



ISSN 2964-3902 (Online)

SUJANA: Journal of Education and Learning Review

<https://journal.jfpublisher.com/index.php/sujana>

Vol. 4, Issue. 2, (2025)

doi.org/10.56943/sujana.v4i2.893

Aqidah Akhlak Teacher Strategies for Cultivating Noble Character in Grade IX Students at MTs Ar Rahmaniyyah

Yusup Al Jailani^{1*}, Reffy Ananda Rizki², Nadra Ulfah³, Rudini⁴, Anna Navita Syairoh

¹valja89@gmail.com, ²reffyananda01@gmail.com, ³nadraulfah43@gmail.com,
⁴rudiniflorezi@gmail.com, ⁵annanavita@nidaeladabi.ac.id

Institut Nida El Adabi

*Corresponding Author: Yusup Al Jailani
Email: valja89@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In the era of globalization, adolescents face significant moral challenges, including behavioral issues that persist despite ongoing character education efforts in Islamic schools. This qualitative study explores the strategies employed by the Aqidah Akhlak teacher to cultivate noble character among Grade IX students at MTs Ar Rahmaniyyah, South Tangerang City. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with teachers, students, and school administrators, alongside direct classroom observations. The findings reveal that character cultivation involves a comprehensive approach integrating theoretical instruction with practical application, teacher exemplification of virtuous behavior, and collaborative efforts among school leadership, homeroom teachers, parents, and the foundation. Key strategies include strategically timed character-building programs, regular guidance sessions, and extracurricular religious activities such as murrotal. While observable improvements in students' moral awareness occurred, persistent negative behaviors influenced by socioeconomic marginalization and limited institutional resources remained challenging. The study demonstrates that effective character formation requires teachers to function as moral exemplars, mentors, and motivators beyond mere knowledge transmission. The teacher's role proves critical yet dependent on adequate institutional support and sustained family collaboration. Recommendations include enhanced professional development for teachers, strengthened school-family partnerships, and systematic resource allocation to bridge the gap between theoretical moral education and behavioral transformation in urban Islamic educational settings.

Keywords: *Aqidah Akhlak, Character Cultivation, Islamic Schools, Moral Education, Teacher Strategies*

INTRODUCTION

Character education constitutes a fundamental pillar in the holistic development of adolescents, serving as the foundation upon which individuals build their moral compass and ethical framework (Ramadhani et al., 2024). In Islamic educational contexts, the cultivation of akhlak (noble character) represents not merely an academic pursuit but a comprehensive approach to nurturing individuals who embody Islamic virtues in their daily conduct and interactions (S. Arifin et al., 2023; Zahira et al., 2024). The formation of strong moral character during adolescence is particularly crucial, as this developmental stage marks a critical period when young people establish their value systems and behavioral patterns that will guide them throughout their lives. Daryaman et al. (2024) believed that educational institutions, especially Islamic schools such as Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs), bear significant responsibility in this character formation process, working alongside families to provide structured moral guidance and practical examples of virtuous living.

In this rapidly developing era of globalization, society faces both positive and negative influences. If individuals fail to utilize the opportunities brought by globalization wisely, they risk a moral decline. On the other hand, those who are able to use these influences effectively have a greater chance of achieving success both in this world and in the hereafter. However, recent observations indicate a worrying trend of moral decline in some segments of society, especially among children and adolescents (Luthfi et al., 2024; Musa, 2023; Ulfa, 2022). This is shown by increasing juvenile delinquency, high crime rates, and children's unrestricted access to various information through advances in technology, often without understanding the consequences and often addiction in gadget usage (Rizky et al., 2025).

One social issue currently drawing attention is the behavior of today's youth, often called "Kids Zaman Now," who are frequently criticized in social media for having bleak futures. This problem also affects students at MTs who, as the next generation, seem to be losing their identity. This phenomenon is partly caused by the assumption that the education of Aqidah Akhlak is merely theoretical and is less applied in daily life. This situation is reflected in worrying incidents such as violence against teachers by students, which show a decline in respect for educators who play the role of second parents at school. This moral character decline marks the erosion of noble values in the young generation (Aisyah & Fitriatin, 2025).

Recent scholarly discourse has increasingly focused on the critical role of teachers in moral and character development within educational settings. Research by Brown et al. (2023) and Khadijah et al. (2021) demonstrates that effective character education programs require teachers who not only possess pedagogical expertise but also serve as authentic moral exemplars for their students. Their comprehensive analysis of character education interventions across multiple

countries revealed that teacher modeling and mentorship significantly influence student moral reasoning and ethical behavior. Similarly, Garrigan et al. (2018) and Ma (2013) argue that moral education extends beyond curriculum delivery, necessitating teachers to engage in reflective practice and cultivate genuine relationships with students to facilitate moral development. Their work emphasizes the integration of cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions in moral pedagogy, aligning with the holistic approach advocated in Islamic education. Furthermore, Luo et al. (2023) investigated school climate and teacher practices in fostering prosocial behavior among middle school students, finding that consistent teacher expectations, positive reinforcement, and collaborative problem-solving strategies contribute substantially to improved student conduct and peer relationships.

