



## Legal Education through Creed: Reforming Religious Pedagogy in Pluralistic Societies

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## Abstract

**Research Objective:** To examine the Center for General Education (CGED) at the International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC) and evaluate how compulsory creed-based courses influence non-Shariah students' legal awareness, ethical behavior, and doctrinal understanding. **Research Methodology:** Mixed-methods empirical approach utilizing structured questionnaires, validated religious cognition scales, and semi-structured interviews. Analysis focused on students' internalization of legal norms, theological clarity, and behavioral transformation. **Results:** Students who completed CGED courses exhibited improved comprehension of Islamic legal principles, stronger ethical reasoning, and greater adherence to civic and religious norms. Participants demonstrated increased ability to distinguish between legitimate religious obligations and cultural misconceptions. Positive spillover effects were reported on families and social circles. **Findings and Implications:** Integration of classical sources, interactive pedagogy, and digital tools enhanced student engagement and legal literacy. Legally structured creed education has broader societal implications and promotes religious moderation and legal consciousness in pluralistic societies. **Conclusion:** Creed-based education, when legally structured and pedagogically sound, significantly improves students' moral and civic development. Islamic legal epistemology remains relevant in modern university contexts, offering a viable model for educational policy reform. **Contribution:** Provides empirical evidence for integrating religious instruction into national university curricula while addressing legal and educational challenges in South Asian Islamic higher education. **Limitations and Suggestions:** Limited to a single institution (IIUC), restricting generalizability. Focus on non-Shariah students may not represent broader populations. Future research should examine multiple institutions and investigate long-term behavioral sustainability.

## Introduction

Islamic education at the tertiary level in South Asia faces not only pedagogical and theological challenges but also significant legal implications regarding the establishment of national education frameworks. In countries such as Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan, inadequate government funding, a lack of administrative oversight, and inconsistencies in curricula have hindered the effective integration of Islamic teachings—particularly those related to creed



(aqidah)—into higher education. Legally, this shortfall represents a failure to meet constitutional obligations concerning educational equity and religious freedom, as well as a neglect of the developmental goals specified in national education policies. The fragmented nature of religious and secular educational institutions, which operate in parallel with limited regulatory collaboration, underscores the need for cohesive legal frameworks. Such structures are essential to ensure alignment, accountability, and the standardization of Islamic education by both national and international human rights standards.<sup>1</sup>

The idea of Sahih Aqidah (authentic Islamic creed) is important in modern discussions about Islamic law and education. It is not just a personal belief; it affects how people behave, what values they hold, and how they understand the law in Muslim societies. When universities do not teach Islamic creed, they create a gap that can allow harmful ideas to take hold. This can lead to radicalization, conflict, and actions that break both local laws and broader standards of living together peacefully. Since Islamic law (Shari'ah) covers all parts of life, including ethics, governance, and education, failing to teach about creed in universities misses a chance to build legal awareness and civic duty through Islamic law.<sup>2</sup>

This neglect weakens the state's position as the legal protector of educational guidance. Without clear legal directives or policies highlighting the importance of Islamic creed education, universities risk becoming battlegrounds for ideological disputes instead of fostering moral growth. Although the resulting diversity of belief systems is legally permissible, it often lacks the interpretive protections needed to avert doctrinal misrepresentation or social division. In light of this, scholars in Islamic legal theory have called for the incorporation of religious education into secular legal systems to ensure that creed instruction is consistent with ideals of moderation, legal pluralism, and the common good (*maṣlaḥah*).<sup>3</sup>

Simultaneously, students situated in secular university settings face a type of legal disempowerment. They encounter conflicting normative systems without clear guidance on how to reconcile these with their religious obligations. The legal ramifications of this identity conflict

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<sup>1</sup> Musleh Harry et al., "Examining the Provision of Legal and Religious Education to Islamic Families to Safeguard the Rights and Well-Being of Women and Children: A Case Study Conducted in Malang Regency, East Java," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v8i3.19566>; Finsa Adhi Pratama et al., "Imposing Sanctions on School Students in East Kolaka, Indonesia: Perspectives of Islamic Law and Islamic Education," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v8i2.21898>; Muhammad Shabir U, M Burga, and Muljono Damopolii, "The Phenomenon of Punishment at Pesantren in South Sulawesi: An Islamic Law and Islamic Education Approaches," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam*, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v7i3.18207>.

