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Analysis of the Effectiveness of Akidah Akhlak Learning Implementation in Developing the Religious Awareness of Students at MAN 2 Padangsidempuan

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the implementation of Aqidah Akhlak learning in developing students' religious awareness at MAN 2 Padangsidempuan. Aqidah Akhlak learning plays a vital role in fostering students' faith, moral values, and character, enabling them to internalize and practice Islamic teachings in their daily lives. This study employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive research design. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation involving Aqidah Akhlak teachers, students, and other relevant stakeholders. The findings indicate that the implementation of Aqidah Akhlak learning at MAN 2 Padangsidempuan has been effective. This effectiveness is reflected in well-structured lesson planning, the use of diverse instructional methods and learning media, and comprehensive assessment practices that emphasize not only students' cognitive achievement but also their affective development and moral behavior. Furthermore, Aqidah Akhlak learning has contributed significantly to enhancing students' religious awareness, as demonstrated by improved discipline in performing religious obligations, greater respect for teachers and parents, increased responsibility in completing academic tasks, and active participation in religious activities organized by the school. Despite these positive outcomes, several challenges remain, including differences in students' individual characteristics, the influence of the social environment, and the rapid advancement of information technology. To overcome these challenges, teachers have implemented various strategies, such as serving as positive role models, providing continuous motivation, establishing religious habituation programs, and adopting personalized approaches to student guidance. Overall, the study concludes that the effective implementation of Aqidah Akhlak learning makes a substantial contribution to the development of students' religious awareness at MAN 2 Padangsidempuan.

Keywords: Aqidah Akhlak Learning; Learning Effectiveness; Religious Awareness; Madrasah Aliyah.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a highly important process in human life because it serves as a means of developing individual potential, shaping personality, and instilling values that guide people in social life. Through education, individuals not only acquire knowledge and skills but also receive moral, spiritual, and social development necessary to face various challenges in life. In the context of the national education system, education aims to develop individuals who are faithful and devoted to God, possess noble character, are knowledgeable, creative, independent, and responsible. Therefore, education is not solely oriented toward intellectual development but also emphasizes character building and the strengthening of students' religious values (Nata, 2023, p. 78).

One of the efforts undertaken to achieve these educational objectives is through Islamic Religious Education. Islamic Religious Education plays a strategic role in shaping students' personalities based on the values of faith (*iman*) and piety (*taqwa*) to Allah SWT. It not only aims to provide an understanding of Islamic teachings but also guides students to apply religious values in their daily lives. Consequently, Islamic Religious Education serves as an essential instrument for developing students' character, morality, and behavior in accordance with Islamic principles.

Among the subjects within Islamic Religious Education that plays a significant role in character development is *Aqidah Akhlak* (Islamic Creed and Morality). *Aqidah Akhlak* is an essential component of the Islamic education curriculum, functioning to instill correct belief in Allah SWT while fostering behavior that reflects noble moral values. Through the study of *Aqidah Akhlak*, students are expected not only to understand the theoretical concepts of faith but also to implement them in their daily lives through conduct that exemplifies *akhlak al-karimah* (noble character).

The teaching of *Aqidah Akhlak* has a crucial objective because it is directly related to the development of students' religious awareness. Religious awareness refers to a condition in which individuals consciously understand, internalize, believe in, and practice religious teachings without coercion from others. Such awareness is not merely reflected in the performance of ritual worship but is also manifested in attitudes, behavior, ways of thinking, and social interactions that are consistent with religious values. Students who possess a high level of religious awareness are more likely to demonstrate positive behavior, such as being disciplined in worship, respecting teachers and parents, maintaining good manners, acting responsibly, and avoiding actions that contradict religious teachings (Aisyah, 2023, p. 51).

However, the rapid advancement of information and communication technology has introduced various challenges to the development of students' religious awareness. The ease of access to information through digital media has both positive and negative impacts on the character development of the younger generation. On the one hand, technology provides broader opportunities to access religious knowledge and learning resources. On the other hand, it can also influence students' ways of thinking, behavior, and lifestyles in ways that may distance them from religious values if not accompanied by adequate educational guidance.