Within the context of Islamic education specifically, several studies have examined the implementation of akhlak education in madrasah settings. Furqon and Hanif (2022) explored the integration of character values in Islamic religious education across Indonesian secondary schools, highlighting the tension between theoretical instruction and practical application of moral principles. Their findings indicated that while curriculum frameworks adequately addressed moral content, implementation gaps persisted due to limited teacher training and insufficient support mechanisms. Subsequent research by Rozali et al. (2023) focused on pedagogical approaches in teaching akhlak at Malaysian Islamic schools, revealing that experiential learning methods and community engagement activities enhanced students' internalization of moral values compared to traditional lecture-based instruction.

More recently, Akyuni et al. (2024) and Ilma et al. (2025) conducted a comparative study of character education practices in public and Islamic schools in Indonesia, demonstrating that madrasah environments that prioritized collaborative teaching strategies and parental involvement achieved more favorable outcomes in student behavior and ethical awareness. Additionally, research by Bertuah (2023) and Rohman et al. (2024) examined the role of Islamic values in shaping adolescent identity and behavior in pluralistic societies, arguing that culturally responsive moral education helps students navigate competing value systems while maintaining their religious identity.

Despite the growing body of literature on character education and Islamic moral pedagogy, significant gaps remain in understanding the specific strategies employed by Aqidah Akhlak teachers in addressing contemporary moral challenges faced by adolescent students (Khoulita, 2023). While previous studies have documented general approaches to character education and identified systemic barriers to effective implementation, few have provided detailed, context-specific analyses of how individual teachers navigate the complex realities of moral cultivation in schools experiencing behavioral problems. Existing research often focuses on curriculum design or institutional policies rather than examining the day-

to-day pedagogical decisions, relationship-building practices, and adaptive strategies that teachers employ when confronting persistent moral issues such as disrespect toward educators, peer bullying, and violations of school regulations. Moreover, limited attention has been given to investigating how teachers coordinate with families and school administrators to create coherent support systems for students exhibiting behavioral challenges, particularly in urban madrasah contexts where students come from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. This study addresses these gaps by providing an in-depth examination of the multifaceted strategies utilized by an Aqidah Akhlak teacher at MTs Ar Rahmaniyyah in South Tangerang City, offering insights into the practical realities of moral education in contemporary Islamic schools.

Given these challenges, instilling noble akhlak values in students from an early age is very important (Sesmiarni, 2019). Moral education provided from the beginning has a profound impact on an individual's personality which is reflected in their outward behavior. Educators play a key role in protecting students from negative influences that arise as a result of globalization. Both teachers and parents must serve as good examples, especially in demonstrating noble character (Rizki et al., 2025). Childhood is a critical period in individual development, where children learn by imitating what they see and experience in their environment. In this context, Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological development theory provides an important foundation for understanding how environment influences the formation of children's behavior. Bronfenbrenner divides the developmental environment of children into several interrelated systems. One of these systems is the microsystem, which includes the child's immediate surroundings such as family and school (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Within the microsystem, the role of teachers in schools, particularly in a madrasah, is very significant in shaping children's values and behavior. Virtuous behavior and positive morals displayed by the teacher will be easily imitated by students as a form of social learning. This will be further strengthened if the family environment, especially parents, also provides guidance and an example of good behavior in line with religious values. When school and family environments act in harmony in providing moral education, the character formation of the child will be more effective and deeper.

Moral education encompasses all aspects of human life and personality development. The success of moral education requires diverse methods, and exemplary behavior is one of the most effective methods (Mubarok et al., 2024). The example given must be comprehensive and integrated into cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. This approach should be adopted by all Muslim individuals across formal, informal, and non formal educational levels. Some in the community believe that the moral and ethical decline of students reflects the failure of religious education in schools. Indeed, religious education often suffers from limited class hours, overly theoretical material, and an approach that emphasizes more on cognitive aspects than on affective and psychomotor aspects of students.

As a result, religious education becomes less effective in shaping character. Akhlak is a fundamental aspect of Islamic education that aims to shape individuals with noble character (Muzakki & Nurdin, 2022). Therefore, moral education becomes an important foundation in forming Muslims who are obedient and understand their responsibilities as servants and stewards on earth. Through effective moral education, it is hoped students can implement these values in daily life, thus raising their ethical standards and social contributions.

Cultivating students' akhlak is very important because one of the main causes of failure in Islamic education is the lack of transformation of noble religious values into tangible behavior. Education so far has focused more on the transfer of knowledge alone without internalizing the noble values needed to form a strong personality and noble character (Hidayati et al., 2020). The decline in akhlak is a continuing problem and if not addressed immediately, can spread widely and affect many aspects of human life. Handling this issue through education is directed to develop students' personalities so that they truly reflect Islamic values, enabling them to filter out foreign cultural influences incompatible with Islamic teachings and reduce juvenile delinquency (Arifin et al., 2024; Hamidi & Nurdin, 2020). Effective moral cultivation requires the cooperation of the entire school community, including the headmaster, Aqidah Akhlak teacher, other subject teachers, and homeroom teachers. Such collaboration can strengthen student character formation and minimize disciplinary issues.