<sup>2</sup> Qolbi Khoiri and Anisyah Rahmadania, "Problem Dan Pengembangan Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia," *Journal on Education*, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v5i2.1117>; PhD Engku Alwi and Engku Ahmad Zaki, "The Creed of Ahl Al-Sunnah Wa Al-Jamā'ah in Islamic Law Framework," *Journal of Information Systems Engineering and Management*, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.52783/jisem.v10i28s.4402>; Muhammad Afif Ananta et al., "Peran Penting Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Membentuk Karakter Pribadi Yang Islami," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.47134/pjpi.v1i2.115>.

<sup>3</sup> Ummi Hanifaa and Meyniar Albina, 'Religious Moderation and Basic Rights in Education According to Islamic Perspective', *MAQOLAT: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 2025 <<https://doi.org/10.58355/maqolat.v3i2.128>>; M Wahyudi and others, 'Optimizing the Advancement of Islamic Education From the Lens of Islamic Law Philosophy', *ISTIFHAM: Journal Of Islamic Studies*, 2023 <<https://doi.org/10.71039/istifham.v1i2.26>>.



are significant, as they relate to the absorption of law, the authority of religious norms, and the encouragement of law-abiding citizenship.<sup>4</sup> Research indicates that access to organized religious education, particularly when integrated into legal and civic programs, can enhance students' ethical judgment and reduce their susceptibility to unlawful conduct or extremist beliefs. Therefore, legal systems have an interest in promoting educational initiatives that reconcile personal convictions with the public legal framework.<sup>5</sup>

This study addresses the legal dimensions of creed-based education by examining the curricular innovations of the International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC), particularly through its Center for General Education (CGED). The university's initiative to institutionalize Sahih Aqidah instruction through compulsory coursework is not only a pedagogical strategy but a quasi-legal reform aimed at restoring doctrinal clarity and normative integrity. The CGED courses—"Basic Principles of Islam," "Sciences of Quran and Hadith," "Islamic Political Thought," and "Life and Teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SAAS)"—operate as soft legal mechanisms, transmitting core values that resonate with the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (objectives of Islamic law), including justice, wisdom, and social cohesion.

Existing literature in both Islamic jurisprudence and comparative legal studies suggests that educational interventions grounded in authentic Islamic creed can mitigate legal fragmentation and foster a more cohesive, rights-conscious society. However, there is a lack of empirical data evaluating how such interventions affect students' legal consciousness, ethical decision-making, and commitment to social norms. This study seeks to fill that gap by assessing the practical outcomes of CGED courses, positioning Islamic creed education not only as a religious imperative but as a legal strategy for cultivating responsible citizenship in a pluralistic legal environment.

The research aims to evaluate the extent to which CGED courses at IIUC foster legal and moral alignment with Sahih Aqidah among non-Shariah students. By investigating how these courses address theological misconceptions, promote normative behavior, and influence broader social and legal awareness, the study contributes to an emerging body of scholarship that intersects Islamic theology with educational law and policy. It posits that legally structured creed education can play a transformative role in strengthening both personal piety and civic virtue.

Methodologically, the study applies a mixed-methods approach combining legal analysis with empirical data collection, thereby grounding theoretical claims in observable outcomes. The focus on non-Shariah faculties is deliberate, as it underscores the universal relevance of creed education across academic disciplines. Ultimately, this research advocates for the legal institutionalization of Sahih Aqidah instruction as a means of fulfilling both religious and constitutional objectives, ensuring that higher education in Muslim societies produces not only knowledgeable graduates but also law-conscious and ethically guided citizens.

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<sup>4</sup> Michael J. Broyde, "Religious Values in Secular Institutions?," *Journal of Law, Religion and State* 10, no. 1 (September 14, 2022): 53–85, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22124810-10010002>.