The phenomenon of declining religious awareness among some students has become one of the major challenges faced by educational institutions today. There are still students who demonstrate a lack of discipline in performing acts of worship, show limited participation in religious activities, exhibit low concern for moral values, and engage in behaviors that are inconsistent with religious norms. This condition indicates that religious education should not merely focus on the mastery of subject matter but must also address the affective and psychomotor domains so that the values being taught are genuinely internalized by students.

In this context, the effectiveness of *Aqidah Akhlak* (Islamic Creed and Morality) instruction becomes a crucial factor. Effective learning is not only characterized by the successful delivery of instructional content but also by the achievement of learning objectives, as reflected in positive changes in students' attitudes, behavior, and understanding. The effectiveness of *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction can be evaluated through the teacher's ability to plan lessons, implement the learning process, utilize appropriate teaching methods and instructional media, and assess students' learning outcomes. When these components function effectively, *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction can make a significant contribution to enhancing students' religious awareness.

Teachers play a vital role in determining the success of *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction. Their responsibilities extend beyond delivering subject matter to serving as educators, mentors, motivators, and role models for their students. In the teaching of *Aqidah Akhlak*, teachers' exemplary conduct is particularly influential because students tend to imitate the behaviors they observe in their daily interactions. Therefore, the success of *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction depends not only on the quality of the instructional content but also on teachers' ability to create meaningful, engaging, and inspiring learning experiences that foster students' religious awareness.

Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Padangsidempuan bears a significant responsibility in nurturing students who are faithful, pious, and possess noble character. As an Islamic educational institution, the madrasah emphasizes not only academic achievement but also character development and the strengthening of students' religious values. One of its primary efforts to achieve these goals is through the implementation of *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction, which constitutes an essential component of the madrasah curriculum.

Based on preliminary observations, the implementation of *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Padangsidempuan has involved a variety of learning activities that actively engage both teachers and students. Teachers strive to apply diverse instructional methods, utilize available learning media, and conduct evaluations to assess students' understanding. Furthermore, *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction is designed to instill the values of faith and noble character that students are expected to apply in their daily lives. Nevertheless, several challenges remain, including those related to students' individual characteristics, learning motivation, social environmental influences, and the impact of technological developments.

These circumstances highlight the importance of conducting a more comprehensive study on the effectiveness of *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction in fostering students' religious awareness. Such a study is necessary to determine the extent to

which the instructional process has achieved its intended objectives, particularly in cultivating students' religious consciousness. Moreover, the research is expected to identify both the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting instructional effectiveness, thereby providing valuable insights for the evaluation and improvement of Islamic Religious Education in madrasahs.

Based on the foregoing discussion, research entitled "*The Effectiveness of Aqidah Akhlak Instruction in Developing the Religious Awareness of Students at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Padangsidempuan*" is considered essential to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction, its effectiveness in enhancing students' religious awareness, and the factors influencing its success. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the improvement of *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction and to the enhancement of the overall quality of religious education in madrasahs.

METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design. Descriptive qualitative research is a type of research that aims to understand, describe, and explore a phenomenon in depth based on actual conditions occurring in the field (Anwar, 2021, p. 67). Rather than focusing on numerical data, statistical measurements, or hypothesis testing, this approach emphasizes the understanding of meanings, processes, experiences, and the social realities experienced by the research participants. Through descriptive qualitative research, the researcher seeks to obtain detailed and comprehensive information about a particular phenomenon in order to provide a holistic description of the situation under investigation.

A qualitative research approach was selected because this study aims to examine the effectiveness of *Aqidah Akhlak* (Islamic Creed and Morality) instruction in developing the religious awareness of students at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Padangsidempuan. This issue represents a social and educational phenomenon that cannot be adequately measured using quantitative data alone. Instead, it requires an in-depth understanding of the instructional process, the interactions between teachers and students, the teaching strategies employed, and the changes in students' religious attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, a qualitative approach is considered the most appropriate because it enables the researcher to collect rich and comprehensive data.

Descriptive qualitative research seeks to portray phenomena as they naturally occur without manipulating the conditions being studied. In this research, the investigator aims to understand how the process of *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction is implemented at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Padangsidempuan, beginning with the planning stage, continuing through classroom implementation, and concluding with the evaluation of learning outcomes. In addition, the study explores how this instructional process contributes to the development of students' religious awareness, as well as the factors that facilitate or hinder its effectiveness.

