

Efforts of Akidah Akhlak Teachers in Shaping Students' Honest Character at Islamic Junior High School

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Abstract. The cultivation of honest character in students at school is a significant challenge in education, given that many students still exhibit dishonest behavior in the classroom. This study aims to identify the efforts of Akidah Akhlak teachers in shaping students' honest character, as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors, at MTs Al-Washliyah KM 6 Medan. A qualitative approach was used, with data collection techniques including observation, interviews, and documentation. The study found that the efforts of Akidah Akhlak teachers included providing knowledge, role modeling, habituation, giving advice and motivation, and offering rewards and punishments. The main supporting factors in shaping students' honest character were collaboration between teachers, parents, and the school environment, while the primary inhibiting factors were lack of parental attention and negative peer influences. The study concludes that the combined efforts of various parties, especially Akidah Akhlak teachers, have had a positive impact on shaping students' honest character. The implications of these findings highlight the importance of collaboration between schools and parents in instilling the value of honesty in students to create a more moral and responsible generation.

Keyword: *Inhibiting Factors; Honest Character; Teaching Methods; Moral Education; Teacher Efforts*

Abstrak Penanaman karakter jujur pada siswa di sekolah merupakan tantangan penting dalam pendidikan, mengingat masih banyak siswa yang menunjukkan perilaku tidak jujur di dalam kelas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi upaya guru akidah akhlak dalam membentuk karakter jujur siswa, serta faktor pendukung dan penghambat yang ada, di MTs Al-Washliyah KM 6 Medan. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa upaya guru akidah akhlak meliputi pemberian pengetahuan, keteladanan, pembiasaan, pemberian nasihat dan motivasi, serta penghargaan dan hukuman. Faktor pendukung utama dalam pembentukan karakter jujur siswa adalah kerja sama antara guru, orang tua, dan lingkungan sekolah, sedangkan faktor penghambat utamanya adalah kurangnya perhatian orang tua dan pengaruh negatif dari lingkungan pergaulan. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa upaya gabungan dari berbagai pihak, terutama guru akidah akhlak, telah memberikan dampak positif dalam membentuk karakter jujur siswa. Implikasi dari temuan ini adalah pentingnya kolaborasi antara sekolah dan orang tua dalam menanamkan nilai kejujuran pada siswa untuk menciptakan generasi yang lebih bermoral dan bertanggung jawab.

Kata Kunci: *Faktor Penghambat; Karakter Jujur; Metode Pengajaran; Pendidikan Akhlak; Upaya Guru*

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Introduction

Education is an effort to equip humans with knowledge that is essential for building civilization. Mulita et al. (2024), state that education aims to humanize people, not merely to be a phenomenon. Education not only transfers knowledge but also shapes students' character, which becomes a major challenge in the face of moral and ethical degradation seen in society. Parents, educators, and educational institutions play an essential role in addressing this challenge and must act swiftly to tackle the decline in moral values. One of the strategies applied is the ethics of teachers, as part of the formal educational system, which emphasizes the importance of instilling the value of honesty in student behavior (Akil et al., 2024; Masturin, 2024).

Morality, behavior, or personality is crucial in human life because it determines one's attitude and identity. Good behavior reflects virtuous traits, while bad behavior indicates undesirable character. Therefore, personality development or behavior is highly dependent on the education one receives. According to Anam and Sakiyati (2019), the educational process is greatly influenced by the family, school, and community environment (Akil et al., 2024). Therefore, parents and educators must be aware of the importance of instilling Islamic values and moral education in line with the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, which are the foundation for building a child's character (Akil et al., 2024).

At school, teachers play a vital role in educating and developing students' character. Virtuous behavior should be taught both at home and in school. Teachers, especially Akidah Akhlak teachers, have a crucial role in helping students develop their moral character. Honesty is one of the moral values that should be instilled in students because it is a fundamental trait needed to be trustworthy and respected. However, the observation conducted by the researcher at MTs Al-Washliyah KM 6 Medan revealed a lack of honesty among students. Issues observed included students relying on their peers instead of completing tasks independently, copying answers, lying about bathroom breaks, and during exams, students were caught asking friends to write answers for them (Akil et al., 2024). Additionally, many students lost study materials such as pens, pencils, and books, indicating a lack of responsibility and honesty.

