

## Evaluating the Role of Islamic Education in Promoting *Sahih Aqidah* among University Students

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### Abstract

*In the current era, university students are increasingly exposed to globalization, social influence, and digital media that often contribute to confusion and a weakened grasp of core Islamic teachings. These external pressures frequently distort Sahih Aqidah (authentic Islamic creed), emphasizing the need to evaluate the role of Islamic education in addressing these challenges during this critical stage of intellectual and spiritual development. This study explores how Islamic education at the International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC) influences students' understanding and practice of Sahih Aqidah. It assesses the impact of university-level Islamic courses on their beliefs, religious behavior, and overall perception of Islamic values. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the study collected data through a structured questionnaire distributed among students. The results reveal that a significant majority of students found these courses valuable in deepening their knowledge of Islam, correcting misconceptions, and encouraging Islamic practice within both personal and family settings. Although a small number of students reported minimal influence, overall responses affirm the positive impact of these educational programs. The study concludes by emphasizing the vital contribution of Islamic education in preserving and promoting Sahih Aqidah among university students, recommending enhancements in course design and delivery to address contemporary ideological challenges more effectively.*

**Keywords:** *Sahih Aqidah*, Islamic Education, Globalization, University Students.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

*Sahih Aqidah* is the part and parcel of the fundamental beliefs of Islam. Even the five pillars of Islam are built on it. Getting a clear concept of it is a prerequisite to being able to follow Islam. Many Islamic institutions teach and promote sects and branches of Islam without any attempt to transmit the *Sahih Aqidah* of Islam. A good number of educated Muslims in our country, having deviated from the original spirit of Islam, are leading superstitious and fanatic lives in the name of Islam. The more times pass, the more difficult it is to internalize religious principles. Globalization and technology advancements have a significant impact on the attitudes and actions of the younger generation. Students are frequently exposed to a variety of values that are at odds with Islamic principles, such as consumerism, hedonism, and individualism. This calls for a creative and flexible approach to teaching religious principles in the classroom.

The state of Muslims today is truly quite worrisome; the crisis of the religious Muslim identity is becoming more and more apparent; mistakes in behavior, whether in words, deeds, or beliefs, are becoming more and more evident; but more worrisome is the sense of not realizing that one has made a mistake. It is typical for kids, teens, and even adults to make fun of religious issues or doctrines (Putri et al., 2023). *Aqidah* serves as the cornerstone of Muslim life and the foundation for daily existence. *Aqidah* governs not only how people relate to Allah (SWT), but also how they relate to one another and the environment. Establishing *Aqidah* ideals at a young age is a crucial first step in developing a generation of devout and religious people (Zahro & Jannah, 2024). The goal of *Aqidah* education is to inculcate in kids moral principles that would help them lead fulfilling lives in the future. Children who have an *Aqidah* education will worship in a disciplined way and possess high values. Along with calming the soul and separating it from polytheism and bad direction, *Aqidah* can also help youngsters behave and think better. The most crucial media for establishing in kids a real education in *Aqidah* is the straightforward, kid-friendly presentation of monotheistic ideas as faith in Allah and His angels, faith in fate, and the significance of loving Allah and His Messenger (Khalid, 2006). When using the principles of *Aqidah*, this field frequently encounters a variety of difficulties. Firstly, students are unaware of the significance of these ideas in day-to-day living. Less engaging teaching strategies, a lack of environmental support, and pupils' poor comprehension of religious doctrines can all contribute to this issue. The biggest barrier to applying *Aqidah* ideals in schools is frequently learning strategies that are irrelevant to students' requirements (Rahmawati, 2021). Good morals are gradually being undermined, particularly among students enrolled in

postsecondary education, where Islamic principles are beginning to fade from their everyday life and academic pursuits. Therefore, the present is regarded as important since it reflects the goals and aspirations of becoming more involved and strict educators who would uphold students' morality by teaching them values.