A fundamental characteristic of qualitative research is that the researcher serves as the primary research instrument. The researcher is directly involved in

collecting data, understanding the field situation, interpreting the information obtained, and drawing conclusions based on the findings. Through this direct involvement, the researcher is able to gain a deeper understanding of various aspects related to the implementation of *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction than would be possible through the use of standardized or closed-ended research instruments alone.

The descriptive nature of this study is intended to provide a systematic, factual, and accurate account of the implementation of *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Padangsidempuan. Descriptive research is not designed to identify causal relationships or test specific theories; rather, it seeks to explain existing conditions based on empirical evidence gathered in the field. Accordingly, this study is directed toward providing a detailed description of how teachers implement *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction, how students respond to the learning process, and how students' religious awareness develops as a result of that instructional experience.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Definition of Aqidah Akhlak Learning

Linguistically, the word *learning* refers to the process derived from the verb *to learn*, which denotes a conscious effort undertaken by an individual to acquire changes in behavior, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and experience through interaction with the environment. Accordingly, learning is a deliberately designed process intended to assist students in gaining meaningful learning experiences that lead to positive personal development (Fathurrohman, 2022, p. 143).

Conceptually, learning is defined as a process of interaction among teachers, students, and learning resources within a learning environment aimed at achieving specific educational objectives. Learning is not merely understood as the delivery of subject matter; rather, it encompasses the processes of guiding, directing, motivating, and facilitating students so that they can develop their full potential. The learning process consists of several interrelated components, including learning objectives, instructional materials, teaching methods, instructional media, students, teachers, and learning assessment.

From the perspective of Islamic education, learning has a broader meaning because it is directed not only toward the intellectual development of students but also toward their spiritual, moral, and social development. Therefore, learning in Islam seeks to produce individuals who possess a balanced integration of knowledge, faith, and noble character.

Linguistically, the term *aqidah* (العقيدة, *al-'aqidah*) is derived from the Arabic root '*aqada-ya'qidu-'aqdan* (عَقَدَ-يَعْقِدُ-عَقْدًا), which means "to bind," "to strengthen," "to affirm," or "to establish firmly." The term signifies a strong and enduring bond that is not easily broken or altered (Hamdani, 2024, p. 94).

Terminologically, *aqidah* refers to a firmly rooted conviction in the heart regarding the teachings of Islam without any doubt. It constitutes the foundation of a Muslim's faith, encompassing belief in Allah SWT, His angels, His revealed books, His messengers, the Last Day, and divine decree (*qada* and *qadar*). *Aqidah* serves as the primary foundation of a Muslim's life because all acts of worship and righteous deeds must be based upon sound and authentic belief.

In Islam, *aqidah* occupies a central position because it forms the basis of every aspect of human life. A strong *aqidah* nurtures complete submission and obedience to

Allah SWT, whereas a weak *aqidah* may leave an individual vulnerable to ideas and behaviors that contradict Islamic teachings. Consequently, *aqidah* education aims to instill correct beliefs so that students develop a solid foundation of faith from an early age.

Aqidah also functions as a guide for life by providing direction and purpose. Individuals who possess sound *aqidah* recognize that every aspect of their lives is under the supervision of Allah SWT. This awareness encourages the development of responsibility, honesty, discipline, and various other positive qualities that reflect sincere faith in Allah SWT.

Linguistically, the term *akhlak* (الأخلاق, *al-akhlāq*) is the plural form of *al-khuluq* (الخلق), which means disposition, temperament, habit, character, or moral conduct. The word shares the same linguistic root as *Khāliq* (the Creator) and *makhlūq* (the created being), indicating the close relationship between human behavior and the will of Allah SWT as the Creator (Muhaimin, 2021, p. 212).

In terminology, *akhlak* refers to an inner disposition firmly embedded within a person's soul that naturally and spontaneously motivates actions without requiring prolonged deliberation. It represents the outward manifestation of one's inner moral condition as reflected in daily attitudes and behavior. When this inner disposition results in actions considered good according to Islamic law and sound reason, it is referred to as *akhlak mahmudah* (commendable character). Conversely, when it leads to wrongful actions, it is known as *akhlak mazmumah* (blameworthy character).