Honesty is a virtuous trait that should be possessed by every individual. Anam and Sakiyati (2019), reveals that honesty is not only about speaking the truth but also about acting honestly, intending to be truthful, and conveying messages in accordance with reality (Akil et al., 2024). Messi and Edi Harapan (2017) further emphasized that honesty is a quality that must be possessed by everyone, applicable in all aspects of life, whether at school, in social life, or in the workplace (Akil et al., 2024). Islam commands its followers to always be honest, as stated in the Qur'an, Surah At-Taubah (9:119), "*O you who have believed, fear Allah and be with those who are truthful*". Tafsir Fathul Qadir explains that this command signifies the importance of behaving truthfully, as demonstrated by those whose repentance Allah accepts.

Previous research has discussed the efforts of Akidah Akhlak teachers in shaping students' honest character, such as Nisa's (2023) study on forming honest character in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students. However, this research lacks a deep discussion on the connection between Qur'anic verses and the outcomes of the teachers' efforts in instilling honesty. This study aims to elaborate on the efforts made by Akidah Akhlak teachers at MTs Al-Washliyah KM 6 Medan in shaping students' honest character, as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors in this process. Additionally, this study aims to identify the impact of the efforts made by Akidah Akhlak teachers in shaping the honest character of students at the school.

Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. This design was chosen to deeply explore the phenomenon occurring at MTs Al-Washliyah KM 6 Medan regarding the efforts of Akidah Akhlak teachers in shaping students' honest character. The case study design allows the researcher to specifically examine the actions taken by teachers and understand the context, supporting factors, and barriers that influence the implementation of character education at the school. The case study focuses on a single educational institution to gain a thorough and comprehensive understanding.

Data in this study were collected through three main techniques: (1) In-depth Interviews: Interviews were conducted with Akidah Akhlak teachers, students, and the school principal to explore their views on the efforts made to shape students' honest character. These interviews used open-ended questions, allowing respondents to freely express their views on the topic; (2) Participatory Observation: The researcher directly observed the teaching and learning process in the classroom to see how teachers taught the value of honesty to students, and how students responded to these values in their interactions with peers and teachers; and (3) Documentation: The researcher collected relevant documents, such as the curriculum, teaching materials, and student academic records, to analyze how honesty values were taught and applied in the learning context at MTs Al-Washliyah KM 6 Medan.

To ensure trustworthiness and validity of the data, several techniques were employed: (1) Source Triangulation. Data validity was checked by comparing information obtained from different sources, such as interviews, observations, and documentation, to ensure that the data was unbiased and reliable; (2) Member Checking: After the data was analyzed, initial findings were returned to some informants for confirmation to ensure the accuracy of the data collected; (3) Audit Trail: The researcher kept detailed records of every step in the research process, from data collection to analysis, to ensure transparency and traceability of the research process; (4) Credibility: Data collection was conducted over a sufficient period to ensure that the data accurately reflected the actual conditions and to minimize potential errors in data interpretation.

The subjects of this study are Akidah Akhlak teachers, students, and the school principal at MTs Al-Washliyah KM 6 Medan. The Akidah Akhlak teachers were chosen because they play a central role in instilling the value of honesty in students. The students are from grades VII and VIII who are involved in Akidah Akhlak lessons, while the school principal was invited to provide insights regarding the policies and implementation of character education at the school.

This research was conducted at MTs Al-Washliyah KM 6 Medan, an Islamic school in Indonesia that focuses on shaping students' character through religious and ethical education. The study was conducted in the school environment, which is the primary place of interaction between teachers and students.

The data collected from interviews, observations, and documentation were analyzed using the Miles & Huberman data analysis model (Miles & Huberman, 1992). The analysis was done in three stages: (1) the first step is data reduction, where the researcher filters, selects, and focuses on data that is relevant to the research objectives. This process involves organizing the data and eliminating irrelevant information; (2) the reduced data is then presented in clear, systematic narrative form. In this step, the researcher organizes the data into categories or themes related to the research objectives, such as supporting and inhibiting factors in the formation of honest character; (3) the final step is drawing conclusions, where the researcher summarizes the findings

from the analyzed data. These conclusions provide insights into the efforts made by Akidah Akhlak teachers in shaping students' honest character and the factors affecting the process.

