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The Role of Aqidah Akhlak Teachers in Developing Leadership Character Among Seventh-Grade Students at MTs Negeri 3 Padangsidempuan

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Abstract: *This study aims to determine the role of Aqidah Akhlak teachers in fostering the leadership character of seventh-grade students at MTs Negeri 3 Padangsidempuan. This research employed a qualitative approach using a case study method. The research participants consisted of the principal, Aqidah Akhlak teacher, and seventh-grade students. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings revealed that Aqidah Akhlak teachers play a crucial role in developing students' leadership character. This role is reflected through the teacher's functions as an educator and mentor; motivator; role model (uswah hasanah), and facilitator. As educators and mentors, teachers instill leadership values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, trustworthiness, and cooperation. As motivators, teachers encourage students to be confident, active, and courageous in participating in various activities. As role models, teachers demonstrate noble moral values that can be emulated by students in their daily lives. Furthermore, teachers act as facilitators by providing opportunities for students to practice leadership skills through classroom learning activities and school programs. Therefore, the role of Aqidah Akhlak teachers significantly contributes to the formation and development of students' leadership character based on Islamic values.*

Keywords: *Teacher Role; Aqidah Akhlak; Leadership Character; Students.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the most important aspects of human life because, through education, individuals can develop their potential optimally. Education serves as a means of shaping people who possess the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values necessary for social, national, and civic life. In addition to enhancing intellectual abilities, education also has the responsibility of shaping students' character so that they become morally upright, responsible individuals who are capable of adapting to the developments of the modern era. Therefore, education is not only understood as a process of transferring knowledge but also as a process of developing a complete and balanced personality in terms of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects.

One of the character traits that should be developed in students is leadership spirit. Leadership spirit refers to an individual's ability to influence, direct, and motivate others to achieve certain goals effectively and responsibly. Leadership character is important for students because they are the future generation who will eventually assume various strategic roles in society. Developing leadership spirit from an early age can help students build self-confidence, communication skills, decision-making abilities, and the capacity to work collaboratively with others. Thus, students not only become academically competent individuals but also agents of change who can make positive contributions to their surroundings (Mulyasa, 2021).

In the field of education, leadership development cannot be achieved instantly; rather, it requires a continuous process through various learning activities and habituation practices. The school environment serves as a highly strategic setting for instilling leadership values in students. Through classroom learning, student organizations, group work, and extracurricular activities, students can learn responsibility, discipline, cooperation, and problem-solving skills. These experiences help students develop leadership competencies that are essential both in their daily lives and in their future endeavors.

From an Islamic perspective, leadership is considered a trust (*amanah*) that must be carried out with full responsibility and honesty. Islam teaches that every individual is a leader who will be held accountable for what they lead. Therefore, leadership development should be grounded in Islamic values that emphasize trustworthiness, justice, honesty, discipline, and exemplary conduct. These values constitute the primary foundation for shaping leaders who possess not only intellectual competence but also noble character. Islamic education plays a significant role in instilling these values in students so that they may become responsible leaders who are committed to the common good (Nata, 2020).

One of the subjects that contributes significantly to character development in Islamic schools (*madrasahs*) is Aqidah Akhlak. This subject focuses on strengthening students' faith and cultivating moral conduct in accordance with Islamic teachings. Through Aqidah Akhlak education, students not only gain an understanding of religious concepts but are also guided to apply these values in their daily lives. Aqidah Akhlak learning serves as an effective means of instilling honesty, trustworthiness, discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and mutual respect, all of which are essential components of leadership character.

The success of developing students' leadership spirit cannot be separated from the role of teachers as educators who interact directly with students. Teachers have a significant responsibility to guide, direct, and motivate students so that they can fully develop their potential. In the learning process, teachers function not only as providers of knowledge but also as role models who demonstrate how leadership values are applied in real life. Teachers' attitudes and behaviors that reflect honesty, discipline, responsibility, and care serve as examples that students can emulate.

