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Strategies for Implementing Exemplary Values in Aqidah Akhlak Teaching for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri Students

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ABSTRACT

Background: The implementation of exemplary values in students' character education during Akidah Akhlak lessons, both at school and at home, is crucial for cultivating good behavior. However, applying these values outside the classroom remains challenging, particularly in terms of students' consistency in practicing the knowledge acquired at school within their home environment. **Objective:** This study aims to examine how exemplary values are implemented in Akidah Akhlak education among students at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri 05 Bengkulu Tengah.Method: A qualitative approach was employed, with data collected through observations, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis focused on understanding how exemplary values are applied both in the classroom and at home. **Results:** The findings indicate that the implementation of exemplary values by the third-grade teacher at school was effective and categorized as good. However, the application of knowledge at home remains limited, as students are less consistent in practicing what they have gained due to a lack of awareness and fear of parental authority. **Conclusion:** While the implementation of exemplary values at school is effective, support from the home environment is necessary to strengthen students' habit formation. **Contribution:** This study offers recommendations for teachers and parents to enhance the consistency of applying exemplary values, thereby ensuring that Akidah Akhlak education is more effective both in school and at home.

1. PENDAHULUAN

Aqidah akhlak learning plays a strategic role in shaping the character of students who are faithful and moral at the madrasah level. Nuraini et al. (2024) show that the systematic implementation of aqidah akhlak learning in MI/SD can improve student discipline and character. Furthermore, Ahmad et al. (2025) emphasize that holistic religious and moral education, encompassing cognitive, affect-tive, and psychomotor aspects, forms the foundation for the development of positive daily behavior. Additionally, Atin & Maemonah (2022) report that the internalization of religious values through religious education in MI makes students more receptive to Islamic teachings, demonstrating their readiness to apply spiritual and social values in the school environment. These three views reinforce that in the context of MI, faith and morals education is not merely the delivery of material, but a process of character building through teacher role modeling, habit formation, and interaction in daily life.

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Theoretically, moral education should encompass cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects, ensuring that moral values extend beyond knowledge and are embodied in practical actions. Husna & Sari (2021) emphasize that effective religious and moral education must encourage students to feel, believe in, and practice moral values, so that their daily behavior reflects the internalization of religious teachings. In line with this, Puspitasari & Fitria (2020) demonstrate that positive student behavior, such as honesty, discipline, and politeness, can develop when teachers provide real-life examples, rather than just delivering material. Furthermore, Rahmawati (2023) asserts that teachers' consistency in displaying praiseworthy morals is a significant factor in the successful instillation of moral values, because students learn more effectively through modeling than through verbal instruction alone. Thus, faith and morals education requires the integration of teaching values and real role modeling by teachers in order for character building to take place optimally.

However, in reality, various phenomena indicate that a gap still exists between the expected moral values and the behavior of students in the field. Based on initial observations in the third grade of MIN 05 Bengkulu Tengah, it was found that some students did not yet apply moral behavior as they should. Some students still display rude behavior, lack discipline, and show little concern for their friends and the environment. These behaviors reflect that the moral knowledge provided in class has not been fully internalized into habits and real actions. This phenomenon suggests that the learning process needs to be evaluated and strengthened through methods that more closely align with the aspects of habit formation and role modeling.

This situation highlights the need for learning that not only conveys moral theory but also instills values through real-world actions. Role modeling is one of the most effective ways to influence behavior because elementary school students are still at the stage of imitating and observing adult behavior. Therefore, the consistent application of role-modeling values in moral education is crucial. Role modeling can take the form of attitudes, ways of speaking, problem-solving strategies, and moral behavior demonstrated by teachers in their daily interactions with students. By seeing and experiencing direct examples, students find it easier to understand the meaning of the moral values they are learning.

Teachers' exemplary behavior has a significant influence on the character formation of students, as students tend to imitate figures they respect. Fauzan & Hartini (2022) state that habits such as greeting, smiling, saying hello, and maintaining cleanliness at school, which are carried out consistently by exemplary teachers, can strengthen the internalization of students' moral values. Furthermore, Dwikorita & Syafitri (2021) emphasize that integrating the role model method in moral education through teachers as concrete examples enables moral values to be instilled not merely as abstract concepts, but as part of students' daily lives. Moreover, Putra et al. (2023) argue that students who are actively involved in group activities guided by exemplary teachers show significant improvements in cooperation, discipline, and responsibility. These three studies reinforce the argument that moral education that integrates the exemplary method has great potential to instill moral values more effect-tively and sustainably.