Results and Discussion

Efforts of Akidah Akhlak Teachers in Shaping Students' Honest Character at MTs Al-Washliyah KM 6 Medan

One of the most important aspects of a person's character and evidence of their faith in Islam is honesty. When a person is honest, their integrity and actions can be trusted. Honesty means speaking the truth and not lying, whether in words or actions. Muslims earn the trust of those around them because they behave honestly. There is no difference between "sincerity and patience" and "honesty." Although these words are easy to say, they must be used with caution (Mulita et al., 2024). Honesty is a foundation for success, which is why we must always remember Allah. In line with the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), he reminds us to always be honest and avoid falsehood:

"Avoid lying, for lying leads to sin, and sin leads to hell. A person will continue to lie until he is recorded as a liar before Allah. And be honest, for honesty leads to righteousness, and righteousness leads to paradise. A person will continue to be honest and strive for truth until he is recorded as truthful before Allah." (Ahmad bin Hanbal, 2001)

This hadith emphasizes that an individual's effort to establish themselves as trustworthy and their behavior reflecting a dislike for lying or deceiving others is the foundation of an honest character. This conclusion is based on the various opinions mentioned earlier. Based on the situation and facts, the reality that exists in the open world can be trusted, both in words and actions. Additionally, teaching students to comply with standards, laws, and regulations in both society and the classroom is another goal of instilling the value of honesty. Honesty should be practiced in both verbal and non-verbal interactions in daily life.

Meanwhile, the efforts made by Akidah Akhlak teachers at MTs Al-Washliyah KM 6 Medan in shaping students' honest character include:

a) Providing Knowledge

The Akidah Akhlak teacher at MTs Al-Washliyah KM 6 Medan provides students with knowledge by explaining the meaning of honesty in line with the materials in the Akidah Akhlak lessons, such as providing concrete examples, like the stories of the prophets and real-life examples of honest behavior. This stage of providing knowledge shows how Akidah Akhlak educators teach the importance of honesty to their students. This method is used to teach students the significance of honesty. The goal of this stage is to help students develop their values of honesty. At this stage, teachers interact actively with students only through verbal communication.

In line with the interview conducted with the counseling teacher, who stated that as a counselor, they also play a role in instilling honesty in students: *"The counselor instills the value of honesty by approaching the students personally, or by providing lessons on attitude and honesty in a class setting."*

b) Understanding and Role Modeling

According to the research conducted with Akidah Akhlak teachers at MTs Al-Washliyah KM 6 Medan, instilling self-confidence in students allows them not only to learn but also to understand the material, which in turn motivates them to act in a manner that upholds the principle of honesty. During this phase, students and teachers engage in two-way interactions and communication. At this stage, educators not only provide knowledge about the importance of honesty but also act as role models by showing and providing real examples of behavior that aligns with the ideals of honesty. The teacher also encourages students to admit mistakes as an example for others to behave honestly.

Moral teachers play a crucial role in successfully instilling the concept of honesty. Teachers are expected to fulfill their roles as educators, mentors, and motivators. Most importantly, educators need to help students practice honesty in their daily lives. Role modeling, whether directly or indirectly, is a common practice. For instance, giving clear instructions to students to help their peers who are struggling with tasks, not just copying from friends. Also, appearance matters; since students often imitate what they see, it is essential for teachers and other role models to always maintain appropriate appearances, especially how they dress (Mulita et al., 2024). However, being honest is not an easy task, especially when the heart is not yet pure. As Siti Syamsiah (2023) states, unfortunately, this trait is increasingly hard to find nowadays. Honesty has become a rare virtue, although we greatly need role models who can fulfill their duties with responsibility. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the best example of honesty. This trait is one of his virtues, which serves as a role model for humankind (Damanik, 2019).

In the Qur'an, Surah Al-Ahzab (33:21), which relates to the method of role modeling (*uswab*), Allah SWT says:

"Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah, you have an excellent example for whoever hopes in Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah often." (Kemenag RI, 2019)

The writer of Tafsir Fathul Qadir explains that this verse contains a reprimand for those who did not participate in the battle with the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), emphasizing that Prophet Muhammad's efforts, including fighting for the religion of Allah, serve as an exemplary model (Asy-Syaukani, 2013).

Imam Al-Ghazali emphasizes that the method of *uswab* (role modeling) is highly relevant to addressing the issues that continue to plague Islamic education. Not only that, but the issue of moral degradation has become a heated global discussion, and the old system must adapt to new challenges without disregarding the importance of character education using the *uswab* method (Rofiq & Munir, 2022).

c) Habituation

The Akidah Akhlak teacher at MTs Al-Washliyah KM 6 Medan instills honesty through habituation by incorporating it into the learning process, such as assigning tasks where students are prohibited from cheating, requiring them to take responsibility for completing their projects, avoiding exam fraud, and paying for snacks and other purchased items according to the price. These actions are part of an effort to foster honesty.