In today's context, the weakening of core Islamic beliefs among Muslim youth has become a growing concern. A lack of proper understanding of *Aqidah*, increasing indifference towards religious duties, and casual attitudes toward Islamic teachings highlight a serious challenge in preserving Islamic identity. One contributing factor is the insufficient depth of religious education, especially in universities, where students are actively forming their perspectives and beliefs. Considering all these problems, the International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC) has implemented a curriculum designed to incorporate Islamic principles and knowledge into all subject areas with the aim of producing well-rounded graduates who exemplify both academic brilliance and Islamic ethics, the institution requires Islamic studies courses for all undergraduate students through its Center for General Education (CGED). The goal of these courses is to strengthen moral character, religious consciousness, and sound *Aqidah*. However, it has not yet been fully investigated how these instructional initiatives actually affect students' comprehension and internalization of *Sahih Aqidah*. The purpose of this study is to assess how Islamic education at the university level encourages *Sahih Aqidah* among students. Through the use of an empirical methodology, the study will offer quantifiable insights into how university students perceive, understand, and apply Islamic teachings.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A quality education in *Aqidah* will create people who can handle a variety of moral dilemmas in the contemporary world. In order to create the next generation of spiritually and socially superior people, the major goal of formal education is to incorporate *Aqidah*, particularly in Islamic educational institutions (Al-Qardhawi, 2021). Students' spiritual awareness is developed via *Aqidah* education. Students who are more spiritually aware are better able to control their conduct and stay out of trouble as children. According to Nurachman et al. (2024), comprehensive *Aqidah* instruction fosters strong self-control in students by assisting them in comprehending the idea of faith. Furthermore, students' positive character development is greatly aided by their active participation in religious events and the growth of spiritual characteristics like thankfulness and sincerity (Jaya & Sudarsana, 2024). According to studies by Riyanto (2021), religiously based education can raise students' moral consciousness. *Aqidah* education enhances students' comprehension of responsibility and helps them refrain from actions that endanger themselves or others (Nurachman et al., 2024).

Teachers who consistently include *Aqidah* values in their lessons can foster an environment that helps students develop their Islamic character (Suryani & Fauzan, 2022). However, for this to be implemented, a comprehensive plan involving collaboration between families, schools, and communities is required. Besides, Fandi Asy'arie (2023) discovered that *Aqidah* education strengthens students' religious identities by raising religious awareness and encouraging religious activities like prayer and fasting. According to Murjani (2022), *Aqidah* education is crucial for fostering moral character. Those who are taught *Aqidah* consistently behave in a more morally and responsibly manner. Students who receive *Aqidah* education are better able to comprehend the repercussions of their behavior and are inspired to follow Islamic principles. The impact of religious instruction on teenage behavior has been examined in earlier research. Helmawati et al. (2024), for instance, emphasized how religious moderation initiatives promote concord and tolerance among students. Likewise, Ahdar et al. (2024) showed how *Aqidah* instruction improved students' social conduct. In the meantime, Asnani (2018) highlighted how well religious education works to combat juvenile delinquency when it is incorporated into the curriculum.

However, contemporary issues, including the impact of globalization, advancements in technology, and changes in societal standards, frequently have an impact on how these ideals are internalized in students' lives. This makes it pertinent and crucial to comprehend how *Aqidah* is applied in the Al-Qur'an when trying to help students grow as individuals. The beneficial effects of *Aqidah* education on students' moral growth, self-control, and conformity to social norms have been demonstrated by previous research, but little is known about how these ideas are successfully incorporated and implemented into modern university-level Islamic education. The precise function of university-level Islamic education in fostering *Sahih Aqidah* among students, especially at establishments like the International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC), has not, however, been extensively studied empirically. By analyzing how IIUC's university-level Islamic education affects students' comprehension and implementation of *Sahih Aqidah* while taking into consideration the current difficulties they confront, this study seeks to close these gaps. The role that academic institutions play in encouraging cooperation with families and communities to support students' religious and ethical growth will also be covered.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design

In order to assess how Islamic education affects students' comprehension of *Sahih Aqidah*, this study uses a qualitative research approach. The study employs a descriptive research

approach to investigate the ways in which particular Islamic studies courses affect students' beliefs and behaviors.

