



The Implementation of Teacher Role Modeling in Aqidah Akhlak Learning at Islamic Junior High School

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Article Info :	ABSTRACT
Accepted: 10-04-2026	Background: Teacher role modeling is a fundamental approach in Islamic education because students tend to imitate the attitudes and behaviors demonstrated by teachers during the learning process. Based on Bandura's social learning theory, moral values are effectively internalized through observation and imitation of positive role models. Objective: This study aims to analyze the implementation of teacher role modeling in Aqidah Akhlak learning at MTs Miftahul Khoir Karangrejo, including its forms, students' responses, and the supporting and inhibiting factors. Method: This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with one Aqidah Akhlak teacher and eight students, and documentation of learning activities. Findings and Implications: The findings indicate that teacher role modeling was reflected in discipline, polite communication, responsibility, and respectful interaction. Students responded positively, showing improved moral understanding and learning motivation. However, exemplary practices had not been systematically integrated into lesson planning. Supporting factors included the teacher's consistent personality and a conducive classroom environment, while limited instructional time and diverse student characteristics became major challenges. Conclusion: Teacher role modeling effectively supports students' moral character development. Integrating exemplary practices into lesson planning and teacher professional development is recommended to strengthen character education in Islamic schools.
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INTRODUCTION

The challenge of moral and character education has become a central concern in educational discourse globally. According to UNESCO (2021), the decline in students' moral awareness, the rise of bullying, and the weakening of social ethics among youth have been identified as critical issues facing educational systems in many developing countries, including Indonesia. The 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report further highlighted that moral

formation and values-based education remain insufficiently integrated into formal instructional practices across diverse cultural and religious contexts.

In Indonesia specifically, the Ministry of Education and Culture has reported persistent concerns regarding students' behavioral problems, including instances of dishonesty, disrespect toward teachers, and declining religious practice, which indicate that cognitive-centered learning alone is insufficient to cultivate well-rounded individuals. These conditions underscore the urgent need for educational approaches that go beyond knowledge transmission to actively shape students' ethical and moral character.

Education plays a fundamental role in shaping students' intellectual and moral development. In the context of Islamic education, learning is not only oriented toward cognitive achievement but also emphasizes the formation of moral character and religious values in students' daily lives. Therefore, the learning process in Islamic schools should integrate knowledge, attitudes, and behavior in a balanced manner, particularly in Aqidah Akhlak subjects, which focus on strengthening faith and moral conduct (Nata 2011).

One of the essential elements in Islamic education is teacher role modeling. Teachers are not merely responsible for delivering academic material but are also expected to become moral exemplars for students. In the learning process, students often imitate the attitudes, behavior, and communication patterns demonstrated by teachers. Consequently, exemplary behavior from teachers becomes an effective educational method in internalizing moral values among students (Nuryanti 2023).

Previous studies have shown that teacher role modeling significantly contributes to students' character formation and learning motivation. Research conducted by Idrus and Lestari (2023) found that teachers' exemplary attitudes positively influence students' discipline and social behavior in Islamic educational institutions. Similarly, Islamia (2024) explained that exemplary behavior in Islamic education facilitates the internalization of akhlakul karimah values because students understand moral concepts more effectively through direct examples rather than theoretical explanations alone.

Despite its importance, the implementation of teacher role modeling in classroom learning still faces several challenges. In many cases, learning activities are predominantly centered on lecture-based methods, causing students to become passive during the learning process. Such conditions reduce students' engagement and limit the effectiveness of moral value internalization. In addition, teacher role modeling is often implemented

naturally and spontaneously rather than systematically integrated into instructional strategies (Wahid and Amri 2024).

Based on preliminary observations conducted at MTs Miftahul Khoir Karangrejo, Aqidah Akhlak learning has generally been implemented properly; however, several problems remain evident. The learning process still relies heavily on conventional teaching methods, although teachers have demonstrated exemplary behavior such as discipline, politeness, and responsibility. Furthermore, students showed stronger interest and understanding when teachers provided direct examples related to daily life situations.

Several previous studies have discussed teacher role modeling in Islamic education. However, most studies mainly focus on character education in general contexts, while research specifically examining the implementation of teacher role modeling in Aqidah Akhlak learning at Islamic junior high schools remains limited. Therefore, this study offers novelty by focusing on how teacher role modeling is implemented specifically in Aqidah Akhlak learning and how students respond to such practices within the context of Islamic secondary education. While prior studies by Idrus et al. (2023); Islamia (2024) have provided foundational insights into the role of teacher exemplary behavior in Islamic education, these studies focus primarily on general character education within broader Islamic school contexts.