Several recent studies confirm that teachers' exemplary behavior has a significant influence on the character development of students. Sukenti & Yulianti (2020) demonstrate that consistent positive behavior displayed by teachers can shape students' morals through imitation and habituation. The findings of Rosyid, et al. (2021) also reinforce that moral values are more easily internalized when teachers demonstrate honest, disciplined, and polite behavior in their daily activities. In addition, Utami & Raharjo (2022) emphasize that routine habits, such as greeting, smiling, maintaining cleanliness, and participating in group work, can accelerate the internalization of moral values when supported by teachers' exemplary behavior. Hidayat & Nurfadilah (2023) found that teacher role models play a crucial role in encouraging students to exhibit responsible and empathetic behavior during learning activities. Azizah & Hasanah (2024) emphasize that the majority of studies still discuss role models in general and have not yet examined their specific implementation in akidah akhlak learning in lower grades of MI, leaving room for further research. These five views demonstrate that teacher role modeling is the primary foundation for character building; however, its application in the context of MI religious and moral education learning still requires further in-depth study.

According to the descriptions of previous studies, a research gap exists that needs to be addressed. Few studies have specifically examined the application of role modeling values in the context of religious and moral education learning in MI third-grade classrooms. In addition, some studies still focus on habits or general school activities, rather than the integration of role models in the learning process in the classroom. The lack of studies observing the relationship between faith and morals education, teacher behavior as role models, and changes in student behavior is a gap that needs to be studied in more depth. This study attempts to fill that gap.

This study aims to describe in depth how exemplary values are applied in teaching faith and morals to third-grade students at MIN 05 Bengkulu Tengah. This study also aims to identify the supporting factors and obstacles that

arise during the process of applying exemplary values, as well as to determine the extent to which teachers' exemplary behavior can influence the development of students' morals and behavior at school. The results of this study can contribute to the development of more effective religious and moral education learning strategies, as well as serve as a reference for teachers in instilling moral values through consistent and meaningful exemplary behavior.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study uses a qualitative research design with a descriptive approach. This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the process of applying exemplary values in faith and morals education, as well as how student behavior is shaped through this process. Qualitative research enables researchers to explore phenomena as they naturally occur in the classroom environment, without manipulating the research variables. Thus, the research can fully describe the role of teachers as role models and how students respond to these role models through their daily activities at the madrasah.

2.2 Research Object

The research subjects were religious education teachers and third-grade students at MIN 05 Bengkulu Tengah. The subjects were selected purposively, based on the consideration that this class exhibited important phenomena related to student moral behavior and was relevant to the study's focus. The Akidah Akhlak teacher was chosen as the primary informant because of his role as a teacher and role model for students. Meanwhile, third-grade students served as the source of data to observe the implementation of role modeling and the behavioral changes that occurred during the learning process.

2.3 Data Collection Process

Data collection was conducted using several techniques, including observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to directly observe the behavior of teachers and students during the learning process, both in the classroom and in daily interactions at school. In-depth interviews were conducted with teachers and several students to obtain information about their experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of the exemplary values being applied. Documentation was used to supplement the observation and interview data, in the form of field notes, photos of activities, syllabi, and lesson plans for Akidah Akhlak, as well as recordings of learning activities that demonstrated the application of exemplary values

2.4 Data Analysis Process

Data analysis in this study was conducted qualitatively using an interactive analysis model, which included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, the researcher selected, focused, and simplified the data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation to align with the study's focus. Next, the data were presented in the form of a narrative description to facilitate the interpretation of the research findings. The final stage was drawing conclusions, which was carried out continuously throughout the research process to ensure that the research results accurately described the application of exemplary values and their influence on student behavior.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

Based on the author's observations in class, third-grade students at MIN 05 Bengulu Tengah demonstrated that they can apply what they have learned at school. Therefore, to develop a civilized and characterful generation, it is necessary to review the implementation of exemplary values in the teaching of faith and morals that are applied in everyday life, both in school and at home. Therefore, the guidance and delivery carried out by teachers must be efficient and easily understood by students, so that learning becomes a motivational drive within them to apply what they have learned. To find out how students apply exemplary values in their daily lives, the researcher first conducted interviews with the homeroom teacher of third-grade students at. The author conducted interviews starting on March 11, 2024, in accordance with the scope of the problem taken by the author, namely:

a) Have you instilled the exemplary value of piety in your students?

