

## Aqidah Teachers' Strategies in Instilling Religious Values: A Case Study of Grade VII Students of the As-Syahaadah Pakpak Bharat Islamic Boarding School

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### Abstract

This study examines the strategy of Aqidah teachers in instilling religious values in grade VII students at the As-Syahaadah Islamic Boarding School, Pakpak Bharat. Using a qualitative approach with a case study method, this research involves in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. The study results show that the main strategies used include worship habituation, contextual approaches, and dialogical methods. The positive impact can be seen from the increase in students' understanding of religious values, with the average score increasing from 70% to 85%. Positive changes in attitudes and behaviors were also observed, including increased respect for teachers and active participation in worship activities. Despite this, challenges such as the diversity of students' backgrounds and limited resources are still faced. This study recommends increasing teacher training, curriculum development, and improving facilities to support the effectiveness of instilling religious values in Islamic boarding schools.

### Keywords

Aqidah Education; Learning Strategies; Religious Values.



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## INTRODUCTION

Religious education is important in forming students' character and morality, especially in a religious-based educational environment such as Islamic boarding schools. According to Muhaimin, Islamic religious education has a central role in shaping students' behavior, personality, and spiritual orientation, focusing on mastering religious knowledge and internalizing underlying moral values (Muhaimin, 2019). As a religious-based educational institution, Pesantren plays an important role in instilling these values, especially through the subject of Aqidah, which discusses basic beliefs in Islam and the cultivation of moral values.

The As-Syahaadah Islamic Boarding School in Pakpak Bharat, North Sumatra, is one of the institutions that is consistent in carrying out Islamic religious education,

especially in the subject of Aqidah for students at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) level. Since its establishment in 2004, this pesantren has experienced significant development in educating its students, especially those from family backgrounds with minimal religious understanding. In this context, Aqidah teachers' role is vital in instilling religious values because they are the spearhead in teaching the basics of faith and morals that every student must have.

The process of instilling religious values in the As-Syahaadah Islamic Boarding School is carried out through a holistic approach that involves all aspects of student life, both inside and outside the classroom. Zubaedi stated that character education must be integrated into all aspects of school life or Islamic boarding schools, including formal learning activities, extracurricular activities, and daily interactions between teachers and students (Zubaedi, 2020). In this context, cultivating Aqidah values becomes more than just a process of knowledge transfer but also involves efforts to form a strong spiritual character in students.

However, implementing this strategy of instilling religious values cannot be separated from challenges. Sardiman stated that students' motivation to learn is often the main factor that affects the effectiveness of instilling religious values (Sardiman, 2020). At the As-Syahaadah Islamic Boarding School, one of the main challenges Aqidah teachers face is the diverse backgrounds of students in terms of the level of religious understanding and the socio-economic conditions of their families. Most students come from rural areas with a very minimal religious education background, so they need extra guidance in the learning process.

In addition, the limited facilities and infrastructure in Islamic boarding schools are also a challenge that cannot be ignored. Arsyad emphasized the importance of using effective learning media to help students understand abstract concepts in Islam, including Aqidah (Arsyad, 2020). However, at the As-Syahaadah Islamic Boarding School, facilities such as libraries, multimedia rooms, and adequate teaching materials are still limited, hindering the optimal learning process.

This study aims to analyze the strategies applied by Aqidah teachers in instilling religious values among grade VII A students at the As-Syahaadah Islamic Boarding School. Through this study, it is hoped that a clearer picture can be obtained about the effectiveness of the teaching methods used and the challenges teachers face in carrying out their duties. In addition, this research also seeks to provide recommendations that can be used to improve the quality of instilling religious values in Islamic boarding schools, especially in Aqidah subjects.

As stated by Suharno, the success of religious education is determined by teachers' mastery of the subject matter and their ability to create a conducive and interactive learning environment (Suharno, 2021). Therefore, instilling religious values in the As-Syahaadah Islamic Boarding School must include a comprehensive approach, including worship habits, cultivating positive character, and using interesting and effective learning methods.

## **METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. According to Creswell, qualitative research aims to understand social phenomena from participants' perspectives in a particular context (Creswell, 2017). This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to gain a deep understanding of the strategies of Aqidah teachers in instilling religious values in the As-Shahadah Islamic Boarding School, Pakpak Bharat, and how the process affects the spiritual development of students. The case study was chosen because this study focuses on one class, namely class VII A, which is a representation of the object of study in depth and detail. The data collected is analyzed using the Miles and Huberman method, which is qualitative data analysis involving three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/verification (Huberman, 2014). This process is carried out simultaneously during and after the data collection process to ensure that any information obtained can be understood and interpreted properly.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The As-Syahaadah Islamic Boarding School, which was established in 2004, located in Pakpak Bharat, North Sumatra, has a vision to become an educational institution that not only teaches religious knowledge but also builds students' character. With the number of students reaching 177 people and 23 teaching staff, this pesantren strives to provide holistic education. In its implementation, the pesantren prioritizes integrating religious values in every aspect of the student's daily life.