School administrators recognize that formal education to date has emphasized the development of cognitive aspects more and given less attention to social, religious, justice, and humanitarian education (Kimanen, 2023). When moral education is given, it is often only theoretical without sufficient practical application. As a result, many students are academically intelligent but lack noble character and sometimes engage in harmful behavior. Faced with these challenges, it is vital for Islamic religious education teachers, particularly Aqidah Akhlak teachers, to develop appropriate teaching strategies to deepen students' understanding of religious teachings, guide them to practice those teachings, and improve their morals and personalities (Fauqi, 2022; Syafi'i et al., 2021). The role of the teacher is crucial in improving students' morals in order to prepare and develop human resources capable of contributing to community welfare and national progress (Nurhayati et al., 2023). Moreover, teachers must maintain professionalism in character development of students, for example by fostering honesty and obedience to school rules. These points underscore the urgency of improving the performance of teachers in instilling and strengthening akhlak values and addressing student behavior issues through appropriate teaching methods in order to improve Aqidah Akhlak at MTs Ar Rahmadiyah.

Based on preliminary observations at MTs Ar Rahmadiyah, Serpong Utara, South Tangerang City, it was found there are still students who violate school regulations. Juvenile misbehavior, which is sometimes referred to as social

deviation, arises due to mental and social influences that lead to behavior considered deviant by society. Cases such as students smoking on school premises, using impolite language, mocking friends, disrespecting teachers, and breaking school rules are quite frequently seen. Such behavior is generally influenced by their surroundings. This study therefore aims to investigate the specific strategies employed by the Aqidah Akhlak teacher in cultivating noble character among Grade IX students at MTs Ar Rahmadiyah, examining how these strategies address the contemporary moral challenges faced by adolescents in an urban Islamic educational setting.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore the strategies utilized by the Aqidah Akhlak teacher in cultivating noble character among Grade IX students at MTs Ar Rahmadiyah, South Tangerang City. Qualitative research is an approach used to understand the meaning that individuals or groups assign to a social phenomenon within their natural context in a deep and comprehensive way (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Creswell & Poth, 2024). This methodological choice was deemed appropriate because it allows for in-depth exploration of the complex processes involved in moral education and character formation, providing rich, contextualized data that capture the nuances of teacher strategies and student experiences. Qualitative methods aim to provide a detailed description of human conditions, attitudes, and behaviors, as well as the factors influencing them in real situations (Fraenkael et al., 2023). Furthermore, qualitative research involves the collection, organization, and interpretation of non-numerical data such as words and actions to gain a thorough understanding of specific meanings, concepts, or experiences (Miles et al., 2020).

Data were collected through multiple qualitative techniques to ensure comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Primary data collection methods included semi-structured interviews with the Aqidah Akhlak teacher, selected Grade IX students, and relevant school administrators to gather diverse perspectives on character cultivation strategies and their implementation. Direct observation was conducted in classroom settings and school activities to document teaching practices, teacher-student interactions, and behavioral manifestations of moral education in action. The researcher also acted as the primary instrument for data collection, interacting directly with research subjects using a naturalistic approach and maintaining sensitivity to phenomena observed, heard, felt, and thought about during fieldwork. This positioning allowed for flexible data gathering and the ability to pursue emerging themes and unexpected insights that arose during the research process.

The study was conducted at MTs Ar Rahmadiyah, located in Serpong Utara, South Tangerang City, during the academic year. Participants were purposively

selected to include individuals who could provide rich information relevant to the research objectives. The primary informant was the Aqidah Akhlak teacher responsible for Grade IX instruction, while secondary informants included Grade IX students representing varying levels of behavioral engagement, the school principal, and other teachers involved in character education initiatives. Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles et al. (2020), involving data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. This iterative process enabled the researcher to identify patterns, themes, and relationships within the data systematically. To ensure trustworthiness, triangulation was employed by comparing data from different sources and methods, and member checking was conducted to validate findings with participants.

The success of qualitative research highly depends on the quality of field data; therefore, accuracy, thoroughness, completeness, and flexibility in recording information were maintained throughout the research process. Detailed field notes were prepared immediately following observations and interviews to capture contextual details and researcher reflections. All interviews were recorded with participant consent and transcribed verbatim to preserve the authenticity of participant voices. Inaccurate data recording can hinder analysis and the drawing of conclusions; thus, systematic documentation procedures were implemented to minimize potential bias and ensure data integrity. This rigorous qualitative methodology facilitated the researcher in obtaining relevant information and determining the material that needed to be explored to acquire accurate and valid data, ensuring that the results truly reflect the strategies employed by the Aqidah Akhlak teacher in cultivating noble character in Grade IX students at MTs Ar Rahmadiyah, South Tangerang City.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Current State of Student Moral Behavior and Influencing Factors

Based on interviews with the school principal, students' moral behavior after participating in the Aqidah Akhlak learning process still shows several areas that need improvement. Although there have been positive developments, negative behaviors such as disobedience to teachers, reluctance to complete assignments, littering, and disturbing peers are still found. These behaviors are largely influenced by students' socioeconomic backgrounds, especially those from marginalized communities (Simatupang et al., 2022). This finding aligns with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, which emphasizes that child development occurs within nested environmental systems where family socioeconomic conditions constitute a critical microsystem factor influencing behavioral outcomes. The persistent behavioral challenges observed at MTs Ar Rahmadiyah reflect the complex interplay between home environment and school-based moral education, suggesting that character formation cannot be achieved through classroom

instruction alone but requires systematic intervention that addresses students' broader social contexts.