Aqidah Akhlak teachers hold a particularly strategic position in fostering students' leadership spirit because the subject they teach is directly related to moral and character development. Through various teaching methods, counseling, positive behavioral habituation, and exemplary conduct in daily life, Aqidah Akhlak teachers can help students understand and apply leadership values that align with Islamic teachings. This role becomes increasingly important considering the complex challenges faced by students in today's modern era, which require strong character and resilience.

MTs Negeri 3 Padangsidempuan, as one of the Islamic educational institutions, is committed to producing graduates who excel not only academically but also in moral character and leadership qualities. Various programs and activities implemented in the madrasah are designed to support the development of students' potential, including their leadership abilities. Through both curricular and extracurricular activities, students are given opportunities to learn leadership, cooperation, and responsibility in carrying out assigned tasks. These efforts are part of the character education process aimed at producing a high-quality and competitive generation.

Nevertheless, based on preliminary observations, several issues related to students' leadership spirit are still evident. Some students lack confidence in expressing their opinions in front of the class, are hesitant to make decisions, participate less actively in group activities, and have not yet demonstrated optimal responsibility toward assigned tasks. These conditions indicate that the process of leadership development still requires greater attention and reinforcement in order to achieve the objectives of character education effectively. Therefore, active teacher involvement in providing guidance and mentoring is essential.

In the effort to foster students' leadership spirit, Aqidah Akhlak teachers play a crucial role because the learning process emphasizes not only knowledge acquisition but also the development of attitudes and behavior. Through the inculcation of Islamic values, the provision of motivation, the habituation of positive behavior, and the demonstration of exemplary conduct, teachers can help students develop various leadership characteristics necessary for life. The success of this developmental process is greatly influenced by teachers' ability to perform their roles as educators, mentors, motivators, and role models for students (Ananda & Fadhli, 2023).

Based on the discussion above, it can be understood that fostering students' leadership spirit is an important component of the educational process that deserves serious attention. Aqidah Akhlak teachers have a strategic role in instilling leadership values based on Islamic teachings through various learning activities and habituation practices within the madrasah environment. Therefore, this study was

conducted to identify and analyze in depth the role of Aqidah Akhlak teachers in fostering the leadership spirit of seventh-grade students at MTs Negeri 3 Padangsidempuan. It is expected that the findings of this study will contribute to the development of character education within the madrasah setting (Suyadi, 2022).

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. The qualitative approach was chosen because the study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding and description of the role of Aqidah Akhlak teachers in fostering the leadership spirit of seventh-grade students at MTs Negeri 3 Padangsidempuan. Through a qualitative approach, the researcher was able to obtain detailed and comprehensive data regarding the various forms of guidance provided by teachers as well as the factors that support the development of students' leadership spirit. Qualitative research also enables researchers to understand phenomena from the direct perspectives of the informants, resulting in richer and more accurate data that reflect actual conditions.

The type of research used in this study was a case study, as the research focused on a single research site, namely MTs Negeri 3 Padangsidempuan, with the objective of examining in depth the role of Aqidah Akhlak teachers in fostering the leadership spirit of seventh-grade students. Through the case study method, the researcher was able to explore detailed information regarding activities, behaviors, and various forms of guidance carried out by teachers within the madrasah environment.

This research was conducted at MTs Negeri 3 Padangsidempuan, located in Padangsidempuan City, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The research site was selected based on the consideration that the madrasah implements various character-building programs related to the development of students' leadership qualities and that Aqidah Akhlak teachers play an active role in these programs. In addition, the location was easily accessible to the researcher, which facilitated the data collection process.

The data sources in this study consisted of primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were obtained directly from research informants through interviews and observations. The main informant was the seventh-grade Aqidah Akhlak teacher, while supporting informants included the principal and several seventh-grade students of MTs Negeri 3 Padangsidempuan. These informants were selected because they were considered to possess knowledge and experience relevant to the focus of the study. Secondary data were obtained from various supporting documents, including the madrasah profile, teacher and student data, documentation of school activities, institutional archives, books, scholarly journals, and previous studies relevant to the research topic.