Neither study specifically investigates how teacher role modeling is operationalized within the disciplinary boundaries of Aqidah Akhlak subjects, nor do they examine in depth the mechanisms through which students' moral character is formed in response to teacher exemplary behaviors at the Islamic junior high school (MTs) level. Furthermore, these studies do not systematically analyze the institutional and personal factors that either support or impede the effective implementation of teacher role modeling within classroom interaction. This research gap represents a significant limitation in the existing literature and warrants dedicated empirical investigation.

This study is expected to offer several theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, the findings will extend the application of A Bandura and Walters (1977) social learning theory to the specific context of Islamic moral education by demonstrating how observational learning operates within Aqidah Akhlak classroom settings. Practically, the findings are intended to provide evidence-based guidance for Aqidah Akhlak teachers in systematically integrating role modeling into instructional strategies, for school administrators in developing supportive professional environments that encourage teacher exemplary behavior, and for curriculum developers

and policymakers in Islamic education in designing character-oriented learning frameworks that acknowledge the centrality of teacher behavior as a pedagogical tool.

This study aims to analyze the implementation of teacher role modeling in Aqidah Akhlak learning at MTs Miftahul Khoir Karangrejo, including the forms of exemplary behavior demonstrated by teachers, students' responses, and the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting its implementation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the implementation of teacher role modeling in Aqidah Akhlak learning at MTs Miftahul Khoir Karangrejo. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because this research focused on understanding social phenomena, teacher behavior, and students' responses within the natural setting of the learning process. According to Creswell (2016), qualitative research is used to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems.

The research was conducted at MTs Miftahul Khoir Karangrejo, an Islamic junior high school located in Pasuruan Regency, Indonesia. The selection of the research site was based on preliminary observations indicating the presence of teacher role modeling practices in Aqidah Akhlak learning activities.

The participants of this study consisted of one Aqidah Akhlak teacher and students of class IX A, totaling 27 students comprising 16 male students and 11 female students. The participants were selected purposively because they were directly involved in the learning process being studied. Purposive sampling is commonly used in qualitative research to obtain participants who possess relevant experiences and information related to the research focus (Sugiyono 2022).

Data collection techniques in this study included classroom observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to examine the teacher's behavior, teaching methods, and students' responses during the learning process. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with the teacher and several students to obtain in-depth information regarding the implementation of teacher role modeling in Aqidah Akhlak learning. In addition, documentation such as classroom activities and class data was used to support the research findings.

The data analysis technique employed in this study referred to the interactive model developed by Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña (2019), which consists of data collection, data reduction, data display, and

conclusion drawing. The collected data were organized and interpreted systematically to identify patterns and relationships related to teacher role modeling practices.

To ensure the validity of the data, this study applied source triangulation and technique triangulation. Triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings (Moleong 2021).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

Observation Findings

Based on classroom observations conducted in class IX A at MTs Miftahul Khoir Karangrejo, several findings related to the implementation of teacher role modeling in Aqidah Akhlak learning were identified.

First, the teacher demonstrated disciplinary behavior by arriving on time and starting the learning process according to the scheduled class hours. The teacher also prepared the learning activities properly and maintained classroom order during the lesson.

Second, the learning process was primarily conducted using lecture and discussion methods. The teacher explained the material in a communicative and approachable manner, allowing students to follow the lesson more comfortably.

Third, most students showed active participation during the learning activities. Students paid attention to the teacher's explanations, responded to questions, and followed classroom instructions appropriately. The classroom atmosphere appeared conducive and respectful.

Fourth, teacher role modeling was reflected through daily behavior in the classroom. The teacher consistently demonstrated politeness, responsibility, and respectful interaction with students. In addition, the teacher reminded students about discipline and moral behavior while simultaneously practicing those values during the learning process.

However, the findings also indicated that teacher role modeling had not yet been systematically integrated into instructional planning. Learning activities still relied heavily on conventional lecture-based methods, limiting opportunities for more reflective and student-centered learning experiences.

Interview Findings

The interview results with the Aqidah Akhlak teacher revealed that teacher role modeling was considered an essential element in the learning process. According to the teacher, students tend to imitate teachers' attitudes

and behavior more easily than merely understanding theoretical explanations. This statement reflects the teacher's strong conviction that moral education is realized not through theoretical instruction alone, but through the consistency of behavior demonstrated in every classroom interaction.