The persistence of negative behaviors despite ongoing moral education efforts reveals the gap between theoretical knowledge acquisition and practical behavioral transformation, a phenomenon extensively documented in character education literature. This observation resonates with findings from Furqon and Hanif (2022), who identified significant implementation gaps in Islamic religious education across Indonesian secondary schools, noting that curriculum frameworks adequately addressed moral content but failed to translate into sustained behavioral change due to insufficient practical application mechanisms. Similarly, the socioeconomic influences identified in this study support the conclusions drawn by Akyuni et al. (2024) and Ilma et al. (2025), whose comparative research demonstrated that students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds exhibited greater difficulty in internalizing moral values, primarily due to competing pressures and limited parental support for reinforcing school-based character education. The present study extends this understanding by providing specific examples of how socioeconomic marginalization manifests in daily school behaviors, thereby offering concrete evidence of the environmental barriers that Aqidah Akhlak teachers must navigate in their character cultivation efforts.

Institutional Strategies for Character Development

To address these issues, the principal has implemented a character-building program conducted before the new academic year, prior to semester report card distribution, and at the beginning of semester breaks. This program also involves collaboration with parents to enhance the effectiveness of moral guidance. Additionally, character development is carried out through the role of homeroom teachers who regularly provide special guidance to strengthen students' character. The principal emphasizes religious morals, discipline, tolerance, and responsibility through mentoring and motivational activities, in cooperation with the foundation by organizing moral seminars. These multi-tiered interventions represent a comprehensive institutional approach to character formation that extends beyond the conventional boundaries of classroom-based moral instruction. The strategic timing of these programs at critical junctures in the academic calendar demonstrates an understanding that character development requires sustained, cyclical reinforcement rather than isolated instructional episodes.

The collaborative framework involving school leadership, homeroom teachers, parents, and the foundation reflects current best practices in character education research. This approach strongly supports the findings of Luo et al. (2023), who demonstrated that school-wide character education initiatives achieve superior outcomes when they integrate multiple stakeholder groups and create consistent expectations across different contexts of student life. The emphasis on parental involvement in MTs Ar Rahmadiyah's character-building programs

particularly aligns with research by Rozali et al. (2023), which identified family engagement as a critical success factor in Malaysian Islamic schools' akhlak education programs. However, the present study extends beyond these earlier findings by documenting specific mechanisms through which collaboration occurs, including the temporal scheduling of interventions and the division of responsibilities among different institutional actors. Furthermore, the incorporation of foundation-sponsored moral seminars represents an innovative strategy not widely reported in previous literature, suggesting that external partnerships with religious organizations can provide valuable supplementary resources for schools facing limitations in their internal capacity for character education programming.

Pedagogical Approaches of the Aqidah Akhlak Teacher

According to interviews with the Aqidah Akhlak teacher, the values taught during the learning process are not only delivered theoretically but are also applied in students' daily lives. Teachers consistently serve as role models by exemplifying good behavior in the school environment. The emphasized values include smiling, greeting, salutation, respecting others, responsibility, religiosity, and communicativeness, which are considered essential for fostering harmonious relationships among religions, ethnicities, and nations (Arina & Hernawan, 2024). This dual emphasis on explicit instruction and teacher modeling reflects an integrated pedagogical approach that addresses both the cognitive and affective dimensions of moral learning. The specific values identified by the teacher encompass both individual character traits and social competencies necessary for functioning in pluralistic societies, indicating an awareness that akhlak education must prepare students not only for personal righteousness but also for constructive civic participation.

The teacher's strategy of combining theoretical instruction with practical modeling directly supports the pedagogical principles advocated by Brown et al. (2023) and Khadijah et al. (2021), whose comprehensive analysis of character education interventions demonstrated that teacher exemplification significantly enhances student moral reasoning and ethical behavior beyond what can be achieved through curriculum delivery alone. The emphasis on teacher authenticity as a moral exemplar aligns particularly well with Garrigan et al. (2018) and Ma (2013) argument that effective moral education necessitates teachers who engage in reflective practice and cultivate genuine relationships with students, rather than simply transmitting decontextualized moral principles. However, the present study contributes new insights by identifying the specific values that Aqidah Akhlak teachers prioritize in their modeling behaviors, revealing that Islamic moral education at MTs Ar Rahmaniyyah extends beyond purely religious observance to encompass broader social and civic virtues such as intercultural respect and communicative competence. This finding offers important nuance to Bertuah (2023) and Rohman et al. (2024) work on Islamic values in pluralistic societies,

demonstrating how individual teachers operationalize culturally responsive moral education in daily practice by balancing religious identity formation with preparation for diverse social interactions.