The data collection techniques employed in this study included observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to obtain a direct overview of classroom learning activities and the forms of leadership development implemented by Aqidah Akhlak teachers. Through observation, the researcher was able to directly examine interactions between teachers and students, as well as various activities that support the development of students' leadership character. In-

depth interviews were conducted with the principal, Aqidah Akhlak teachers, and students to gather more comprehensive information regarding the teachers' roles in fostering leadership spirit. Documentation was used to complement the research data in the form of photographs of activities, school documents, notes, and various archives related to the research object.

To ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the data, the researcher employed triangulation techniques. Triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from various sources and different data collection methods. Observation data were compared with interview and documentation data so that the accuracy of the information could be verified. In addition to source triangulation and technique triangulation, the researcher also conducted member checking by reconfirming the collected data with informants to ensure that the information accurately reflected actual conditions.

The data analysis technique used in this study followed the interactive data analysis model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved selecting, focusing, and simplifying the data obtained from the field according to the research focus. Subsequently, the data were presented in the form of systematic narrative descriptions to facilitate understanding and interpretation. The final stage involved drawing conclusions by identifying the meanings emerging from the analyzed data in order to answer the research questions regarding the role of Aqidah Akhlak teachers in fostering the leadership spirit of seventh-grade students at MTs Negeri 3 Padangsidempuan.

Through the application of a qualitative approach with a case study design, supported by systematic data collection and analysis techniques, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive description of the role of Aqidah Akhlak teachers in fostering students' leadership spirit and to contribute to the development of character education within the madrasah environment.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The Concept of the Role of Aqidah Akhlak Teachers

Teachers are one of the most important components in the educational process. The success of education is not solely determined by the curriculum, facilities, infrastructure, or teaching methods, but is also greatly influenced by the role of teachers in guiding and directing students. Teachers are not only responsible for delivering learning materials but also play a significant role in shaping students' character, attitudes, and personalities so that they become knowledgeable, faithful, pious, and morally upright individuals. In the context of Islamic education, teachers carry broader responsibilities because they are expected not only to develop students' intellectual abilities but also to nurture their spiritual, moral, and social dimensions (Rahman & Wahyuni, 2021).

The role of a teacher can be defined as a series of duties, functions, and responsibilities carried out in the educational process to achieve learning objectives and character development goals. These roles include educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students. In addition, teachers serve as motivators, facilitators, mediators, innovators, and role models who demonstrate positive behavior in everyday life. Through these diverse roles, teachers contribute

significantly to creating an educational environment that supports students' holistic development and personal growth.

In Islamic education, Aqidah Akhlak teachers occupy a particularly important position because the subject of Aqidah Akhlak is directly related to the development of students' faith and moral character. Aqidah refers to the beliefs that form the foundation of a Muslim's faith in Allah SWT, while Akhlak refers to behavior and attitudes that reflect Islamic values in daily life. Therefore, Aqidah Akhlak teachers are not only responsible for conveying knowledge about faith and morality but also for instilling these values into students' lives so that they become habits and enduring personal characteristics (Sari & Munandar, 2022).

The role of Aqidah Akhlak teachers can be understood as all efforts, responsibilities, and functions carried out to guide students toward a correct understanding of Islamic teachings and the ability to practice them in everyday life. Aqidah Akhlak teachers are responsible for instilling values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, trustworthiness, cooperation, empathy, and other commendable moral qualities that form the foundation of students' character development. Through the learning process, teachers strive to develop students who are not only intellectually competent but also possess strong moral and spiritual qualities.

In addition to serving as instructors, Aqidah Akhlak teachers also function as counselors who assist students in dealing with various life challenges. Teachers provide guidance, advice, and solutions based on Islamic principles so that students can make appropriate decisions in their daily lives. This role is particularly important because adolescence is a critical developmental stage during which students require guidance in forming their identities and personal character. Effective mentoring helps students navigate social and personal challenges while maintaining adherence to Islamic values.

