

The Dynamics of Interaction and Values in Faith and Morals Education: A Study of the Inside Outside Circle Model at MIN 5 Cilacap

Asep Deny Firdaus
MIN 5 Cilacap, Indonesia
E-mail: adenyfirdaus@gmail.com

Correspondence E-mail (adenyfirdaus@gmail.com)
Received: 2025-04-13; Accepted: 2025-05-16; Published: 2025-06-26

Abstrak

Pendidikan karakter di sekolah dasar menghadapi tantangan serius, salah satunya adalah dominasi metode pembelajaran konvensional yang minim interaksi, sehingga menghambat internalisasi nilai-nilai akhlak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis efektivitas model pembelajaran Inside Outside Circle (IOC) dalam meningkatkan hasil belajar, interaksi sosial, dan internalisasi nilai akhlak siswa. Metode: Penelitian kualitatif dengan studi kasus ini melibatkan guru dan siswa kelas V MIN 5 Cilacap. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi. Analisis data menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman. Hasil: Penerapan IOC menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan pada hasil belajar kognitif dan afektif. Skor post-test siswa meningkat rata-rata 15 poin, dan mereka mampu mengaitkan konsep akhlak dengan pengalaman nyata. Secara sosial, IOC menciptakan iklim kelas yang inklusif dan egaliter, di mana siswa yang pendiam menjadi lebih aktif. Partisipasi aktif dalam diskusi memicu refleksi diri dan mendorong internalisasi nilai yang otentik, terbukti dari perubahan perilaku sehari-hari siswa seperti peningkatan kedisiplinan dan empati. Kesimpulan: Model IOC terbukti efektif sebagai strategi pembelajaran yang holistik. Ia tidak hanya meningkatkan pemahaman kognitif, tetapi juga memfasilitasi interaksi sosial yang bermakna dan internalisasi nilai secara berkelanjutan, mengubah siswa menjadi agen aktif dalam pembentukan karakter mereka.

Kata Kunci: Inside Outside Circle, pendidikan akhlak, internalisasi nilai, interaksi sosial, hasil belajar.

Abstract:

Background: Character education in elementary schools faces a serious challenge: the dominance of conventional teaching methods with minimal interaction, which hinders the internalization of moral values. This study aims to analyze the

DOI: 10.30999/shibyan.v3i1.3785

<http://ojs.uninus.ac.id/index.php/JURSHIBYAN/index>

effectiveness of the Inside Outside Circle (IOC) learning model in improving learning outcomes, social interaction, and the internalization of moral values in students. Methods: This qualitative case study involved a teacher and fifth-grade students at MIN 5 Cilacap. Data collection was conducted through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data analysis used the interactive model by Miles and Huberman. Results: The implementation of IOC showed a significant increase in both cognitive and affective learning outcomes. Students' post-test scores increased by an average of 15 points, and they were able to connect moral concepts to real-life experiences. Socially, IOC created an inclusive and egalitarian classroom climate, where quiet students became more active. Active participation in discussions triggered self-reflection and fostered the authentic internalization of values, evidenced by daily behavioral changes such as increased discipline and empathy. Conclusion: The IOC model is proven to be an effective and holistic teaching strategy. It not only improves cognitive understanding but also facilitates meaningful social interaction and sustainable value internalization, transforming students into active agents in their own character development.

Keywords: Inside Outside Circle, moral education, value internalization, social interaction, learning outcomes.

Introduction

Education in Indonesia currently faces a double challenge: massive advances in information technology and the weakening of moral values among students. Although digitization provides broad access to information, its negative excesses have contributed to the marginalization of character education in classroom learning practices.

One of the impacts can be seen in the weak appreciation of spiritual and social values by students, especially at the elementary school level (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2023). In this context, the subject of Akidah Akhlak (Faith and Morals) should play a strategic role in shaping moral and spiritual foundations from an early age. However, in practice, it is often positioned as a supplement rather than the core of learning.