For instance, Al-Ghazali emphasizes the importance of forming habits in children from an early age: *"The heart of a child is like a blank sheet of paper that has not been written on. It will accept whatever is shown to it. Ultimately, this tendency will develop into habits, which then become beliefs (character). Children taught to do good from an early age will grow up to be good individuals, and this will make them safe both in this world and the hereafter."* Ahmad Tafsir argues that habituation is something practiced because it is fundamentally based on application (Raihanah, 2017).

d) Storytelling

Storytelling is another method employed by Akidah Akhlak teachers at MTs Al-Washliyah KM 6 Medan. The teacher tells stories about honest behavior in daily life, including stories of the prophets. At this stage, the Akidah Akhlak teacher does not just tell stories but also supports them with references from the Qur'an. Abuddin Nata asserts that storytelling is an effective technique that can deeply touch the emotions of children. Islam acknowledges that humans are naturally drawn to stories because they have a strong emotional impact. Therefore, storytelling is used as one of the teaching methods (Raihanah, 2017).

e) Giving Advice and Motivation

Moral teachers always provide motivation before starting lessons on practicing good morals, avoiding bad morals, and consistently integrating moral messages such as honesty, mutual

encouragement to help, respecting others' opinions, and behaving kindly toward others. The efforts made by the teacher in providing guidance or inspiration are beneficial because they can increase students' motivation to work hard, improve themselves, and learn to appreciate others' viewpoints (Mulita et al., 2024).

f) Rewards and Punishments

The form of reward usually given by teachers at MTs Al-Washliyah KM 6 Medan includes praise or words that make students feel appreciated. Amirullaoh Syarbini (2016) states, everyone needs and wants to feel appreciated, and the method of rewarding is crucial. Children are at a developmental stage where they greatly seek recognition. Therefore, parents should express appreciation when children achieve something remarkable, although this appreciation should not be excessive. Children who receive rewards will feel more confident and inspired to do good things again. Children with high self-esteem tend to be more imaginative in thinking and behaving (Raihanah, 2017).

In addition to rewarding students for building their character, punishment can also be used. However, it should be noted that punishment is not the best way to educate children, especially when teaching. Children often act under pressure when threatened with punishment. Punishment also instills fear, making children feel pressured and forced to act. However, if no other methods work, this form of discipline can be applied as a last resort. Muhammad Quthb asserts that "firm action must be taken immediately to place the issue in its proper place if role modeling and advice are insufficient. Punishment is that firm action" (Raihanah, 2017). At MTs Al-Washliyah KM 6 Medan, the punishment for students caught lying or making mistakes that are still tolerable is usually to clean the classroom.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Shaping Students' Honest Character

In the process of shaping students' honest character, there are several supporting and inhibiting factors. First, Supporting Factors. The school environment that encourages programs that implement learning processes and moral development; and the curriculum that supports instilling honesty values in students. Second, Inhibiting Factors. Internal factors such as physiological conditions and physical functions of the students. External factors, such as a lack of parental attention, students who are not guided in practicing honesty, and peers who come from environments where Islamic values are not instilled.

After the various efforts made by the teachers at MTs Al-Washliyah KM 6 Medan, there have been noticeable improvements in students' honesty. Students have become more responsible for their actions, speak truthfully when questioned by teachers, and exhibit greater discipline, such as arriving on time and not taking items that do not belong to them. Students are also more motivated to act honestly and more active in Akidah Akhlak lessons, ready to acknowledge their mistakes and accept punishment.

Conclusion

This study reveals that the efforts of Akidah Akhlak teachers in shaping students' honest character at MTs Al-Washliyah KM 6 Medan highlight the importance of integrating Islamic values into character education. The findings indicate that a holistic approach, involving the provision of knowledge, role modeling, and habituation, can be effective in instilling honesty values in students. However, the success of these efforts is also influenced by external factors such as the social environment and parental involvement, underscoring the need for the active participation of all parties in supporting character education.

The scientific contribution of this study strengthens the understanding that religion-based character education must be designed with a contextual and responsive approach to the challenges of the modern era, including the influence of technology and social media. This study also suggests

that character education should involve a cross-sector approach between schools, families, and communities to create an environment that supports the development of strong character in students.

There are limitations to this study, particularly regarding the scope of the research, which focused only on one madrasa in Medan. Further research is needed to explore other variables, such as the role of social media and digital culture in shaping students' character. Additionally, this study was limited to the perspective of Akidah Akhlak teachers, and future research should involve the viewpoints of parents, students, and the community to provide a more comprehensive picture.

The implications of this study for educational policy are the importance of integrating religion-based character education into the school curriculum, as well as enhancing teacher training to understand and implement effective methods in instilling honesty in students. Furthermore, policies that encourage collaboration between schools, parents, and communities will greatly support the development of strong character in students, which, in turn, can influence the creation of a more moral and responsible society.

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