Challenges and the Multifaceted Role of Teachers

However, not all students are able to consistently demonstrate good morals after the learning process, so character development still needs to be enhanced. Teachers' efforts in nurturing students' morals play a crucial role (Fitriyani & Heryadi, 2024; Miharja et al., 2023). Teachers are not only knowledge transmitters but also models of positive behavior, sources of inspiration, and motivators for students. In today's culturally diverse classrooms, their ability to guide with empathy, uphold discipline, and respect pluralism is essential. According to Rofiqoh and Fikri (2025), a teacher's responsibility extends beyond academic instruction; they are also moral exemplars, mentors, and motivators who shape students' attitudes and character. This underscores that effective teaching involves not only cognitive delivery but also emotional and social support. By embodying values such as respect, responsibility, and open-mindedness, teachers help foster inclusive learning environments where students feel valued and encouraged to grow intellectually and ethically.

The multidimensional role of teachers identified in this study resonates strongly with contemporary scholarship on moral pedagogy while also revealing tensions between idealized teacher responsibilities and practical implementation constraints. The finding that not all students consistently demonstrate good morals despite teacher efforts highlights a critical limitation in current character education approaches, supporting the concerns raised by Hidayatulloh et al. (2024) and Ruswandi et al. (2019) regarding the persistent gap between intended outcomes and actual behavioral transformation in Islamic education contexts. This implementation challenge appears particularly acute in settings like MTs Ar Rahmaniayah, where teachers must simultaneously fulfill roles as knowledge transmitters, moral exemplars, mentors, motivators, and disciplinarians while operating within resource-constrained environments. The present study thus provides empirical support for Garrigan et al. (2018) and Ma (2013) theoretical argument that moral education requires substantial institutional investment in teacher development and support systems, as expecting teachers to fulfill multifaceted roles without adequate professional preparation and ongoing assistance places unrealistic burdens on individual educators.

In dealing with student misbehavior, teachers provide guidance and motivation to prevent the repetition of negative behaviors. However, there are still challenges due to limited support from the foundation, resulting in suboptimal guidance and supervision. Despite the advancement of technology and easier access to information, the role of teachers in guiding students' character remains irreplaceable. Teachers must possess strong commitment in fulfilling their roles as

mentors, facilitators, motivators, and evaluators to enhance students' noble character. The resource limitations identified at MTs Ar Rahmadiyah represent a significant barrier to effective character education implementation, contradicting the idealized models often presented in character education literature that assume adequate institutional support and resources. While previous research has documented various pedagogical strategies for character formation, fewer studies have systematically examined how resource constraints shape the actual implementation of these strategies in under-resourced Islamic schools.

This finding extends the work of Akyuni et al. (2024) and Ilma et al. (2025) by demonstrating that institutional resource limitations affect not only curriculum implementation but also the fundamental capacity of teachers to provide individualized guidance and sustained behavioral monitoring necessary for character transformation. The acknowledgment that foundation support is insufficient reveals structural challenges that cannot be resolved through teacher effort alone, suggesting that policy interventions must address systemic funding and organizational capacity issues in addition to improving pedagogical practices. Nevertheless, the teacher's continued commitment despite these constraints illustrates the critical importance of educator dedication in character formation, supporting Brown et al. (2023) and Khadijah et al. (2021) emphasis on teacher authenticity and personal investment as essential ingredients in effective moral education. The contrast between technological advancement and the irreplaceable role of human mentorship in character development further underscores an important point largely absent from recent literature: that digital tools and information access, while valuable for knowledge acquisition, cannot substitute for the relational and affective dimensions of moral guidance that emerge through sustained teacher-student interactions grounded in trust, empathy, and shared values.

The discussion of the research findings shows that students' morals are continuously monitored and nurtured through various school policies. Character development programs are regularly conducted through religious learning and extracurricular activities such as *murrotal*, which teaches mutual respect. Intensive guidance is also provided by homeroom teachers on a weekly basis. Meanwhile, teachers' efforts in character building must be continually improved to achieve better noble character through sustainable policies and programs designed by the school. The integration of character development across multiple domains of school life, including formal instruction, extracurricular activities, and pastoral care systems, reflects a holistic approach consistent with Islamic educational philosophy that views moral formation as inseparable from all aspects of learning and communal life.

This integrated approach provides strong empirical support for the theoretical frameworks proposed by both Bronfenbrenner (1979) and contemporary Islamic education scholars. The weekly guidance provided by homeroom teachers creates

regular touchpoints for behavioral monitoring and corrective intervention, operationalizing Bronfenbrenner's concept of the microsystem by establishing consistent adult-child relationships that shape moral development through repeated interactions over time. The incorporation of murrotal and other religious extracurricular activities as character-building mechanisms extends the findings of Rozali et al. (2023), who advocated for experiential learning methods in akhlak education but provided limited documentation of specific activities that effectively translate religious practice into moral behavior. The present study offers concrete examples of how Islamic devotional practices can be structured as character education interventions that simultaneously deepen religious identity and foster prosocial values such as mutual respect and communal responsibility.