Akhlak holds a highly significant position in Islam because it serves as tangible evidence of the quality of a person's faith. Genuine faith should be reflected in proper conduct toward Allah, fellow human beings, and the environment. Accordingly, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) regarded the cultivation of noble character as one of the principal objectives of his prophetic mission. *Akhlak* encompasses not only one's relationship with Allah but also relationships with parents, teachers, friends, society, and the natural environment.

Good moral character contributes to a harmonious, peaceful, and responsible society. Conversely, poor character may give rise to various social problems, including conflict, division, dishonesty, and moral decline. Therefore, moral development constitutes an essential component of the educational process.

Based on the foregoing discussion, *Aqidah Akhlak* learning can be understood as an educational process designed to instill sound Islamic beliefs and to cultivate behavior and character consistent with Islamic values. This instructional process aims not only to provide students with theoretical knowledge of *aqidah* and *akhlak* but also to guide them in internalizing, believing in, and practicing Islamic teachings in their daily lives.

Aqidah Akhlak learning serves as an essential means of developing a generation of Muslims who possess strong faith, noble character, and a conscious commitment to practicing Islamic teachings consistently. Through this learning process, students are expected to adopt the values of faith as the foundation of their thinking and to make *akhlaq al-karimah* (noble character) the guiding principle of their attitudes and behavior within society. Consequently, *Aqidah Akhlak* learning functions not merely as a process of knowledge transmission but also as a comprehensive effort to foster character formation and the holistic development of an Islamic personality.

Objectives of Aqidah Akhlak Learning

Aqidah Akhlak learning plays a vital role in Islamic education because its objectives extend beyond the acquisition of religious knowledge to encompass the development of students' faith, character, and personality. Through *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction, students are expected to gain a correct understanding of Islamic

teachings, internalize the values of faith, and practice them consistently in their daily lives. Consequently, the objectives of *Aqidah Akhlak* learning address not only the cognitive domain but also the affective and psychomotor domains, as reflected in students' attitudes and behavior (Nizar, 2022, p. 156).

The primary objective of *Aqidah Akhlak* learning is to instill and strengthen students' faith in Allah SWT. Faith serves as the fundamental foundation of a Muslim's life, guiding all actions and behaviors. Through this subject, students are introduced to the six pillars of faith, including belief in Allah, His angels, His revealed books, His messengers, the Last Day, and divine decree (*qada* and *qadar*). This understanding is expected to cultivate a firm and unwavering conviction that provides students with a strong spiritual foundation for facing the various challenges of life. A strong faith encourages students to obey Allah's commands, avoid His prohibitions, perform righteous deeds, act responsibly, and maintain harmonious relationships with others.

Another important objective is the cultivation of *akhlaq al-karimah* (noble character). Moral character reflects the quality of an individual's faith; therefore, *Aqidah Akhlak* learning not only teaches theoretical concepts of good conduct but also seeks to develop habits and personal qualities consistent with Islamic teachings. Students are encouraged to embody honesty, trustworthiness, discipline, responsibility, courtesy, humility, respect for parents and teachers, and concern for others. Developing these moral qualities is essential because students represent the future generation that will contribute to society. Possessing noble character enables them to interact positively with others and make meaningful contributions to their communities.

Aqidah Akhlak learning also aims to foster students' religious awareness in their daily lives. Religious awareness is characterized by a conscious understanding, internalization, and practice of Islamic values rather than mere compliance resulting from external pressure. Through this instructional process, students are guided to appreciate the significance of worship, understand the wisdom underlying Islamic teachings, and adopt religion as the foundation for their thoughts and actions. Well-developed religious awareness encourages students to perform acts of worship consistently, maintain appropriate conduct, and distinguish between right and wrong according to Islamic principles.

Furthermore, *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction seeks to develop well-rounded Muslim personalities characterized by a balanced integration of spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and social dimensions. A complete Muslim personality is reflected in the harmony between one's beliefs, words, and actions. Students are expected not only to understand Islamic teachings conceptually but also to apply them as guiding principles in everyday life. As a result, they are expected to grow into individuals who are faithful, pious, morally upright, responsible, and capable of responding to social change without compromising their Islamic identity.

Another objective is to cultivate the habit of living according to Islamic values. Positive character cannot be developed solely through theoretical knowledge; rather, it requires continuous practice and reinforcement. Through *Aqidah Akhlak* learning, students are encouraged to develop habits such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, respect for others, cleanliness, and regular observance of religious duties. These positive habits gradually become an integral part of students' personalities and daily conduct.