The author interviewed the first informant, (NM) a teacher of Aqidah Akhlak (Islamic beliefs and morals) in third-grade students at MIN 05 Bengkulu Tengah. She said that: "Exemplary piety is an inherent duty of every teacher because they replace the role of students' parents at school, naturally due to their maturity and adulthood. In their daily lives at school, it is the teacher's responsibility to instill good exemplary values, especially when they are still in their formative years. To identify their personality, they still often imitate their parents and teachers. Hasbullah argues that children will imitate their behavior, actions, and speech. With this example, positive symptoms arise, namely, identification with the person being imitated. Identification is essential in personality formation. That is why role models are the primary and most important educational tool, as the transfer process is closely linked to the interaction between parents and children, which occurs naturally and intimately. So, in this dimension, every parent should understand well that every child tends to identify with the people who are close to them. Of course, we, as educators at this school, have incorporated this value into every activity and the school environment, as piety has been emphasized since children entered preschool and began kindergarten or early childhood education. Therefore, we, the madrasah teachers, only reaffirm the fundamentals of life that go hand in hand with the value of piety that must be carried out by children every day so that these values of piety always become the basic foundation in children, both for their current and future lives."

b) Have you instilled the values of good manners in your students?

Informan NM, a teacher of faith and morals in class third-grade students at MIN 05 Bengkulu Tengah, said: "I strongly emphasize the value of politeness in my classroom because I believe that knowledge and manners must be balanced in order for children to achieve success in life. It is my responsibility and duty as a teacher of morals at this school to always monitor and pay attention to the development of children's character in the school environment so that they can grow and develop optimally and effectively, in line with knowledge and manners in terms of humanity towards fellow human beings."

c) Have you taught your students the value of tolerance?

Informan NM, a teacher of Aqidah Akhlak in class third-grade students at MIN 05 Bengkulu Tengah, said: "I have applied the value of tolerance throughout my teaching career because there are two transfer students in my class who are not from this village, so there are differences in language and culture. Therefore, I always teach the children to respect one another so that there is no awkwardness among them when making friends. This has been successfully applied by the students both inside and outside the classroom; there is no discrimination among them in the playground."

d) Have you instilled the value of discipline in your students?

Informan NM, a religious education teacher in class third-grade students at MIN 05 Bengkulu Tengah, said that: "I have implemented the value of discipline. Discipline is essential in the learning process that I teach, which is based on religious values that are certainly related to discipline. For example, in class, children must practice discipline by bringing their own stationery and refraining from making noise when reciting prayers before the lesson begins. This has become part of the students' discipline in class when they are at school and studying."

e) Have you implemented the value of caring for students?

Neli Maryani S.Pd., an akidah akhlak teacher in class third-grade students at MIN 05 Bengkulu Tengah, said: "The value of caring is also something that I emphasize in my teaching because in akidah akhlak learning, caring is a commendable moral value and must always be incorporated into our daily lives. For example, we often organize donation activities when a friend or family member of another student experiences a misfortune, and the children are always eager to participate in donating to one another (Informant NM).

Based on the researcher's observations at MIN 05 Bengkulu Tengah, religious and moral education teachers have taught and applied exemplary values in their religious and moral education classes. This can be observed in the teachers as they conduct the learning process in the classroom. From the analysis of interviews and observations of third-grade religious and moral education teachers, it appears that in every lesson, teachers always emphasize and demonstrate the values that students should apply in their daily lives, both inside and outside of school. This is because the application of good manners and behavior taught in Aqidah Akhlak lessons can be seen from the various efforts and activities carried out by teachers in the classroom, where there are many actions to apply exemplary values during teaching, and the application of these values is constantly monitored by teachers while in class (Observation Results). Next, an interview was conducted with the second informant, who is the homeroom teacher of the third-grade students at MIN 05 Bengkulu Tengah, on March 25, 2022.