However, the acknowledgment that teachers' efforts must be continually improved through sustainable policies indicates an important limitation in current implementation that warrants further examination. This finding suggests that while MTs Ar Rahmadiyah has established a comprehensive framework for character education, the translation of this framework into consistent, high-quality implementation remains incomplete. This observation aligns with Luo et al. (2023) research on school climate and teacher practices, which emphasized that structural programs alone are insufficient without ongoing professional development, collaborative reflection, and adaptive refinement of practices based on student outcomes. The call for sustainable policies and programs reflects an emerging understanding within the school that character education cannot rely solely on individual teacher initiative but requires institutionalized systems that ensure consistency, quality, and continuity even as personnel change over time. This recognition represents an important evolution in thinking about character education implementation, moving beyond episodic interventions toward systemic transformation of school culture and pedagogical practices in ways that make moral formation an integral, rather than supplementary, dimension of the entire educational enterprise.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the cultivation of noble character among Grade IX students at MTs Ar Rahmadiyah involves multifaceted strategies that integrate theoretical instruction, practical application, and sustained relational engagement. The Aqidah Akhlak teacher employs a comprehensive pedagogical approach that combines explicit moral teaching with consistent behavioral modeling, emphasizing values such as respect, responsibility, religiosity, and communicativeness essential for harmonious living in pluralistic contexts. The research reveals that effective character formation extends beyond classroom instruction to encompass collaborative efforts involving school leadership, homeroom teachers, parents, and the foundation through strategically timed

character-building programs, regular guidance sessions, and extracurricular activities such as murrotal. While these initiatives have yielded observable improvements in students' moral awareness and behavior, persistent challenges remain, particularly negative behaviors influenced by socioeconomic marginalization and resource limitations that constrain the intensity and consistency of individualized guidance. The findings underscore that the teacher's role transcends mere knowledge transmission to encompass serving as moral exemplar, mentor, motivator, and facilitator, thereby positioning educators as central agents in the character formation process whose effectiveness depends critically on institutional support, professional development, and sustained collaboration with families and community stakeholders.

The study's findings align with and extend existing literature on character education by providing detailed documentation of specific strategies employed in an urban Islamic school context while revealing the complex interplay between pedagogical approaches, institutional frameworks, and environmental constraints that shape implementation outcomes. To enhance the effectiveness of moral education at MTs Ar Rahmaniyyah and similar institutions, several recommendations warrant consideration. First, the school and foundation should allocate adequate resources for teacher professional development focused on innovative, experiential methods of moral pedagogy that bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and behavioral transformation. Second, teachers should continue refining their instructional practices by integrating character education across all aspects of student life through creative, interactive approaches while maintaining consistency in modeling virtuous behavior. Third, systematic mechanisms for collaboration between homeroom teachers and parents must be strengthened to ensure coherent moral guidance across school and home environments, thereby creating the ecological consistency necessary for sustained character development. Finally, future research should explore the long-term impacts of these character cultivation strategies through longitudinal designs and examine comparative effectiveness across diverse school contexts using mixed-method approaches that capture both quantitative behavioral outcomes and qualitative dimensions of students' moral reasoning and identity formation.

REFERENCES

- Aisyah, N. N., & Fitriatin, N. (2025). Krisis Moral dan Etika di Kalangan Generasi Muda Indonesia dalam Perspektif Profesi Guru. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Indonesia (JPPI)*, 5(1), 329–337. <https://doi.org/10.53299/jppi.v5i1.908>
- Akyuni, Q., Nurainiah, N., & Zulfadli, Z. (2024). Comparative Study Of Islamic Education Models In Public And Private Universities. *SYAMIL: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam (Journal of Islamic Education)*, 12(2), 442–455. <https://doi.org/10.21093/sy.v12i2.9889>
- Arifin, M. K., Heninda, N., Anita, M., Anggraini, N. M., Anggara Faza, N. D.,