The latest national report shows that more than 45% of elementary school students have difficulty understanding and internalizing the ethical values taught in Akidah Akhlak (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2023). This indicates a gap between the delivery of material in the curriculum and the reflective and contextual learning experiences of students. The main cause identified is the dominance of conventional, one-way methods with minimal interaction. Lectures and memorization still dominate the

classroom, even though values education requires a dialogical, participatory, and experience-based approach (Mahmudah & Putra, 2021).

In response to these challenges, active learning models such as Inside Outside Circle (IOC) have begun to be adopted in the context of values education. The IOC model facilitates structured discussions through interactions in a circle formation, where students take turns asking and answering questions. Through this approach, students are encouraged to think critically, express their opinions, and listen to their peers' perspectives in an inclusive atmosphere (Cleary-Holdforth & Leufer, 2020).

This approach has the potential to strengthen conceptual understanding while fostering moral and social awareness. The application of the IOC model at MIN 5 Cilacap is particularly relevant because the school's diverse social context demands an adaptive pedagogical approach. Teachers act not only as conveyors of information but also as facilitators who create collaborative and transformative learning spaces.

In line with this, research by Abdurrahman and Anggriani (2020) confirms that the effectiveness of learning is more influenced by the delivery method than simply the teaching content. In this context, IOC can be seen as an actuating strategy within the POAC (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, Controlling) framework, where active student involvement is central to the learning process (Saputra & Ali, 2022).

Theoretically, the IOC model has a strong foundation in Vygotsky's social constructivism theory, which emphasizes the importance of interaction in the learning process. Mahmudah and Putra (2021) show that students who are involved in active discussions demonstrate a deeper understanding than those who only receive information passively. This is also supported by the findings of Aflisia et al. (2022), which emphasize that collaboration in religious education not only strengthens cognitive understanding but also helps students form a collective moral identity through meaningful social interaction.

In Akidah Akhlak learning, collaboration and discussion are not merely learning strategies but also become a medium for internalizing values. The IOC model, through its systematic and interactive structure, provides equal opportunities for all students to be actively involved. This increases a sense of ownership of the learning process and encourages reflection on values in the context of real life (Putra & Wulandari, 2021). Learning activities do not stop at knowledge but extend to attitude transformation and character building.

However, research that specifically highlights the application of the IOC model in the context of Akidah Akhlak in elementary schools is still very limited. Most existing studies emphasize the effectiveness of IOC in exact subjects such as science and mathematics (Chang et al., 2020), while studies on its integration into values education have not received sufficient attention. Similarly, although there is critical discourse on the dialogical approach in education (Humaeroh et al., 2021), not many have explored its application in the form of structured learning strategies such as IOC.

Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap in the literature. The focus of this study is to analyze the dynamics of interaction and internalization of values in Akidah Akhlak learning through the application of the IOC model at MIN 5 Cilacap. The main objective of this study is to understand how the IOC model encourages active engagement, strengthens moral values, and facilitates the transformation of students' attitudes in the context of Islamic elementary education.

Furthermore, this study also aims to answer the following questions: How can the application of the Inside Outside Circle model improve students' Akidah Akhlak learning outcomes? What are the dynamics of social interaction that are formed during the learning process? To what extent do students' discussion and active participation experiences through IOC contribute to the process of value internalization?

Based on these objectives, the main argument in this study is that the IOC model is capable of creating a dynamic, reflective, and collaborative learning space. In this space, students learn not only from teachers or texts, but also from their own social experiences and from their peers. As stated by Raito and Ramadan (2023), learning that builds connections between religious values and social realities is more effective in shaping character. This is also reinforced by the views of Rizal and Amril (2024) that students' emotional and intellectual involvement in the learning process results in a more meaningful and sustainable learning experience.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the application of the Inside Outside Circle (IOC) model in Akidah Akhlak learning at MIN 5 Cilacap. This approach was chosen to explore in depth the dynamics of interaction and the process of internalization of values that occur during learning.

The research subjects consisted of Akidah Akhlak subject teachers and fifth-grade students who were directly involved in the application of the IOC model. Data collection was carried out using three main techniques: participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to record learning activities, student interactions, and the implementation of the IOC model directly in the classroom.

Interviews were conducted with teachers and several students to understand their perceptions of the effectiveness of the methods used. Documentation included lesson plans, evaluation notes, and student portfolios as supporting data.