The teacher explained that exemplary behavior was implemented through daily practices such as punctuality, polite communication, responsibility, and respectful interaction with students. The teacher also attempted to create a comfortable learning atmosphere to encourage students' participation during classroom activities. Furthermore, interviews with eight selected students indicated that they preferred teachers who explained the material clearly and repeatedly when students experienced difficulties in understanding the lesson. Students also stated that they understood moral values more effectively when teachers provided direct examples related to everyday life situations. These responses consistently indicate that direct modeling by the teacher produces more meaningful moral learning than conventional lecture-based instruction.



Figure 1. Interview session with students regarding their responses toward teacher role modeling in Aqidah Akhlak learning at MTs Miftahul Khoir Karangrejo

In addition, students admitted that they often imitated positive attitudes demonstrated by the teacher, such as politeness, friendliness, and respectful communication. These findings indicate that teacher role modeling contributed positively to students' motivation and moral understanding. Nevertheless, the interview findings also revealed several obstacles in implementing teacher role modeling, including limited instructional time and differences in students' characteristics and learning responses.

Documentation Findings

Documentation data in this study consisted of classroom activity photographs, classroom condition records, and student data. The

documentation findings supported the observation and interview results regarding the implementation of teacher role modeling in Aqidah Akhlak learning.

The classroom documentation showed that the learning environment was relatively conducive for the teaching and learning process. Teacher-student interaction appeared active and respectful during classroom activities. In addition, the documentation indicated that the teacher consistently maintained discipline and classroom order during the learning process. Students also demonstrated positive attitudes during classroom interaction, including attentiveness and respectful behavior toward the teacher.



figure 2 and 3. Aqidah Akhlak learning activities in class IX A at MTs Miftahul Khoir Karangrejo

The documentation findings further strengthened the evidence that teacher role modeling had been implemented through daily classroom interaction, although its integration into instructional strategies remained limited.

DISCUSSION

Teacher Role Modeling in Aqidah Akhlak Learning

The findings of this study demonstrate that teacher role modeling has been implemented in Aqidah Akhlak learning at MTs Miftahul Khoir Karangrejo through teachers' daily attitudes, communication patterns, discipline, and classroom interaction. Teacher role modeling was reflected not only in verbal instruction but also in the practical behaviors demonstrated during the learning process.

The observation findings revealed that the teacher consistently showed punctuality, responsibility, and polite communication toward students. These behaviors indicate that moral values were not merely conveyed theoretically but also practiced directly within classroom interaction. In Islamic education, exemplary behavior or *uswah hasanah* is considered one of the most effective

approaches in developing students' moral character because students naturally imitate figures they respect and trust (Nuryanti 2023).

The interview findings further confirmed that students paid greater attention to teachers who demonstrated positive attitudes during classroom activities. Students also stated that they understood moral values more effectively when teachers provided direct examples related to daily life experiences. This finding supports the social learning theory proposed by Bandura, which explains that individuals learn behavior through observation and imitation of role models within their social environment.

Applying Bandura's four sub-processes of observational learning to this study's findings: (1) Attention, students actively directed their attention toward the teacher's behavior, particularly disciplinary practices and polite communication, which served as salient and trusted stimuli; (2) Retention, through repeated exposure across multiple learning sessions, students retained these behavioral patterns in memory;

(3) Reproduction, students demonstrated behavioral imitation by applying politeness, respectful communication, and disciplinary attitudes in their own classroom conduct; and (4) Motivation, positive emotional relationships between teacher and students reinforced students' willingness to emulate the modeled behaviors. This analytical mapping demonstrates that Bandura's framework is not merely applicable in general educational contexts but also operates meaningfully within the culturally and religiously specific domain of Aqidah Akhlak learning in Indonesian Islamic schools (Albert. Bandura 1977).

In addition, the findings of this study are consistent with previous research conducted by M. Idrus and Lestari (2023), which found that teacher role modeling significantly influences students' discipline and character development in Islamic educational settings. Similarly, (Islamia 2024) emphasized that exemplary behavior in Islamic education facilitates the internalization of akhlakul karimah values among students because moral learning becomes more contextual and meaningful.

However, this study also found that teacher role modeling had not yet been systematically integrated into instructional planning. Learning activities remained predominantly teacher-centered through lecture-based methods, reducing opportunities for reflective and participatory learning experiences. This condition indicates that teacher role modeling was still implemented naturally rather than strategically designed as part of instructional methods.