Furthermore, Aqidah Akhlak teachers act as motivators who encourage students to continuously improve themselves and develop their potential. Through motivation, students are expected to cultivate enthusiasm for learning, self-confidence, and resilience in facing challenges both within the school environment and in society. The motivation provided by teachers is not limited to academic achievement but also extends to the development of good morals and positive character traits. Such encouragement plays a vital role in helping students achieve balanced personal growth (Fadillah, 2020).

In addition, Aqidah Akhlak teachers serve as role models (*uswah hasanah*) for their students. In Islamic education, exemplary conduct is considered one of the most effective educational methods because students tend to imitate the behavior they observe in significant individuals around them. Consequently, teachers must demonstrate attitudes and behaviors that reflect Islamic values, including honesty, discipline, politeness, responsibility, and fairness. The example set by teachers has a profound influence on students' character formation and moral development (Nurhayati & Hasanah, 2023).

In relation to leadership development, Aqidah Akhlak teachers play a crucial role in instilling Islamic leadership values. They guide students to develop responsibility, trustworthiness, courage in decision-making, teamwork skills, and

the ability to influence others positively. These qualities are fundamental characteristics of effective leaders. Through continuous learning activities and habituation processes, teachers help students cultivate a leadership spirit that is firmly grounded in Islamic teachings. Such leadership development is essential in preparing students to become responsible individuals capable of contributing positively to society (Prasetyo & Hidayat, 2024).

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the role of Aqidah Akhlak teachers encompasses all duties, functions, and responsibilities performed in guiding, educating, directing, motivating, and serving as role models for students so that they develop strong faith, noble character, and positive personalities in accordance with Islamic teachings. This role is not limited to achieving instructional objectives but also extends to shaping students' character and personality, including fostering a leadership spirit characterized by responsibility, trustworthiness, and moral excellence.

The Role of Aqidah Akhlak Teachers in Fostering the Leadership Spirit of Seventh-Grade Students at MTs Negeri 3 Padangsidempuan

Aqidah Akhlak teachers play a very important role in fostering students' leadership spirit. Leadership development is not only carried out through the delivery of learning materials in the classroom but also through habituation, motivation, exemplary conduct, and various activities that actively involve students. Leadership spirit is one of the character traits that must be instilled from an early age so that students are able to lead themselves and others, take responsibility for assigned tasks, work collaboratively, make decisions confidently, and demonstrate trustworthiness in carrying out their responsibilities. The role of teachers in developing leadership character is crucial because leadership values are closely related to moral development, responsibility, and social competence among students (Hidayat & Nurhayati, 2021).

Based on interviews with the Aqidah Akhlak teacher, it was found that leadership development is carried out by instilling moral values that form the foundation of good leadership character. According to the teacher, a leader must possess honesty, responsibility, discipline, trustworthiness, and effective communication skills. Therefore, these values are consistently emphasized during classroom instruction as well as in students' daily activities within the madrasah environment. The integration of leadership values into religious and moral education enables students to understand leadership not merely as a position of authority but as a form of responsibility and service to others (Prasetyo & Ramadhan, 2022).

As educators and mentors, Aqidah Akhlak teachers not only teach lessons related to faith and morality but also guide students in applying these values in their daily lives. Teachers help students understand that every individual is essentially a leader who will be accountable for his or her actions and responsibilities. Consequently, students are encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility through various assignments and activities provided by the school. During interviews, the teacher explained that leadership is not solely about leading others but also about leading oneself by being disciplined, honest, and responsible. Through Aqidah

Akhlaq lessons, students are guided to distinguish between behaviors that align with Islamic teachings and those that do not. Teachers also encourage students to fulfill their responsibilities in both individual and group tasks, enabling them to recognize responsibility as one of the most fundamental qualities of a leader.

In addition to providing guidance, teachers assist students who experience difficulties in social interactions with their peers. Students are encouraged to cooperate, respect differing opinions, and resolve conflicts in constructive ways. Such continuous guidance helps leadership values become deeply embedded within students' personalities. This mentoring process reflects the importance of teacher involvement in nurturing interpersonal skills that are essential for effective leadership (Siregar & Lubis, 2023).