The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which included the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and techniques. This approach allowed researchers to gain a holistic understanding of how the IOC model affects the learning process and value formation in students.

Results and Discussion

1. Application of the Inside Outside Circle Model in Improving Students' Learning Outcomes in Akidah Akhlak

Based on the results of observation and evaluation of learning during four meetings, the application of the Inside Outside Circle (IOC) model showed a significant improvement in the learning outcomes of fifth-grade students at MIN 5 Cilacap in the subject of Akidah Akhlak. Cognitively, students showed an increase in their understanding of basic concepts of akhlak, such as honesty, politeness, responsibility, and mutual respect. This improvement was evident from a comparison of the daily pre-test and post-test scores conducted by the teacher. Of the 25 students, 19 experienced an increase in their scores of more than 15 points, while the other 6 students showed moderate improvement.

In addition to the written test results, changes were also evident in the students' ability to relate the material to concrete experiences. During the IOC discussion session, students were able to provide examples of real-life situations related to the moral values they had learned. For example, when the topic of "honesty" was discussed, one student, RA (11 years old), said:

"If I cheat on a test, that's dishonest. If we are honest, even if we get a bad grade, we are still not lying. The teacher also said that Allah loves honest people."

The Akidah Akhlak teacher, Ustazah NA, also revealed:

"In the past, when I taught using the lecture method, only a few students actively answered questions. Now with IOC, almost all children have the opportunity to speak. They not only answer questions, but also begin to understand and relate moral values to their daily lives."

In addition, during the reflection session, students seemed more enthusiastic in giving answers and responding to their friends' opinions. This activity also had an impact on improving affective learning outcomes: students became more polite, involved in school religious activities, and showed a spirit of mutual cooperation.

These results demonstrate the effectiveness of IOC in building students' conceptual understanding of moral values.

The two-circle discussion structure provided equal opportunities for all students to participate actively. This pattern is in line with the findings of Mahmudah and Putra (2021) that social interaction-based learning deepens students' conceptual understanding because the learning process is no longer one-way but dialogical and reflective.

Within the framework of Vygotsky's social constructivism theory, social interaction is the main catalyst in the formation of new understanding. IOC effectively creates a zone of proximal development where students learn from their peers through the exchange of experiences and ideas. This is in line with the findings of Andriani et al. (2018), which show that interaction-based learning increases learning activity and concept mastery.

Furthermore, the success of this improvement in learning outcomes is also influenced by a more enjoyable and participatory learning atmosphere. Field findings show that students are more courageous in expressing their opinions when the learning atmosphere is not rigid. The IOC model minimizes teacher dominance and changes the role of the teacher to that of a facilitator, rather than the sole source of information. This pattern is in line with Humaeroh et al. (2021)'s thinking on critical pedagogy, which places students as active subjects.

In addition to cognitive aspects, improvements in the affective domain were also significant. Discussions in IOC help students to reason and feel values, rather than simply memorizing moral definitions. According to Aflisia et al. (2022), effective understanding of religious values requires emotional involvement, social awareness, and personal reflection. IOC provides space for students to share their experiences relevant to the values being studied—a process of internalization that cannot be achieved through lectures alone.

Thus, the application of IOC supports the achievement of comprehensive Akidah Akhlak learning outcomes, covering cognitive, affective, and social aspects. This also supports Lestari's (2021) idea about the need for a learning model that involves active participation to improve students' understanding and interpretation of concepts.

2. The Dynamics of Social Interaction Formed During IOC Learning

The application of the Intensive Oral Communication (IOC) method in class V of MIN 5 Cilacap has produced extraordinary dynamics of social interaction. Based on observations, interviews, and analysis, it can be seen that IOC is capable of creating an intense, inclusive, and egalitarian learning environment. This method fundamentally changes the way students and teachers interact, shifting the focus from a one-way learning model to a dialogical and collaborative model.