From an educational perspective, the integration of teacher role modeling into learning strategies is important because moral education requires consistency between theory and practice. Therefore, teachers should

not only function as knowledge transmitters but also as moral exemplars capable of shaping students' attitudes and social behavior comprehensively.

Students' Responses toward Teacher Role Modeling

The findings of this study indicate that students responded positively to the implementation of teacher role modeling in Aqidah Akhlak learning. Students showed greater interest and engagement during classroom activities when teachers demonstrated moral values directly through their attitudes and behavior. This finding suggests that exemplary behavior plays an important role in creating meaningful learning experiences within Islamic education. Based on interview data, students expressed that they preferred teachers who explained the material clearly, repeated explanations when necessary, and demonstrated moral behavior in daily classroom interaction. Students also admitted that direct examples provided by teachers helped them understand moral concepts more effectively than theoretical explanations alone.

These findings indicate that teacher role modeling contributes not only to students' cognitive understanding but also to their emotional and social development. From the perspective of educational psychology, students' responses toward exemplary teachers can be understood through the concept of observational learning, in which learners develop attitudes and behaviors by observing influential figures within their social environment. Teachers who consistently demonstrate positive behavior become important social models for students in shaping moral awareness and classroom attitudes (Ormrod 2020).

Furthermore, positive teacher-student interaction was found to strengthen students' motivation and classroom participation. Students appeared more confident and active when the teacher created a supportive and respectful learning atmosphere. This finding is in line with previous research conducted by Ryan and Deci (2020), which emphasized that supportive interpersonal relationships in learning environments significantly influence students' intrinsic motivation and engagement.

The findings also revealed that students tended to imitate teachers' behavior, particularly in terms of politeness, discipline, and respectful communication. This condition demonstrates that teacher role modeling functions as an indirect moral education process in which values are internalized through repeated social interaction rather than through formal instruction alone.

In addition, the positive responses shown by students indicate that moral learning becomes more contextual when teachers integrate ethical values into classroom interaction. Therefore, teacher role modeling should be viewed not

merely as complementary behavior but as an essential component of effective Islamic learning practices.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of Teacher Role Modeling

The implementation of teacher role modeling in Aqidah Akhlak learning at MTs Miftahul Khoir Karangrejo was influenced by several supporting and inhibiting factors identified through observation, interviews, and documentation. These factors significantly affected the effectiveness of moral value internalization within the learning process.

One of the main supporting factors identified in this study was the teacher's positive personality and consistent behavior. The teacher demonstrated discipline, responsibility, politeness, and respectful communication during classroom activities. Such consistency strengthened students' trust and respect toward the teacher, thereby facilitating the process of moral imitation. According to [\(Lickona 2019\)](#), character education becomes more effective when teachers consistently demonstrate ethical behavior because students learn moral values not only through instruction but also through real-life examples.

Another supporting factor was the conducive classroom environment. The interaction between teacher and students was generally positive and respectful, creating a learning atmosphere that encouraged participation and openness. This condition allowed students to feel more comfortable expressing opinions and engaging in classroom discussions. Positive classroom climate is considered an important component in promoting effective learning and character development [\(Wentzel 2017\)](#).

In addition, students' awareness and willingness to follow teachers' guidance also contributed positively to the implementation of teacher role modeling. Several students demonstrated respectful attitudes and attentiveness during the learning process, indicating that exemplary behavior had influenced students' classroom conduct.

However, the findings also revealed several inhibiting factors affecting the implementation of teacher role modeling. One of the primary obstacles was limited instructional time. The teacher often focused more on delivering academic material due to time constraints, reducing opportunities for reflective moral discussion and deeper character development activities.

Another challenge was the diversity of students' characteristics and learning responses. Not all students demonstrated equal levels of motivation, discipline, or emotional maturity during classroom interaction. Some students remained passive and less responsive toward moral guidance provided by the

teacher. According to Nucci, Narvaez, and Krettenauer (2014), differences in students' social and psychological backgrounds can influence the effectiveness of character education practices in schools.

Furthermore, the learning process still relied predominantly on conventional lecture-based methods. Although lecture methods remain useful for delivering theoretical content, excessive dependence on teacher-centered instruction may limit students' active participation and critical reflection. Contemporary educational approaches emphasize the importance of interactive and student-centered learning environments in promoting deeper moral understanding and behavioral transformation.