Another important role of Aqidah Akhlaq teachers is instilling responsibility. Responsibility is a fundamental leadership characteristic because effective leaders must be able to carry out their duties conscientiously and accept the consequences of their decisions. To cultivate this value, teachers assign tasks that students are expected to complete properly and explain that every task represents a trust (*amanah*) that must be fulfilled sincerely. Interview findings revealed that teachers consistently remind students to complete assignments on time and fulfill their obligations as learners. When students neglect their responsibilities, teachers provide advice and constructive reminders regarding the importance of accountability in everyday life. This cultivation of responsibility extends beyond classroom learning to include class duties, group work, and religious activities, all of which help students understand the significance of teamwork and commitment in achieving common goals.

Discipline is another leadership value emphasized by Aqidah Akhlaq teachers. A disciplined leader serves as a positive example for others; therefore, teachers strive to develop discipline through continuous positive habituation. Students are encouraged to arrive at school on time, participate in lessons orderly, obey school regulations, and perform religious duties according to established schedules. Teachers believe that discipline cannot be formed instantly but requires a long and continuous process. Consequently, they consistently remind students and model disciplined behavior in their daily interactions. Through these efforts, students learn time management, compliance with rules, and commitment to fulfilling their responsibilities.

Trustworthiness and honesty are also essential qualities that Aqidah Akhlaq teachers seek to instill in students. Without honesty and trustworthiness, a leader cannot gain the confidence and respect of others. During the learning process, teachers continuously emphasize the importance of being truthful in all circumstances. Students are advised not to cheat during examinations, not to lie to teachers or peers, and to have the courage to admit mistakes when they occur. Interviews with students revealed that teachers frequently provide advice regarding the importance of maintaining trust and practicing honesty in daily life. Teachers also use examples from the life of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, who is widely recognized for his honesty and trustworthiness. Through these exemplary stories, students gain a clear understanding of the qualities of an ideal leader according to Islamic teachings. The cultivation of honesty and trustworthiness is intended to help

students develop strong integrity and become leaders who can be trusted by others in the future (Fauzi & Mulyadi, 2024).

In addition to being educators and mentors, Aqidah Akhlak teachers serve as motivators in developing students' leadership spirit. Teachers encourage students to express their opinions, participate actively in classroom discussions, and develop their talents and abilities. According to interview results, many students possess leadership potential but often lack self-confidence. Therefore, teachers provide encouragement and support to help students recognize and demonstrate their capabilities. Appreciation and recognition are frequently given to students who actively participate in learning activities and school programs. Such recognition makes students feel valued and motivates them to continue improving themselves. Teachers also inspire students by sharing stories of prominent Islamic figures who demonstrated exceptional leadership qualities, encouraging students to emulate these positive characteristics.

The role of teachers as role models (*uswah hasanah*) is another significant factor in leadership development. Students tend to imitate the behaviors demonstrated by teachers in everyday life. Therefore, Aqidah Akhlak teachers strive to set a positive example through their attitudes, speech, and actions, reflecting Islamic values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, politeness, fairness, and respect for others. Interviews with students indicated that they regard their Aqidah Akhlak teacher as a figure worthy of emulation because of the teacher's exemplary conduct and caring attitude. This role modeling serves as an effective means of instilling leadership values because students can directly observe how such values are practiced in real-life situations (Anwar & Kurniawan, 2025).

Furthermore, Aqidah Akhlak teachers function as facilitators of leadership development by providing students with opportunities to practice leadership skills. Students are given responsibilities such as leading prayers before lessons, directing group discussions, presenting discussion results in front of the class, and serving as coordinators for certain activities. These opportunities provide students with practical leadership experiences and help them develop communication skills, courage, confidence, and responsibility. Interview findings showed that students felt more confident after being given opportunities to speak and lead in front of their peers. Teachers also encourage participation in student organizations and extracurricular activities, which serve as valuable platforms for leadership training. As a result, leadership development takes place not only in the classroom but also through various activities within the madrasah environment.