<sup>5</sup> Hanifaa and Albina, "Religious Moderation and Basic Rights in Education According to Islamic Perspective"; Ivan Dodlek, "Values in Narratives: Religious Education as an Exercise in Emotional Rationality," *Religions*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15101283>; Ibrahim El-Sayed Ebaid, "Ethics and Accounting Education: Does Teaching Stand-Alone Religious Courses Affect Accounting Students' Ethical Decisions?," *Society and Business Review*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1108/sbr-07-2021-0102>; F Alshehri, M Fotaki, and Saleema Kauser, "The Effects of Spirituality and Religiosity on the Ethical Judgment in Organizations," *Journal of Business Ethics* 174 (2020): 567–93, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-020-04614-1>.



## Methods

This study employs a mixed-methods legal-empirical research design to assess the normative and behavioral implications of the Center for General Education (CGED) courses on students' understanding and embodiment of *Sahih Aqidah* within the framework of Islamic legal education at the International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC). The research integrates both quantitative and qualitative techniques to evaluate how Islamic creed functions as a foundation for legal consciousness and civic engagement. Moving beyond traditional doctrinal legal analysis, this investigation emphasizes empirical legal studies (ELS), focusing on the practical influence of legal-normative teachings embedded within the CGED curriculum. This approach not only captures the formation of belief but also explores how Islamic legal obligations—derived from *Sahih Aqidah*—are interpreted and potentially enacted by students.

The study's participant pool comprises undergraduate students from non-Shariah faculties at IIUC who have completed at least one CGED course. A purposive sampling strategy was implemented to reflect the diverse range of legal reasoning and ethical responses observed among students from various academic disciplines. Thirty participants were carefully selected, with consideration given to gender, faculty affiliation, and academic level, thereby ensuring a representation of legal pluralism and educational inclusivity—principles commonly endorsed in legal-pedagogical research.

Quantitative data were gathered through a structured questionnaire designed to gauge students' comprehension of legal-normative concepts rooted in Islamic creed, their ethical decision-making in alignment with Islamic law, and their perceived duties under religiously informed legal frameworks. The questionnaire items were adapted from validated scales, specifically the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS) and the Prosocial Tendencies Measure (PTM), and subsequently modified to reflect legal cognition. For qualitative data collection, open-ended interviews and narrative prompts encouraged participants to elaborate on the legitimacy of Islamic norms, their interplay with formal legal concepts, and their reflections on the moral imperatives of Islamic law. To ensure doctrinal and legal consistency, all research instruments underwent review and validation by legal scholars specializing in Islamic jurisprudence. Conceptual references for these tools included instruments like the Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith Questionnaire (SCSRFQ-SF) and the Christian Ethical Beliefs Scale. These instruments provided a basis for capturing constructs such as normative authority, motivation for compliance, and ethical reasoning through a legal perspective.

Quantitative data analysis involved descriptive statistics and comparative tabulation to identify patterns in students' receptiveness to Islamic legal values, with particular attention to variables such as gender and faculty background. Qualitative data were systematically coded using socio-legal themes, including "legal norm internalization," "compliance behavior," and "perceived juridical legitimacy". The cross-analysis of both data types facilitated triangulated interpretations, thereby strengthening the study's legal-research integrity.

Legal-ethical compliance was a cornerstone of this investigation. All participants received comprehensive information regarding their rights, including anonymity, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Given the inherent overlap between religious identity and legal self-conception, specific safeguards were implemented to respect theological sensitivity while upholding empirical neutrality—a practice consistent with Islamic legal-empirical methodology.

Despite these measures, certain methodological limitations persist. The absence of a control group and the reliance on subjective self-reporting limit the extent of causal inference. Furthermore, the study's scope is confined to a single institution, which may restrict the broader applicability of the findings. Additionally, legal interpretations of *Sahih Aqidah* can exhibit regional variations. Nevertheless, the study endeavors to mitigate these limitations through the use of triangulated data and a focused legal-educational framework



## Results and Discussions

### *Knowledge Enhancement and Legal Literacy Development*

To evaluate students' knowledge development about Sahih Aqidah through CGED courses at IIUC, various recognized assessment tools were used to capture the multidimensional nature of religious knowledge acquisition and its implications for legal understanding. These included self-assessments, structured questionnaires, and qualitative reflections, aligned with scholarly models such as the Religious Schema Scale (RSS) and experiential character-based scoring systems that measure jurisprudential comprehension.