In addition, *Aqidah Akhlak* learning serves as a moral safeguard against the negative influences of the social environment and rapid technological advancement. In the era of globalization and digital media, students encounter numerous external influences that may affect their moral development and behavior. Therefore, this

subject aims to strengthen students' faith and moral character so that they can critically evaluate and resist negative influences from both society and digital platforms. A solid understanding of *aqidah* combined with strong moral values enables students to make sound decisions in accordance with Islamic teachings, exercise self-control, avoid deviant behavior, and remain steadfast in upholding religious principles in various life situations.

Another significant objective is to cultivate students' awareness of their responsibilities as servants of Allah and as members of society. As servants of Allah, students are expected to recognize their obligation to worship Him and obey His commands. At the same time, as members of society, they are expected to establish positive relationships with others, respect the rights of fellow human beings, and actively contribute to creating a harmonious social environment. *Aqidah Akhlak* learning emphasizes that human beings are social creatures who live alongside others; consequently, values such as mutual assistance, tolerance, social responsibility, and compassion are essential elements that must be nurtured throughout the educational process.

Ultimately, *Aqidah Akhlak* learning aims to prepare a generation distinguished by strong faith, deep piety, and noble character. Such individuals are expected to become future leaders who contribute positively to Islam, society, and the nation. Through this learning process, students are prepared not only for academic success but also for lives characterized by integrity, moral responsibility, and exemplary character. In this way, they are expected to achieve a balanced life that encompasses both worldly success and eternal well-being, in accordance with the fundamental objectives of Islamic education.

Scope of Aqidah Akhlak Learning

Aqidah Akhlak is one of the core subjects within Islamic Religious Education that plays a fundamental role in developing students' faith and moral character. This subject not only provides knowledge of Islamic teachings but also seeks to instill the values of faith and cultivate behavior that conforms to the principles of Islamic law (*Sharia*). Accordingly, the scope of *Aqidah Akhlak* learning encompasses various aspects related to belief, attitudes, behavior, and the cultivation of an Islamic way of life in everyday practice.

One of the primary foundations of *Aqidah Akhlak* learning is found in the words of Allah SWT in the Qur'an, Surah *Luqman* (31:17):

"O my dear son, establish prayer, enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, and be patient over whatever befalls you. Indeed, these are among the matters requiring determination." (Qur'an 31:17)

This verse demonstrates the importance of educating individuals in both faith and moral character. Luqman instructed his son not only about belief in Allah but also about worship, moral conduct, patience, and social responsibility. This illustrates that *Aqidah Akhlak* learning has a comprehensive scope, encompassing not only matters of faith but also behavior and the practical application of Islamic values in everyday life (Tafsir, 2022, p. 125).

The first major component of *Aqidah Akhlak* learning is *aqidah*, or Islamic creed. *Aqidah* serves as the fundamental foundation of a Muslim's life because it underpins all forms of worship and ethical conduct. Within this subject, students are provided with a sound understanding of Islamic beliefs, including faith in Allah SWT, His angels, His revealed books, His messengers, the Last Day, and divine decree

(*qada* and *qadar*). The objective of teaching *aqidah* is to establish a firm and unwavering faith that enables students to recognize Allah, understand the purpose of human existence, and appreciate their responsibilities as servants of Allah. A strong *aqidah* becomes the basis for righteous conduct and serves as a moral safeguard against the negative influences present in society and digital media (Suryana, 2023, p. 88).

Another essential component is the cultivation of moral conduct toward Allah SWT. This aspect of *Aqidah Akhlak* emphasizes behaviors that reflect faith and devotion to the Creator. Students are taught to love Allah, obey His commands, avoid His prohibitions, express gratitude for His blessings, place their trust in Him (*tawakkul*), and perform acts of worship sincerely. The purpose of this instruction is to develop students' spiritual awareness so that they constantly recognize Allah's presence in every aspect of their lives. Such awareness encourages them to perform righteous deeds and refrain from actions that contradict Islamic teachings.