3.2. Discussion

The application of exemplary values in Akidah Akhlak learning for third-grade students at MIN 05 Bengkulu Tengah demonstrates that the learning process, characterized by real-life examples, has a positive impact on the development of students' behavior and attitudes. The exemplary behavior displayed by teachers, whether through their words, attitudes, or problem-solving in the classroom, has a strong influence on how students respond to similar situations. Students not only hear explanations about praiseworthy morals, but also see firsthand how these values are manifested in real actions, which encourages them to imitate them. This condition confirms that the internalization of moral values requires real-life behavioral models that students can directly observe in their daily school activities.

Students' understanding of moral values will be significantly enhanced when teachers incorporate role modeling into the learning process. Suryani & Rahmawati (2020) found that students find it easier to understand moral concepts when they directly observe polite, disciplined, and responsible behavior exemplified by teachers in real situations. Research by Wahyuni & Maulina (2022) also shows that moral learning becomes more contextual and meaningful when teachers consistently display positive behavior, allowing students to connect moral concepts with their daily practices. Meanwhile, Hakim & Fitriani (2023) emphasized that contextualizing moral values through role modeling not only strengthens students' understanding but also improves their ability to apply these values in their family and community environments. These three findings confirm that teacher role modeling is an effective strategy in helping students understand and internalize moral values more deeply.

In addition to influencing cognitive aspects, teachers' role models not only affect cognitive development but also have a substantial impact on students' emotional development. Amri & Wulandari (2020) emphasize that teachers' gentle and patient attitudes can create a sense of emotional security in students, making it easier for them to concentrate and feel comfortable during the learning process. Sari & Handayani (2022) demonstrate that students tend to imitate how teachers manage their emotions, including how to respond to conflicts calmly, which in turn helps them develop more stable emotional regulation skills. Additionally, Fathurrahman & Ningsih (2023) state that teachers' emotional role modeling plays a crucial role in fostering students' empathy and positive attitudes toward various social situations, especially during the elementary school years, when adults around them have a significant influence. These findings confirm that teachers' role modeling is a crucial factor in fostering stu-dents' emotional development and character building.

Significant changes in students' social interactions indicate that teachers' role modeling not only impacts the teacher-student relationship but also influences the interaction patterns among students. When students are accustomed to seeing commendable behavior from teachers, such as respecting opinions, being polite, and showing discipline, they are encouraged to imitate this behavior in their relationships with their peers, thereby creating a more harmonious, conducive, and Islamic classroom culture. Habituation has been proven to be an important factor that enhances the effectiveness of role modeling in moral education, as behaviors that are repeated continuously become more ingrained in students over time. Rohim and Lestari (2021) emphasize that consistent habituation by teachers, such as greetings, smiles, salutations, and prayers before studying, can shape students' religious character through a natural process of internalization. In addition, Huda & Salsabila (2023) found that habits integrated into school routines, particularly when teachers serve as primary role models in their implementation, cause students to no longer perform these behaviors out of obligation, but rather as part of their daily habits.

Although it has a positive impact, the challenges in implementing role modeling in the classroom cannot be separated from the diverse backgrounds of students, which cause differences in the speed at which they internalize moral values. Fauziah & Marzuki (2020) emphasized that students who lack character education support from their families typically take longer to adopt good behavior at school, highlighting the significant influence of the home environment on shaping moral values. In line with this, Syamsuddin & Halim (2022) found that old habits that are not in line with moral values become a factor that hinders internalization, so that teacher role models must be synergized with the involvement of parents and the family environment so that changes in student behavior can take place more effectively and sustainably. These two opinions suggest that teacher role models alone are insufficient without the full support of the family and the student's environment.

External environmental factors also play a significant role in the successful internalization of moral values in students. Rahman & Anwar (2020) emphasize that a lack of parental supervision, weak communication within the family, and minimal moral conditioning at home can hinder the formation of commendable behavior in students, requiring schools to work harder through exemplary behavior and conditioning. In line with this, Halim & Yusra (2023) found that collaboration between schools and parents, through intensive communication, supervision of

children's behavior, and the application of moral values at home, greatly influences ensuring that the moral values instilled by teachers continue in the family environment.