The results of interviews with Aqidah teachers in class VII A revealed that several main strategies were used in instilling religious values in the As-Shahadah Islamic Boarding School: Worship Habits: One of the strategies applied is the habit of daily worship, such as saying greetings when entering class, reading the Qur'an, and praying before and after teaching and learning activities. This habit is considered very important in shaping the character and spirituality of students. According to Muhaimin, habituation effectively instills moral and spiritual values in Islamic religious education (Muhaimin, 2019).

**Contextual Approach:** Teachers also apply a contextual approach in teaching Aqidah values. By relating the subject matter to the student's daily lives, teachers help students understand the importance of these values in a real context. Sardiman stated that a contextual approach to learning can increase student engagement and make it easier for them to understand the material (Sardiman, 2020).

**Dialogical Method:** Besides the lecture method, teachers use dialogical methods in learning. This method allows students to actively interact during the learning process, discuss the religious values taught, and provide opinions and questions. Nana Sudjana explained that the dialogical method increases student participation and helps them internalize the values taught (Sudjana, 2016).

Observations and interviews with students show that the strategies applied by Aqidah teachers have a positive impact on students' spiritual and moral development. Here are some key findings: **Increased Understanding:** Most students report improving their understanding of religious values. After a few weeks of learning, the quiz results showed that the average student comprehension score increased from 70% to 85%. According to Arsyad, the use of varied methods in teaching can increase students' motivation and understanding. (Arsyad, 2020)

**Changes in Attitudes and Behaviors:** Many students show positive changes in their attitudes and behavior. They respect teachers and friends more and are more active in worship activities at Islamic boarding schools. Zubaedi emphasized that good character education will be reflected in students' daily behavior (Zubaedi, 2020 ).

**Involvement in Extracurricular Activities:** Students are also increasingly involved in extracurricular activities that support religious values, such as recitation, Qur'anic tahfidz classes, and social activities. This involvement increases their religious knowledge and strengthens the sense of togetherness and solidarity among students.

Despite the positive results, the study also identified several challenges in instilling religious values: **Diverse Student Backgrounds:** Students in class VII A come from various social and educational backgrounds. Some students understand religion well, while others need more guidance. This is by the findings of Sari and Wibowo, who stated that a student's educational background can affect the learning process (Wibowo, 2021).

**Resource Limitations:** Islamic boarding schools face limited resources, such as inadequate teaching materials and facilities. Azhar Arsyad mentioned that limited resources can hinder the effectiveness of the learning process, especially in the context of religious education (Arsyad, 2020). **Social and Cultural Change:** Rapid social and

cultural changes can affect students' understanding and acceptance of religious values. Nugroho and Susanto noted that this challenge needs to be faced with a more adaptive approach to education (Susanto, 2021).

Based on the results of this study, several recommendations can be proposed to increase the cultivation of religious values in the As-Syahaadah Islamic Boarding School: Training for Teachers: Conduct training and workshops for Aqidah teachers to update their teaching methods, including the use of technology in religious education. This is in line with the views of Yvonna Lincoln and Egon Guba (1985) about the importance of professional development for teachers in improving the quality of learning.

Curriculum Development: Updating the Aqidah learning curriculum to be more relevant to the needs of students and their socio-cultural context. Creswell emphasized that a good curriculum must be able to answer the challenges of the times and be relevant to existing social developments (Creswell, 2017). Improved Facilities and Resources: Improve educational facilities and provide more adequate resources to support the learning process, such as textbooks, learning media, and comfortable learning spaces.

## CONCLUSION

This study analyzes the strategies of Aqidah teachers in instilling religious values in grade VII A of the As-Syahaadah Islamic Boarding School, Pakpak Bharat. The results showed that worship habits, contextual approaches, and dialogical methods effectively shaped students' characters. The increase in students' understanding of religious values can be seen from the average score, which increased from 70% to 85%. In addition, students show positive changes in attitudes and behaviors, such as being more respectful of teachers and active in worship activities. However, challenges such as diverse student backgrounds and resource limitations remain. Therefore, training for teachers, facility improvements, and curriculum development are needed to be more relevant to the needs of students. Instilling the right religious values can help students become individuals with good morals.

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