### 3.2 Sample and Sampling

Regardless of faculty or discipline, 30 students (male and female) from the International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC) were chosen anonymously from the fourth, fifth, and sixth semesters. Those students were specifically selected because they have finished major Islamic courses offered by the Center for General Education (CGED) and are thought to have attained a reasonably advanced level of comprehension.

### 3.3 Data Collection Instrument

Data was collected through a structured questionnaire to measure the students' perspectives, understanding, and behavioral outcomes in relation to *Sahih Aqidah*. The questionnaire was developed to align with the learning objectives of the relevant courses and ensure the reliability of responses. The questionnaire consists of the following questions-

1. Do Islamic courses introduced by the university help to develop the knowledge of Islam?
2. Have these courses been a great attempt to end the misunderstandings regarding *Sahih Aqidah* (the sacred creed)?
3. Do these courses help them to be practicing Muslims?
4. Do these courses motivate their family members to follow Islam?
5. Are superstitious beliefs and fanaticism about Islam being ended by these courses?

The CGED (Center for General Education) courses offered at IIUC that are directly related to Islamic theology and ethics:

- Basic Principles of Islam (2nd Semester): Introduces students to foundational Islamic beliefs (*Aqidah*).
- Sciences of Qur'an and Hadith (3rd Semester): Emphasizes understanding the Qur'an and Sunnah as the primary sources of Islamic knowledge.
- Introduction to Political Thought and Social Behavior (5th Semester): Covers Islamic political concepts such as Khilafah and sovereignty in light of *Sahih Aqidah*.
- Life and Teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) (6th Semester): Aims to clarify the correct understanding of the Prophet's (SAAS) life and teachings, countering distorted beliefs.
- Additional supporting courses include 'Text of Ethics and Morality', 'A Survey of Islamic History and Culture', and 'Islamic Worldview', which collectively aim to build a holistic Islamic understanding and reinforce students' identity and moral integrity.

#### 4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

In response to the first question that “Do Islamic courses introduced by the university help to develop the knowledge of Islam?” 70% of respondents expressed a strong positive response in this regard. According to their opinions, these courses assist them in enhancing their knowledge of Islam. Therefore, they feel interested in following Islam. Thirty percent of respondents are positive in their consent, having no negative views. There was no one to disagree with the statement.

The second question was, “Have these courses been a great attempt to end the misunderstandings regarding *Sahih Aqidah* (the sacred creed)?” Fifty percent of respondents boldly express their opinions that amid various misconceptions of Islam, these courses help them to attain true and genuine concepts about Islam. Forty-three percent of students supported the statement, but not intensely. A very few students showed their disagreement with this view. Only seven percent of respondents disagreed with the opinion.

The next question for the respondents was if “Do these courses help them to be practicing Muslims?” Replying to the question, sixty-seven percent of respondents strongly supported this view. They opined that the contents of these courses are very much life-oriented, which can motivate them to follow the rules of Islam in their daily practical life. Twenty-seven percent of students supported the opinion, but not wholeheartedly. On the other hand, only seven percent of respondents did not convey their opinions positively.

With the intention of transmitting Islamic knowledge to the family members of the students, the Center for General Education (CGED) has introduced these courses. So, there was a question for the students if “Do these courses motivate their family members to follow Islam?” Asked the question, forty-three percent of participants strongly expressed their opinions that the lessons of the courses and the way they themselves try to follow Islam in their practical life after getting class lectures had a great impact on their family members. And the same percentage of respondents supported it, but they were not robust in their opinions. Only fourteen percent of respondents said that this statement is not true. According to them, it does not have any psychological effects on their family members.