Aqidah Akhlak learning also encompasses the development of moral character toward oneself. Islam teaches that every individual has a responsibility to respect, protect, and nurture his or her own well-being. Accordingly, students are encouraged to cultivate qualities such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, patience, humility, steadfastness (*istiqamah*), and self-control. Developing good character toward oneself forms the foundation of a healthy personality, enabling students to maximize their potential while facing life's challenges with resilience and a positive attitude.

Another important area of study concerns moral conduct toward parents and teachers. Parents play an indispensable role in nurturing and educating children from an early age, while teachers serve as guides and educators who provide knowledge and character formation within the school environment. Through *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction, students are taught to honor, obey, and show devotion to their parents, as well as to respect and appreciate their teachers. Respect for parents and teachers is regarded in Islam as one of the highest expressions of noble character. This aspect of learning aims to develop students who demonstrate courtesy, gratitude, and an awareness of the importance of valuing the contributions of others.

The scope of *Aqidah Akhlak* learning also includes moral conduct toward fellow human beings. In addition to emphasizing the relationship between humans and Allah, Islamic education highlights the importance of maintaining positive relationships with others. Students are introduced to values such as mutual assistance, tolerance, justice, compassion, brotherhood, cooperation, and respect for diversity. These values are essential for creating harmonious and peaceful communities. Through this instruction, students are expected to become socially responsible individuals who care for others and interact respectfully regardless of differences in ethnicity, culture, or social background.

Finally, *Aqidah Akhlak* learning addresses moral responsibility toward the environment. Islam teaches that human beings are *khalifah* (stewards) on earth who are entrusted with preserving and protecting the natural world. Consequently, students are encouraged to value cleanliness, conserve nature, avoid environmental destruction, and use natural resources wisely and responsibly. This aspect of instruction aims to develop environmental awareness by emphasizing that caring

for the environment is both an act of worship and a fundamental human responsibility. Through this understanding, students are expected to demonstrate genuine concern for the cleanliness, sustainability, and preservation of the environment in which they live.

The Effectiveness of Aqidah Akhlak Instruction in Developing the Religious Awareness of Students at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Padangsidempuan

Based on the findings of this study, the implementation of *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Padangsidempuan demonstrates a high level of effectiveness in fostering students' religious awareness. This effectiveness is evident not only in the achievement of academic learning objectives but also in the positive transformation of students' attitudes, behaviors, and religious practices in their daily lives. The implementation of *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction has served as an effective means of cultivating religious character through a learning process that is well planned, systematic, and oriented toward the practical application of Islamic values.

The effectiveness of *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction in this study can be observed through several interrelated dimensions, including the learning objectives established by teachers, the instructional methods employed, the use of learning media, and the evaluation strategies implemented to assess the development of students' attitudes and religious awareness. Together, these components contribute significantly to the successful achievement of the learning objectives of *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction at the madrasah.

The findings indicate that the learning objectives formulated by the *Aqidah Akhlak* teachers extend beyond the cognitive domain or the mere acquisition of subject knowledge. Instead, they are explicitly designed to foster character development and strengthen students' religious attitudes. In every lesson plan, teachers establish objectives that encourage students to understand, internalize, and practice the values of *aqidah* and *akhlak* in their everyday lives.

The teachers emphasized that the success of *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction should not be measured solely by students' examination scores but also by observable improvements in their behavior following the learning process. Consequently, classroom instruction consistently promotes positive habits such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, courtesy, and obedience to Islamic teachings. Clearly defined learning objectives that prioritize character formation make the instructional process more meaningful and contribute significantly to the development of students' religious awareness (Yusuf, 2021, p. 173).

The effectiveness of the instruction is also reflected in the variety of teaching methods employed throughout the learning process. Rather than relying exclusively on lectures, teachers combine lectures with question-and-answer sessions, classroom discussions, assignments, and practical examples drawn from students' everyday experiences. This combination of instructional strategies enables students to understand the subject matter more effectively while connecting theoretical concepts to real-life situations.

Through these instructional methods, students acquire not only knowledge of *aqidah* and *akhlak* but also a deeper understanding of the importance of applying

these values in their daily lives. The learning process becomes more active and participatory, allowing students to engage directly with the material. This approach contributes positively to the development of religious awareness because students are encouraged not merely to receive information passively but to comprehend and internalize the significance of the concepts being taught.