- Hidayatullah, S. Z., Febriani, E., Hasanah, U., Saputra, D., & Khumaidi, M. (2024). Islamic Religious Education in Preventing and Overcoming Juvenile Delinquency. *Journal Analytica Islamica*, 13(1), 88. <https://doi.org/10.30829/jai.v13i1.19817>
- Arifin, S., Huda, M., & Mufida, N. H. (2023). Developing Akhlak Karimah Values through Integrative Learning Model in Madrasah. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 9(1), 41–54. <https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v0i0.24443>
- Arina, I., & Hernawan, A. H. (2024). PENERAPAN BUDAYA (SENYUM, SALAM DAN SAPA) TERHADAP PEMBENTUKAN KARAKTER PADA SISWA SEKOLAH DASAR DI SDN WADAS III KARAWANG. *BUANA ILMU*, 9(1), 238–247. <https://doi.org/10.36805/BI.V9I1.8255>
- Bertuah, M. F. (2023). The Role of Islamic Education in Shaping Indonesian National Identity. *International Journal of Applied Educational Research (IJAER)*, 1(2), 93–102. <https://doi.org/10.59890/ijaer.v1i2.989>
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The Ecology of Human Development*. Harvard University Press.
- Brown, M., McGrath, R. E., Bier, M. C., Johnson, K., & Berkowitz, M. W. (2023). A comprehensive meta-analysis of character education programs. *Journal of Moral Education*, 52(2), 119–138. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2022.2060196>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2023). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (Sixth). SAGE Publication, Inc.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2024). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. SAGE Publications Ltd. <https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/qualitative-inquiry-and-research-design/book266033#main-content>
- Daryaman, D., Mayasari, A., Supriadi, D., Wahyu Hoerudin, C., & Susandi, A. (2024). Implementation of Character Education in Madrasah Students. *International Journal of Education and Digital Learning (IJEDL)*, 2(4), 35–46. <https://doi.org/10.47353/ijedl.v2i4.131>
- Fauqi, I. F. (2022). TEACHER STRATEGIES IN ONLINE LEARNING DUE TO PANDEMIC: A LITERATURE REVIEW. *SUJANA (Education and Learning Review)*, 1(1), 14–25. <https://doi.org/10.56943/sujana.v1i1.182>
- Fitriyani, W., & Heryadi, Y. (2024). PERAN GURU DALAM MEMBENTUK KARAKTER SISWA KELAS IV SDN 02 SANGKANWANGI. *JURNAL PENDIDIKAN DASAR SETIA BUDHI (JPDS)*, 7(2), 115–122. <https://jurnal.usbr.ac.id/jpds/article/view/235>
- Fraenkael, J. R., Wallen, N., & Hyun, H. H. (2023). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (eleventh edition). McGraw Hill.
- Furqon, A., & Hanif, M. (2022). Strengthening Character Education Through Islamic Religious Education: A Case in Indonesian Context. *Tadibia Islamika*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.28918/tadibia.v2i2.6261>
- Garrigan, B., Adlam, A. L. R., & Langdon, P. E. (2018). Moral decision-making and moral development: Toward an integrative framework. *Developmental Review*, 49, 80–100. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dr.2018.06.001>
- Hamidi, N., & Nurdin, I. F. (2020). Juvenile Delinquency and Its Coping Strategy: An Islamic Education Perspective. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 17(2), 187–202. <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.2020.172-06>

- Hidayati, N. A., Waluyo, H. J., Winarni, R., & Suyitno, S. (2020). Exploring the Implementation of Local Wisdom-Based Character Education among Indonesian Higher Education Students. *International Journal of Instruction*, 13(2), 179–198. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2020.13213a>
- Hidayatulloh, T., Saumantri, T., & Ramdani, Z. (2024). Integrating Living Values Education into Indonesian Islamic Schools: An Innovation in Character Building. *EDUKASI: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Agama Dan Keagamaan*, 22(1), 137–152. <https://doi.org/10.32729/edukasi.v22i1.1743>
- Ilma, L. S., Asrohah, H., & Zainiyati, H. S. (2025). Adaptation of the Cambridge curriculum: A comparative study of public and Islamic schools. *Curricula: Journal of Curriculum Development*, 4(2), 965–978. <https://doi.org/10.17509/CURRICULA.V4I2.84860>
- Khadijah, K., Suciati, I., Khaerani, K., Manaf, A., & Sutamrin, S. (2021). Schools' character education values and students' mathematics learning achievement: A meta-analysis. *Jurnal Cakrawala Pendidikan*, 40(3), 670–683. <https://doi.org/10.21831/cp.v40i3.39924>
- Khoulita, I. (2023). THE ROLE OF AKHLAK AQIDAH TEACHERS IN IMPROVING MORALS AT MTS AL-URWATUL WUTSQA JOMBANG. *ILJ: Islamic Learning Journal*, 1(1), 158–171. <https://doi.org/10.54437/iljjislamiclearningjournal.v1i1.901>
- Kimanen, A. (2023). Privileged and non-privileged agencies – education about, into and with social justice in religious education classrooms. *British Journal of Religious Education*, 45(3), 277–287. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2022.2086103>
- Luo, Y., Ma, T., & Deng, Y. (2023). School climate and adolescents' prosocial behavior: the mediating role of perceived social support and resilience. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1095566>
- Luthfi, D. A., Hanifurrohman, H., Jahrudin, J., Jannah, S. R., & Asy'arie, B. F. (2024). Analisis Degradasi Moral Remaja Era Digital dalam Perspektif Psikologi Pendidikan Islam. *JIP - Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan*, 7(7), 6616–6624. <https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v7i7.4743>
- Ma, H. K. (2013). The Moral Development of the Child: An Integrated Model. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 1. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2013.00057>
- Miharja, M., Hasanah, N., H. Pesik, H., Hadi R, L., Kurnia S, S., Zaini, A., Noviyanto, T. A., Adi Prasetyo, R., Sanjaya M, A., Ridho, A., Sari, A., & Dian Arifni, E. (2023). Menjadikan Guru Sebagai Agen Perubahan Dengan Menerapkan Pola Pendidikan Revolusi Mental Di Sma Muhammadiyah 4 Jakarta. *Jurnal Penyuluhan Dan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat*, 2(1), 45–50. <https://doi.org/10.59066/jppm.v2i1.244>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, M. A., & Saldana, J. (2020). *Qualitative Data Analysis : A Methods Sourcebook*. SAGE.
- Mubarok, M. K., Syakur, A., Fahmi, M. F., & Prasetya, R. (2024). A Character Education Framework Grounded in Exemplary Leadership: Insights and Applications. *Tadris: Jurnal Keguruan Dan Ilmu Tarbiyah*, 9(2), 659–673. <https://doi.org/10.24042/tadris.v9i2.25086>
- Musa, I. (2023). STUDI LITERATUR : DEGRADASI MORAL DI KALANGAN REMAJA. *EZRA SCIENCE BULLETIN*, 1(2), 224–230. <https://doi.org/10.58526/EZRASCIENCEBULLETIN.V1I2.31>