Worshippers of shrines are dominating the religious creeds. People deviated by wrong beliefs unknowingly are becoming enticed to seek help from the Islamic scholars, dead and buried. So, a question in the questionnaire was “Are superstitious beliefs and fanaticism about Islam being ended by these courses?” This was the most significant question for the students. In response to this statement, seventy percent of respondents answered that they support it vehemently. They said that different types of wrong religious dogmas are disseminated by the

shrine worshippers. These courses are very helpful for eliminating their superstitious beliefs and fanaticism. The response of thirty percent of students has revealed that they do not get any strong support from the courses to end their superstitions. However, they believe that the course contents need to be developed to achieve the optimum result. None was found to disagree with the statement.

A summary of the findings is depicted in Table 01 below.

Table 01: A summary of the respondents' opinions

Particulars	Strongly Positive (percentage of respondents)	Positive (percentage of respondents)	Disagree (percentage of respondents)
Do Islamic courses introduced by the university help to develop the knowledge of Islam?	70%	30%	None
Have these courses been a great attempt to end the misunderstandings regarding <i>Sahih Aqidah</i> (the sacred creed)?	50%	43%	7%
Do these courses help them to be practicing Muslims?	67%	27%	7%
Do these courses motivate their family members to follow Islam?	43%	43%	14%
Are superstitious beliefs and fanaticism about Islam being ended by these courses?	70%	30%	None

## 5. DISCUSSION

According to the study's findings, university-level Islamic education programs, especially those at the International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC), significantly contribute to students' development of *Sahih Aqidah*. *Sahih Aqidah*, the cornerstone of the Islamic religion, acts as a roadmap for moral conduct and religious identity in addition to providing a theological basis. It is evident from the reactions of the participants that these courses encourage students to reaffirm their faith, oppose erroneous ideologies, and develop a greater awareness of Islam at both the societal and personal levels. These findings align with Al-Qardhawi (2021) and Nurachman et al. (2024), who emphasized that *Aqidah* education

strengthens moral awareness and self-control. Additionally, these courses have an impact on students' families and communities, reinforcing the significance of a comprehensive learning environment as stated by Suryani & Fauzan (2022). All things considered, the results demonstrate that properly organized Islamic education can greatly strengthen *Sahih Aqidah* and promote constructive behavioral changes in both individuals and society.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Islam is a comprehensive way of life, yet misconceptions and distorted beliefs are widespread, especially among university students. Amid academic pressures, social influences, and digital content, students are vulnerable to external factors that distort authentic Islamic teachings, such as social media, peer groups, and globalization. This study aims to assess the role of Islamic education in fostering *Sahih Aqidah* among university students. By examining the impact of IIUC's courses on students' understanding of genuine Islamic beliefs, the research seeks to evaluate how effectively these programs reinforce *Sahih Aqidah* and empower students to practice Islam in its true form. According to the study's findings, students' understanding of *Sahih Aqidah* and their fundamental understanding of Islam are much improved by the Islamic courses offered by the International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC). The majority of respondents confirmed that these courses encourage them to become practicing Muslims by increasing their understanding of true Islamic principles and having a good impact on their daily life. Furthermore, these classes have an influence that goes beyond the students themselves, encouraging their relatives to adopt Islamic principles. The results also demonstrate how well the courses work to combat superstitions and false beliefs that are frequently spread via shrine-based customs. Although a small percentage of students recommended changes to the way the material was delivered, the majority of replies show that the goals of the courses were strongly supported. This study offers insightful information about how Islamic education helps university students develop *Sahih Aqidah*. It emphasizes the beneficial effects that well-designed Islamic courses can have on students' attitudes, conduct, and desire to adhere to Islam in social and personal settings. The results also imply that these classes can have an indirect effect on communities and families by assisting in the debunking of myths and superstitions surrounding Islamic principles. The study does have some drawbacks, though. It only looks at one university, which could limit how broadly the findings can be applied. A more comprehensive picture would be provided by future studies conducted at various institutions using a wider range of methodologies.



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