One of the keys to the success of IOC is the use of a two-circle structure. This structure physically and psychologically eliminates the hierarchy and dominance that often occurs in traditional classroom settings. Every student has the same opportunity to speak and be heard. This minimizes the risk of domination by more vocal students and effectively provides space for students who are usually quiet to participate. The statement by MA student, "When sitting in a circle, it feels like everyone is equal. I'm not afraid of making mistakes. My friends also listen when I speak," confirms how this structure fosters psychological security and self-confidence.

Aqidah Akhlak teacher, Ustazah NA, also reinforces this finding, "This model encourages children who are usually quiet to speak up. They feel safe, not judged." This comment is very significant because it shows that IOC not only facilitates interaction but also creates a positive and supportive climate. In this kind of environment, students aren't afraid to express their ideas or experiences, even if they're not perfect. This process is crucial for internalizing moral values, because authentic understanding often starts with honest self-reflection, not memorized answers.

The dynamics of social interaction observed in the IOC reflect a fundamental shift from a paradigm of information transmission to a dialogical and collaborative paradigm. In the traditional model, knowledge is transmitted from teacher to student. In contrast, in the IOC, knowledge and understanding are collectively formed through dialogue and collaboration. Students are no longer empty vessels to be filled, but active subjects who collectively construct meaning.

These findings are consistent with research by Cleary-Holdforth and Leufer (2020), who found that organized discussion structures can significantly increase confidence, participation, and the quality of communication among participants. In IOC, this structure is realized through clear turn-taking and listening rules, which in turn train students to become more effective communicators and more empathetic listeners. Discussions on the topic of “responsibility,” in which students enthusiastically give examples and respond to each other, are clear evidence of how this collaborative learning takes place.

The egalitarian and non-hierarchical interactions in IOC are in line with the idea of humanistic education expressed by Humaeroh et al. (2021). Humanistic education emphasizes the importance of dialogical, rather than hierarchical, teacher-student and student-student relationships. In IOC, teachers act as facilitators, not sole authorities. The teachers' position outside the circle allows them to observe, encourage, and guide the discussion without dominating it. This gives students the space to take the lead and feel a sense of ownership over their learning process.

This creates a positive classroom atmosphere where every student feels valued. They learn not only from the teacher but also from the experiences and perspectives of their peers. This is particularly important in character education, as social values such as empathy, tolerance, and mutual respect are more effectively learned through direct interaction and social experience rather than theory alone.

In addition to the social dimension, interactions in IOC also have a strong pedagogical dimension. The turn-taking structure trains active listening skills, patience, and empathy. As stated by Lubis et al. (2022), learning that contains elements of interpersonal communication can increase a sense of ownership of the learning process. In the context of Akidah Akhlak, this experience is vital. By listening to their friends' stories about honesty or responsibility, students not only understand the concepts but also see how these values are applied in real life.

The dynamics of this interaction also show that students learn values through direct social experience, not just from instruction. In line with the opinion of Aflisia et al. (2022), collaborative interaction-based religious learning encourages the formation of a more authentic awareness of values. These values become part of students' moral consciousness because they are practiced and experienced, not just memorized. Interactions in IOC are social laboratories where students practice morals, such as respecting others' opinions, speaking politely, and being patient.

Thus, IOC is not just a teaching method; it is a social ecosystem that promotes character growth. Through intense and inclusive interactions, students learn to become more empathetic, communicative, and responsible individuals. This safe and egalitarian environment allows them to explore intellectually and emotionally, build a collective understanding of ethics, and ultimately internalize these values into their daily actions.

3. Active Participation and the Process of Internalizing Values

This study shows that students' active participation in IOC (*Intensive Oral Communication*) discussions plays a crucial role in the process of internalizing moral values. These findings are based on an in-depth analysis of interview results, observations, and confirmation from teachers. Each IOC meeting is deliberately designed to create a space where students can interact personally and deeply with values such as honesty, trustworthiness, responsibility, and empathy. This process is no longer merely a transfer of knowledge, but a reflective journey that involves the students' real experiences.