This study demonstrates that the application of exemplary values significantly contributes to enhancing the quality of Akidah Akhlak learning. Teachers, as role models, play a significant role in shaping students' behavior, attitudes, and moral values. Exemplary behavior helps students internalize moral values more quickly and strongly because they are involved in the process of observation, imitation, and habit formation. The results of this study reinforce the understanding that moral learning is effective when carried out through consistent real-life examples and accompanied by habit formation. Thus, schools and teachers need to continue to prioritize exemplary behavior in all educational activities so that students' character development can flourish optimally.

4. IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

4.1 Research Imlications

The implications of this study indicate that exemplary behavior is a relevant and practical approach in improving the quality of Akidah Akhlak learning. Exemplary behavior enables teachers to effectively convey moral values, foster positive interactions, and encourage natural behavioral changes in students. For madrasahs, these findings provide a basis for developing comprehensive character-building strategies by involving all elements of the school to become role models for students. Role modeling can be a core approach that is reinforced by habit formation, coaching, and a supportive school environment.

4.2 Research Contributions

This study contributes to the development of moral learning theory and practice by showing that role modeling is not only a teaching method but also a potent mechanism for internalizing values. These findings confirm that teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' morals, as their daily behavior has a direct impact on the moral development of students. Therefore, madrasahs and educators must continue to strengthen their integrity, professionalism, and moral commitment so that moral education can be more effective and have a lasting impact on students' character

5. LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

5.1 Research Limitations

This study has several limitations that need to be considered when interpreting the results. Data collection was conducted in one class at one madrasah; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to broader conditions. In addition, this study focused solely on the application of teacher role models in the context of Akidah Akhlak learning. It therefore did not examine the influence of the family and community environment, which also play a significant role in shaping students' character. The relatively short duration of the study meant that the researchers were unable to observe the long-term changes in student behavior comprehensively. Variations in student behavior and backgrounds also posed a challenge, as not all students responded to role modeling at the same rate. Therefore, the results of this study should be supplemented with further studies that have a broader scope and a longer observation period to obtain a more comprehensive picture.

5.2 Recommendations for Further Research

Further research is recommended with a broader scope, encompassing a greater number of classes, madrasah levels, and diverse school environments, to enable stronger comparison and generalization of the results. Subsequent research should also employ a longer time frame to monitor changes in student behavior gradually and assess the long-term effectiveness of role modeling. In addition, further research could examine the involvement of families and the community environment as external factors that also influence the formation of students' character. A mixed approach between qualitative and quantitative methods could also be considered to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the relationship between role models, habituation, and the development of students' moral behavior.

6. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the application of exemplary values in teaching Akidah Akhlak to third-grade students at MIN 05 Bengkulu Tengah has a positive impact on students' behavior, attitudes, and understanding of

moral values. Teachers who consistently display commendable behavior, such as politeness, discipline, honesty, and patience, become real-life examples that are easy for students to observe and imitate. Learning that is accompanied by exemplary behavior makes it easier for students to understand moral concepts because they see their application directly in everyday life, allowing the process of internalizing values to take place more effectively.

In addition to enhancing students' understanding of moral concepts, exemplary behavior also impacts students' emotional and social development. Students exhibit more positive attitude changes, such as increased cooperation, appreciation for friends, and improved ability to manage emotions in various classroom situations. Teacher role modeling not only forms a more harmonious teacher-student relationship but also creates a conducive and morally rich classroom culture. Consistent habituation strengthens the character-building process, allowing these positive behaviors to become ingrained and an integral part of the students' identities.

This study confirms that role modeling is a practical and relevant approach in teaching Akidah Akhlak at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level. This model not only helps students understand religious teachings conceptually but also encourages them to apply these teachings in their daily lives. The results of this study make an important contribution to the development of moral learning strategies, emphasizing the need for teachers, schools, and families to collaborate in building students' character through real-life examples and consistent habits. Thus, role modeling must be an integral part of every educational activity in order to produce a generation with noble character

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Author Contribution Statement

All authors discussed the results, contributed to the final manuscript, and approved the final version for publication. Yemi Agusti: Conceptualization, Design, Methodology, Writing - Original Draft, Performed data, Analysis and Interpretation of the results. Alimni: Conceptualization, Writing - Review & Editing.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no significant competing financial, professional or personal interests that might have influenced the performance or presentation of the work described in this manuscript.

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