- Muzakki, Z., & Nurdin, N. (2022). Formation of Student Character in Islamic Religious Education. *EDUKASIA: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran*, 3(3), 937–948. <https://doi.org/10.62775/edukasia.v3i3.219>
- Nurhayati, U., Setyaningsih, S., & Sunaryo, W. (2023). STRENGTHENING COMMITMENT TO ORGANIZATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, EMPOWERMENT AND PERSONALITY IN IMPROVING TEACHERS' INNOVATIVENESS. *SUJANA (Education and Learning Review)*, 2(3), 38–54. <https://doi.org/10.56943/sujana.v2i3.402>
- Ramadhani, T., Widiyanta, D., Sumayana, Y., Santoso, R. Y., Agustin, P. D., & Al-Amin. (2024). The Role Of Character Education In Forming Ethical And Responsible Students. *IJGIE (International Journal of Graduate of Islamic Education)*, 5(2), 110–124. <https://doi.org/10.37567/ijgie.v5i2.3064>
- Rizki, R. A., Amelia, R., Rohanda, Julaeha, P. R., & Maemunah, I. (2025). THE ROLE OF THE AKIDAH AKHLAK TEACHER IN IMPROVING THE BEHAVIOR OF EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS AT MTS. TA'DIBUL UMMAH, PARUNG PANJANG DISTRICT, BOGOR REGENCY. *Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Studies*, 1(2), 252–261. <https://jurnal-jams.or.id/index.php/JAMS/article/view/33>
- Rizky, A. R., Kurniawan, A., & Mubinah, A. (2025). The Role of Family in Shaping Children's Islamic Education: A Study in Paku Pasir Village, Leuwisadeng, Bogor. *PhilPaper*. https://scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=view_citation&hl=id&user=L8iEINUAAAAJ&citation_for_view=L8iEINUAAAAJ:WF5omc3nYNoC
- Rofiqoh, Y., & Fikri, M. K. (2025). Peran Guru Sebagai Model, Inspirasi dan Motivator Ramah Budaya untuk Membimbing Siswa di Sekolah Dasar Pendahuluan Dalam dunia pendidikan, pemahaman karakter siswa, termasuk menanamkan pembiasaan positif di sekolah, di mana guru dan kesadaran multikul. *JUPERAN: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran*, 04(01), 63–83.
- Rohman, A. T. H., Arisanti, K., & Mansur, R. (2024). The Role of Social Values of Islamic Education in Shaping the Religious Character of Adolescents. *Scaffolding: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Dan Multikulturalisme*, 6(2), 240–253. <https://doi.org/10.37680/scaffolding.v6i2.5698>
- Rozali, M. H., Jasmi, K. A., Nazim, M. A. A. M., & Sahran, R. (2023). Practical Teaching and Learning Methods in Malaysian Islamic Education. *SYAMIL: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam (Journal of Islamic Education)*, 11(1), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.21093/sy.v11i1.6157>
- Ruswandi, A., Firdaus, M. A., Ruswandi, R., & Supritna, A. (2019). Integration Of Character Education With Islamic Religious Education Subjects Based On School Culture. *Jurnal At-Tarbiyat: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 6(2). <https://doi.org/10.37758/jat.v6i2.702>
- Sesmiarni, Z. (2019). The Effective Moral Education on Early Childhood As an Effort Against Immoral Culture. *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 3(2), 561. <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v3i2.191>
- Simatupang, B. S., Nurhadi, M., & Purwati, W. (2022). Analisis latar belakang ekonomi keluarga dan motivasi belajar peserta didik pada kelas X-I SMAN 2 Samarinda. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional PPG Universitas Mulawarman*, 52–55. <https://journals.indexcopernicus.com/search/article?articleId=3877086>
- Syafi'i, I., Susanti, S., & Harti, H. (2021). Pengaruh Kinerja Keuangan, Tingkat

- Pendidikan Dan Kemampuan Manajemen Pemilik Terhadap Pertumbuhan UMKM Di Kabupaten Sidoarjo. *Journal of Economic, Bussines and Accounting (COSTING)*, 5(1), 530–541. <https://doi.org/10.31539/COSTING.V5I1.2881>
- Ulfa, M. (2022). DEKADENSI PENDIDIKAN MORAL REMAJA (STUDY KASUS DI DESA TEMBOK REJO KECAMATAN MUNCAR KABUPATEN BANYUWANGI). *FAJAR Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 2(2), 211–224. <https://doi.org/10.56013/fj.v2i2.1786>
- Zahira, F., Hamida, A. S., Tsabit, A. S., Fauzia, N. N., Romadhoni, R., & Hidayat, F. (2024). Islamic Moral Education in Shaping the Character of Muslim Identity in the Millennial Era. *Solo Universal Journal of Islamic Education and Multiculturalism*, 2(02), 103–118. <https://doi.org/10.61455/sujiem.v2i02.157>