Therefore, the findings suggest that the successful implementation of teacher role modeling requires not only exemplary teachers but also supportive learning environments, adequate instructional strategies, and active student participation. Integrating reflective, participatory, and contextual learning approaches may strengthen the effectiveness of moral education in Aqidah Akhlak learning.

The Role of Teacher Role Modeling in Students' Character Formation

The findings of this study demonstrate that teacher role modeling plays a significant role in shaping students' moral character within Aqidah Akhlak learning. Teacher behavior observed during classroom interaction influenced students not only academically but also socially and morally. Students tended to imitate attitudes and behaviors consistently demonstrated by the teacher, particularly in terms of discipline, politeness, responsibility, and respectful communication.

The interview findings revealed that students perceived the teacher as an important figure whose behavior should be followed in daily life. Several students admitted that they attempted to apply positive behaviors demonstrated by the teacher, such as speaking politely, respecting others, and maintaining discipline during classroom activities. This indicates that teacher role modeling contributes to the internalization of moral values through continuous social interaction.

In Islamic educational philosophy, moral education is closely associated with the concept of *uswah hasanah*, in which educators function as living examples for students. Moral values become more meaningful when students directly observe ethical behavior practiced consistently within their learning environment. According to (Al-Attas 2019), Islamic education fundamentally aims to develop *adab* or proper moral conduct through the integration of knowledge, ethics, and spiritual awareness.

Furthermore, the findings of this study support previous research conducted by Berkowitz and Bier (2014), which emphasized that character formation is more effective when moral values are integrated into everyday social interaction rather than delivered solely through theoretical instruction. In this context, teacher role modeling functions as an indirect educational process through which students gradually construct moral understanding based on lived experiences within the classroom environment.

The study also found that positive teacher-student relationships strengthened students' emotional attachment to the learning process. Students who respected and admired the teacher appeared more motivated to follow classroom rules and demonstrate positive behavior. This finding aligns with the view of (Noddings 2013), who argued that caring relationships between teachers and students are essential in promoting ethical development and meaningful learning experiences.

However, character formation through teacher role modeling requires consistency and sustainability. Moral values cannot be internalized effectively through occasional instruction alone. Instead, students need continuous exposure to positive examples within daily educational interaction. Therefore, teachers in Islamic educational institutions should position themselves not only as instructors but also as moral agents responsible for cultivating students' ethical awareness and character development.

Overall, the findings suggest that teacher role modeling serves as a central component in strengthening students' moral character within Aqidah Akhlak learning. The integration of exemplary behavior into classroom interaction contributes to the development of respectful attitudes, social responsibility, and moral awareness among students.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that teacher role modeling has been implemented in Aqidah Akhlak learning at MTs Miftahul Khoir Karangrejo through disciplinary attitudes, polite communication, responsibility, and respectful interaction with students. Role modeling was reflected not only through verbal instruction but also through consistent practical behavior in daily classroom interaction, functioning as an ongoing relational process of moral character formation. Students responded positively, demonstrating greater motivation, moral understanding, and engagement when teachers provided direct behavioral examples.

Supporting factors included the teacher's positive personality, conducive classroom environment, and supportive teacher-student relationships, while inhibiting factors comprised limited instructional time, heterogeneity in

students' characteristics, and the dominance of lecture-based methods. These findings underscore that effective moral education in Islamic schools requires consistency between teachers' words and actions. Therefore, teachers should integrate exemplary behavior more systematically into instructional strategies, supported by professional development programs that strengthen character-oriented teaching practices.

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This study contributes to the development of Islamic education research, particularly in the field of Aqidah Akhlak learning and character education. The findings provide empirical evidence that teacher role modeling plays a significant role in strengthening students' moral understanding and character formation through daily classroom interaction. Unlike previous studies that mainly discuss character education in broader contexts, this study specifically focuses on the implementation of teacher role modeling in Aqidah Akhlak learning at the Islamic junior high school level. Therefore, this research expands the discussion of Islamic moral education by emphasizing the importance of integrating exemplary behavior into instructional practices.

In addition, this study highlights that effective moral education is not limited to theoretical instruction but also requires consistency between teachers' words and actions within the learning environment. The study also demonstrates that positive teacher-student relationships contribute to students' motivation, participation, and ethical awareness during the learning process. The findings of this research are expected to become a reference for teachers, researchers, and Islamic educational institutions in developing more contextual, reflective, and character-oriented learning strategies in Islamic education.

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