The effective use of instructional media also emerged as an important factor supporting the success of *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction. Teachers utilize various educational media to present instructional materials in ways that are easier for students to understand. The integration of learning media makes classroom instruction more engaging, reduces monotony, and increases students' attention and motivation to learn.

Through the use of instructional media, students gain more concrete learning experiences. Concepts that might otherwise appear abstract become easier to understand because they are presented in more engaging and communicative ways. Consequently, instructional media contribute substantially to enhancing the effectiveness of the learning process and support the development of students' religious awareness.

The findings further reveal that teachers evaluate not only students' cognitive achievement but also their attitudes and behavioral development. Assessment is conducted through classroom observation, question-and-answer activities, assignments, daily quizzes, chapter examinations, mid-semester examinations, and evaluations of students' spiritual and social attitudes.

Teachers carefully observe how students apply the values of *Aqidah Akhlak* in their daily lives, including honesty, responsibility, discipline, courtesy, and consistency in performing religious obligations. In addition, teachers provide continuous feedback and encouragement to motivate students to improve both their religious understanding and their personal conduct. This ongoing evaluation enables teachers to monitor students' development while simultaneously serving as an effective means of fostering their religious character.

The effectiveness of *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction is most clearly reflected in the positive changes observed in students' religious attitudes and behavior following participation in the learning process. The findings indicate noticeable improvements in various aspects of students' religious awareness. Students have become more disciplined in performing acts of worship, more respectful in their interactions with teachers and peers, more responsible in completing school assignments, and more actively involved in religious activities organized by the madrasah.

Students' religious awareness is also demonstrated through their ability to apply the values of *Aqidah Akhlak* in everyday life. They increasingly exhibit behavior consistent with Islamic teachings, including honesty, respect for teachers, proper social etiquette, and active participation in various religious programs conducted by the school. These findings indicate that *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction contributes not only to students' cognitive understanding of Islamic teachings but also to the development of enduring religious character and behavior.

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing discussion of *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction, it can be concluded that *Aqidah Akhlak* learning is an educational process designed to instill sound Islamic faith and cultivate noble moral character among students. This instructional process extends beyond the acquisition of religious knowledge by emphasizing the development of character, attitudes, and behavior that are consistent with Islamic values. *Aqidah* serves as the foundation of a Muslim's belief, while *akhlak* represents the manifestation of that faith as reflected in everyday conduct. Therefore, these two elements are inseparable and complementary in shaping a well-rounded Islamic personality.

The objectives of *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction are not limited to enhancing students' understanding of Islamic teachings but also include strengthening faith, cultivating *akhlaq al-karimah* (noble character), developing religious awareness, fostering the habitual practice of Islamic values, and preparing a generation that is faithful, pious, and socially responsible. Furthermore, the scope of *Aqidah Akhlak* learning encompasses belief in Allah SWT, moral conduct toward Allah, moral conduct toward oneself, respect and proper conduct toward parents and teachers, ethical behavior toward fellow human beings, environmental responsibility, and the cultivation of commendable moral qualities while avoiding blameworthy conduct.

Based on the findings of this study conducted at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Padangsidempuan, the implementation of *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction can be regarded as effective in fostering students' religious awareness. This effectiveness is reflected in a systematically planned instructional process characterized by clearly formulated learning objectives, the appropriate use of teaching methods and instructional media, and evaluation procedures that assess not only students' cognitive achievement but also the development of their attitudes and behavior. The instructional process has successfully helped students understand the values of faith and morality while encouraging them to practice these values consistently in their daily lives.

Students' religious awareness has developed through various positive behavioral changes, including greater discipline in performing acts of worship, increased respect for teachers and parents, stronger responsibility in completing academic tasks, and improved social relationships with their peers. These developments indicate that *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction contributes not only to students' cognitive understanding of Islamic teachings but also to the formation of religious character in accordance with the objectives of Islamic education.

Nevertheless, several challenges remain in the implementation of *Aqidah Akhlak* instruction, including differences in students' individual characteristics, the influence of peer groups, the rapid development of technology and social media, and varying levels of religious awareness among students. Despite these challenges, their impact can be minimized through sustained efforts by teachers, including serving as positive role models, providing continuous motivation, fostering regular participation in religious activities, adopting personalized approaches to student guidance, and maintaining close collaboration with parents and the school community.

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