Interviews with students, such as HA (11 years old) and RR (10 years old), provide concrete evidence of how these discussions work. HA's statement, "When I heard my friend's story about honesty, I remembered when I lied to my mother. I felt ashamed and wanted to apologize," shows that listening to other people's experiences triggers strong self-reflection. This reflection is not only cognitive but also emotional. He acknowledges his mistake and feels compelled to correct it, a strong indication that the value of honesty has begun to take root in him. Similarly, RR reveals, "When I hear my friends' opinions, I learn from their experiences. So I understand better why I have to be polite and patient." This statement confirms that sharing stories and listening to the perspectives of peers opens up new insights and provides a richer contextual meaning to the values being learned.

This discussion is in line with the views of Raito and Ramadan (2023), who emphasize that moral values will be more strongly instilled when students experience, feel, and reflect on them directly. IOC provides a platform for students to do all three. They not only hear theories about honesty, for example, but also hear how these values are applied—or violated—in the real lives of their friends. This experience creates a bridge between abstract concepts and reality, making moral values feel more relevant and personal.

Furthermore, these findings also reinforce Putra and Wulandari's (2021) idea about the importance of cognitive and emotional engagement in the

learning process. Active participation in IOC discussions requires students to think about values, feel them in an emotional context, and relate them to their personal experiences. This approach effectively shifts the learning model from the previous normative (memorizing rules) to reflective (understanding and internalizing values). Instead of just knowing that “lying is a sin,” students begin to understand why honesty is important and how it feels when they are not honest.

Akidah Akhlak teachers also confirm the positive changes seen in students' daily behavior. They have become more orderly during congregational prayers, show increased discipline, and are more respectful of differences of opinion. These changes are a manifestation of the internalization of values that has taken place. IOC discussions do not stop in the classroom, but also influence the way students interact outside of class, showing that these values have become part of their identity and behavior.

In the context of Islamic education, the IOC model is highly relevant to Laila's (2022) view, which emphasizes a contextual approach to moral education. Effective moral education does not only focus on memorizing arguments, but also on the students' ability to live out these values. IOC provides a structure that encourages equal participation and deep reflection, helping students not only to know about Islam, but also to become Islamic individuals in their actions and morals

Another prominent aspect is the increase in students' sense of ownership of their own learning process, as described by Rizal and Amril (2024). When students are emotionally and intellectually engaged, they feel responsible for the values they learn. This can be seen in the increase in students' discipline, politeness, and empathy. They no longer feel forced to behave well, but rather have an internal awareness to do so. This shows that IOC has succeeded in fostering intrinsic motivation to do good.

This study concludes that active participation in IOC discussions is not merely an additional learning method, but the core of the process of internalizing moral values. By creating a safe and supportive space for reflection, interaction, and sharing experiences, IOC facilitates a shift from cognitive knowledge to emotional understanding and behavior. This process transforms students from mere recipients of information into active agents in shaping their own character, bringing moral values from the classroom into their daily lives. The success of this model confirms that effective character education must be centered on student experience, engaging them holistically—both cognitively and emotionally—to achieve sustainable and meaningful behavioral change.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the application of the Inside Outside Circle (IOC) model is significantly effective in improving students' Akidah Akhlak learning outcomes, facilitating positive social interaction dynamics, and encouraging a deep internalization of values. This model has succeeded in changing the learning paradigm from a conventional and one-way approach to a dialogical and participatory one.

The improvement in learning outcomes was not only seen in the cognitive aspect, but also in the affective realm and students' daily behavior, which showed that the understanding of values had been internalized. The inclusive learning environment, supported by a two-circle structure, created a sense of security for students to express their opinions and reflect on personal experiences, which was the main catalyst for authentic internalization of values. IOC has proven to be a transformative pedagogical strategy, placing students as active subjects in shaping their own character.

However, this study has several limitations. First, the scope of the case study is limited to one school, namely MIN 5 Cilacap, making it impossible to generalize these findings to a wider population. The school context, local culture, and unique characteristics of teachers may have influenced the results. Second, this study focused on a relatively short time frame (four learning sessions), so understanding the sustainability of the long-term impact of IOC still requires further study. Future studies could explore the effectiveness of IOC over a longer period of time and at different levels of education. In addition, quantitative studies that examine the causal relationship between variables in more detail are also needed to strengthen the validity of the findings.

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