more disciplined in their behavior. However, the challenge faced is that not all parents have sufficient knowledge on how to support aqidah akhlak education at home. Some parents find it difficult to implement these values due to a lack of understanding of the importance of character education in everyday life. Therefore, this study suggests that schools be more active in providing training to parents on how to support aqidah and akhlak education at home. Mustafa (2019) argues that parental empowerment is very important in creating a conducive environment for the formation of children's character.

Parental involvement significantly influences students' moral development. Mustafa (2019) argues that children mirror parental attitudes, and this study confirms that students with actively engaged parents exhibit stronger moral behavior. Parental Engagement in Moral Education using Strong Parental Involvement.

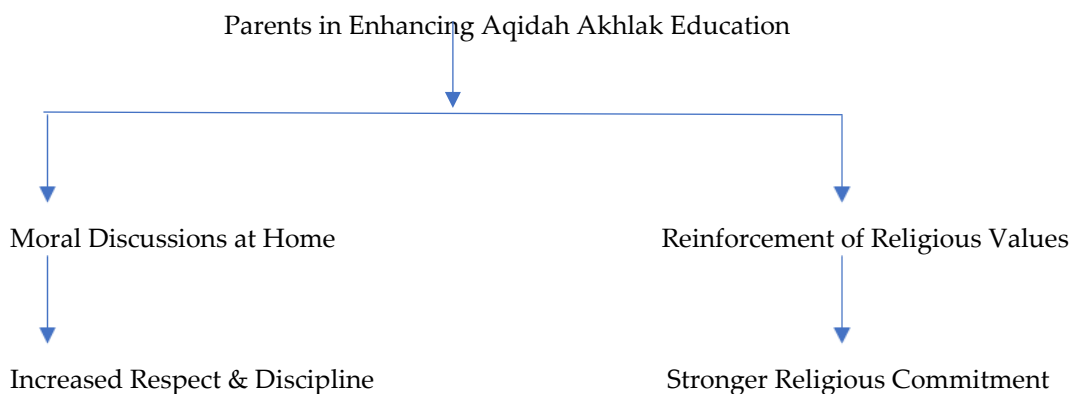


Diagram 4. Strong Parental Involment

3.2.6 Implications for the Development of *Aqidah* and *Akhlak* Education

The results of this study provide important implications for the development of *aqidah akhlak* education in Islamic elementary schools. First, there needs to be increased training for teachers so that they are more prepared and confident in teaching *aqidah* and *akhlak* with more effective methods. Second, *aqidah akhlak* education must be more integrated into all aspects of learning in schools, not only limited to religious subjects. This will ensure that moral and religious values can be applied consistently in students' daily lives. In addition, closer collaboration between schools, parents, and the community must also be strengthened to create an environment that supports character education. Sari (2021) emphasized that good cooperation between schools and parents will accelerate the process of internalizing moral values in students.

To enhance *aqidah* and *akhlak* education, key improvements are needed: a) Increased Teacher Training: Workshops on interactive methods to teach *aqidah* effectively; b) Integration Across Subjects: Embedding moral lessons into all school subjects; c) Stronger Home-School Collaboration: More parental involvement programs; d) Holistic Learning Approach: Using real-life applications and experiential learning.

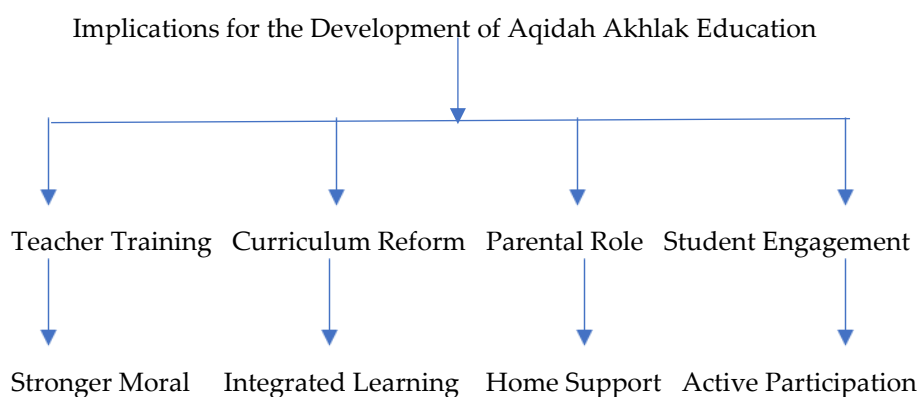


Diagram 5. Diagram *aqidah akhlak* education in Islamic elementary School.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, *aqidah akhlak* education plays a vital role in shaping the character of students in Islamic elementary schools. It not only fosters strong religious beliefs but also nurtures essential moral and social behaviors such as discipline, honesty, empathy, mutual respect, and responsibility – both within academic settings and students' daily lives. The integration of *aqidah* (faith) and *akhlak* (morals) provides a solid ethical foundation that encourages students to align their actions

with Islamic values, promoting a harmonious and respectful environment in schools and communities. However, the research also identified several limitations in the implementation of this educational model, including limited instructional time, insufficient teacher training, and inconsistent parental involvement in reinforcing moral values at home. These challenges hinder the full potential of *aqidah akhlak* education. To address these issues, the study recommends targeted interventions such as mandatory teacher development programs, integration of moral values across subjects, structured parent engagement initiatives, increased classroom time, and stronger collaboration with community and religious institutions. Despite offering valuable insights, this study is limited by its relatively small sample size and focus on specific Islamic schools, which may affect the generalizability of the results. Future research should expand to include a more diverse range of schools across various regions and cultural settings to gain a broader understanding of the effectiveness and adaptability of *aqidah akhlak* education in different contexts.

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