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the role of Aqidah Akhlak teachers in fostering the leadership spirit of seventh-grade students at MTs Negeri 3 Padangsidempuan is carried out through multiple interconnected functions. These functions include serving as educators and mentors, instilling responsibility, discipline, trustworthiness, and honesty, acting as motivators and role models, and facilitating leadership development opportunities. Together, these roles form a continuous and comprehensive process of leadership development. Through this process, students not only acquire knowledge about leadership but also gain experiences and habits that help them develop leadership character grounded in Islamic values. Consequently, Aqidah Akhlak teachers make a significant

contribution to shaping a generation that possesses noble character, responsibility, and strong leadership qualities (Harahap & Nasution, 2025).

The Implications of Leadership Development on Students' Growth and Development

The leadership development carried out by Aqidah Akhlak teachers has significant implications for students' growth in terms of personality, social skills, academic achievement, and spiritual development. Leadership qualities cultivated through learning activities, habituation, role modeling, and motivation not only prepare students to become future leaders but also help them develop into more mature and responsible individuals in their daily lives. Therefore, leadership development is considered one of the essential efforts in shaping high-quality student character and promoting holistic personal growth (Rahman & Siregar, 2021).

One of the most noticeable implications of leadership development is the enhancement of students' sense of responsibility. Through various activities designed to train leadership skills, students become more aware of the duties and obligations they are expected to fulfill. They learn that every trust or responsibility entrusted to them must be carried out seriously and should not be neglected. This sense of responsibility is reflected not only in classroom learning activities but also in everyday behavior, such as completing assignments on time, maintaining classroom cleanliness, obeying school regulations, and performing religious obligations properly. The more frequently students are given opportunities to lead and take responsibility for activities, the stronger their awareness becomes in carrying out tasks independently without constant reminders from teachers. This finding is consistent with studies indicating that leadership training contributes significantly to the development of personal responsibility among students (Wahyuni & Arifin, 2022).

Leadership development also has a positive impact on students' self-confidence. Before receiving leadership guidance, some students tend to be shy, hesitant, and reluctant to speak in public or express their opinions. However, after being given opportunities to lead discussions, present assignments, lead prayers, and participate actively in school activities, students begin to demonstrate greater confidence. They become more willing to express ideas, answer questions, and interact with teachers and peers. Self-confidence serves as an important asset that enables students to face various challenges in both their educational journey and future social life. Increased confidence also encourages students to participate more actively in classroom learning and extracurricular activities.

Furthermore, leadership development contributes to the improvement of students' communication skills. Effective communication is one of the fundamental competencies required of a leader because it enables the delivery of ideas, instructions, and collaborative efforts with others. Through learning activities involving discussions, group projects, presentations, and deliberations, students learn how to express their opinions clearly and respectfully. They also develop the ability to listen to others, appreciate different viewpoints, and seek solutions through constructive dialogue. The development of communication skills from an

early age provides long-term benefits for students in both academic and social settings (Hidayat & Fauzi, 2023).

Another implication of leadership development is the enhancement of students' ability to collaborate and establish positive social relationships. In various leadership-related activities, students are required to work together with their peers to achieve common goals. They learn that success depends not only on individual abilities but also on the capacity to cooperate effectively with others. Through such experiences, students become more adaptable to their environment, more appreciative of others, and more capable of building harmonious social relationships. Values such as mutual assistance, respect for differing opinions, and prioritization of collective interests gradually become part of their character through the leadership development process.

Leadership development also influences students' decision-making abilities. In everyday life, students frequently encounter situations that require them to make choices and take appropriate actions. Through leadership training, students are encouraged to think critically, consider alternative solutions, and take responsibility for the decisions they make. These skills are highly important because they help students address challenges wisely and avoid being easily influenced by negative factors. Research has shown that students who receive leadership education tend to demonstrate stronger problem-solving and decision-making abilities compared to those who do not receive similar training (Nasution & Harahap, 2024).

From a character development perspective, leadership training has a significant impact on students' moral formation. Leadership values instilled by Aqidah Akhlak teachers, such as honesty, trustworthiness, discipline, responsibility, hard work, and social concern, gradually become integrated into students' personalities. These values are not only essential for effective leadership but also represent fundamental moral principles that every Muslim should possess in daily life. As positive character traits become more deeply rooted, students are better able to avoid negative behaviors and exercise self-control in various situations. The integration of leadership and moral education thus contributes significantly to the formation of ethical and responsible individuals (Fitriani & Mulyadi, 2020).

Another important implication is the improvement of student discipline. Effective leadership cannot be separated from disciplined behavior. Through various rules and habituation practices implemented by teachers, students learn to value time, comply with regulations, and perform activities according to established procedures. Such discipline positively influences students' learning processes because they become more organized in managing their time and more serious in participating in educational activities. As a result, students develop habits that support both personal and academic success.

From an academic perspective, leadership development also produces positive outcomes. Students who possess leadership qualities tend to be more active in the learning process, more willing to ask questions when encountering difficulties, and more enthusiastic about participating in academic activities. They generally demonstrate higher learning motivation because they are accustomed to taking initiative and assuming responsibility for their own development. This

condition ultimately supports improved academic performance and encourages lifelong learning attitudes (Putra & Kurniawan, 2025).

In the spiritual dimension, leadership development implemented through Aqidah Akhlak education helps strengthen students' faith and devotion to Allah SWT. Students come to understand that leadership is not merely the ability to direct others but also a trust (*amanah*) for which they will be accountable before Allah SWT. This awareness encourages students to be more careful in their actions, more honest in their behavior, and more responsible in carrying out their duties and obligations. Consequently, leadership development based on Islamic values not only cultivates leadership abilities but also nurtures strong spiritual awareness within students. This integration of leadership education and Islamic values contributes to the development of individuals who are capable of leading responsibly while maintaining a strong commitment to religious and moral principles (Lubis & Siregar, 2024).

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion regarding the role of Aqidah Akhlak teachers in fostering the leadership spirit of seventh-grade students at MTs Negeri 3 Padangsidempuan, it can be concluded that Aqidah Akhlak teachers play a highly significant role in the process of developing and strengthening students' leadership qualities. This role is carried out not only through the delivery of instructional materials in the classroom but also through character development, motivation, exemplary conduct, habituation, and the provision of opportunities for students to practice leadership values in their daily lives.

In practice, Aqidah Akhlak teachers serve as educators and mentors who instill leadership values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, trustworthiness, cooperation, and decision-making skills. They also act as motivators by encouraging students to develop self-confidence, courage in expressing their opinions, and the willingness to maximize their potential. Furthermore, teachers function as role models (*uswah hasanah*) through attitudes and behaviors that reflect noble moral values, providing students with examples to emulate in their daily lives. In addition, teachers act as facilitators by creating opportunities for students to develop leadership skills through both classroom learning activities and various school programs.

The leadership development carried out by Aqidah Akhlak teachers has positive implications for students' overall development. Through this guidance, students demonstrate improvements in responsibility, discipline, honesty, trustworthiness, self-confidence, communication skills, teamwork, and decision-making abilities. Moreover, leadership development contributes to the cultivation of noble character, increased learning motivation, the strengthening of Islamic values, and students' readiness to face various challenges in their future lives.

Therefore, it can be concluded that Aqidah Akhlak teachers make a substantial contribution to fostering the leadership spirit of seventh-grade students at MTs Negeri 3 Padangsidempuan. Through continuous guidance grounded in Islamic values, teachers are able to help students become morally upright, responsible, self-confident individuals who possess strong leadership character. Consequently, the

role of Aqidah Akhlak teachers should continue to be strengthened and supported by all members of the madrasah community so that educational goals aimed at producing outstanding and well-characterized generations can be achieved optimally.

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