Students demonstrated significant cognitive development in their comprehension of Islamic knowledge, especially regarding legal reasoning and jurisprudence. Seventy percent of the respondents indicated that the CGED courses greatly enhanced their understanding of core Islamic principles, particularly those that form the basis of Islamic legal theory. Another 30% showed moderate agreement with this claim, while none expressed disagreement. These results confirm that organized and compulsory Islamic education has a considerable effect on student learning, especially in fostering the foundational knowledge necessary for legal interpretation and application. This finding aligns with earlier research that emphasizes the role of formal religious education in moral growth and legal reasoning.<sup>6</sup>

Digital media has also played a growing role in the integration of legal education. Students supplement course material with online legal resources and fatwa databases, indicating a hybrid learning model that combines traditional instruction with contemporary legal applications. The integration of traditional Islamic disciplines with modern legal technologies has expanded accessibility to legal precedents and jurisprudential discussions, bridging the gap between classical Islamic law and contemporary legal practice.<sup>7</sup> The integration of digital technologies—such as simulations, case studies, and online courts—has been shown to improve student engagement, practical skills, and satisfaction, while also fostering digital literacy and adaptability among future legal professionals.<sup>8</sup>

Students demonstrated a heightened awareness of the compatibility between Islam and various legal systems and constitutional frameworks. This marks a corrective to prior

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<sup>6</sup> Budi Johan, Fathan Faqih Ali, and Muhammad Ali, "Learning Media in Islamic Education," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.47134/pjpi.v1i4.810>; Devi Melani, "THE USE OF INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGY IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: IMPACT ON STUDENTS' MOTIVATION, PARTICIPATION, AND UNDERSTANDING," *Al-Masail: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.61677/al-masail.v1i2.128>; Desti Widiani and Lilik Istiqomah, "The Influence of Learning Motivation and Intellectual Intelligence on Learning Achievement in Islamic Religious Education," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v7i2.15273>.

<sup>7</sup> Gautami Chakravarty, Aranya Nath, and Srishti Roy Barman, "Transforming Legal Education Through Experiential Learning: Integrating Intellectual Property Simulations and Digital Copyright Case Studies into the Law School Curriculum," *Asian Journal of Legal Education*, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1177/23220058251334749>; C McGrath and Christine Storr, "In Search of the Evidence: Digital Learning in Legal Education, a Scoping Review," *The Law Teacher* 57 (2023): 119–34, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03069400.2022.2133212>; She Min, "Research on the Application Strategy of New Media Technology in Modern University Law Teaching," *Journal of Intelligent & Fuzzy Systems*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.3233/JIFS-219122>.

<sup>8</sup> T Judd, Erika Smith, and R Kahlke, "Not Just Digital Natives: Integrating Technologies in Professional Education Contexts," *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.5689>; Thorsten Lauterbach et al., "A Study of University Law Students' Self-Perceived Digital Competences," *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science* 54 (2021): 751–69, <https://doi.org/10.1177/09610006211048004>.





misconceptions that viewed religious law and secular legal systems as inherently conflicting. Several students noted that the CGED materials portrayed Islamic jurisprudence as both intellectually compelling and historically significant to the evolution of legal thought. This observation aligns with curriculum reforms in various global contexts that aim to integrate religious legal principles with modern jurisprudence. The theory of *al-maṣlahah* (public interest) and the broader concept of *maqāṣid al-sharīah* (objectives of Islamic law) have been central to contemporary reforms, enabling Islamic law to address current societal needs and align with universal legal values.<sup>9</sup>

### **Doctrinal Clarification and Legal Interpretation**

The impact of CGED courses on students' belief clarification, particularly their understanding of *Sahih Aqidah* and its legal implications, was significant for developing sound jurisprudential reasoning. Fifty percent of respondents reported that these courses had deeply clarified their understanding of Islamic legal principles, with an additional 43% expressing moderate agreement. This result confirms that structured Islamic education facilitates theological and legal clarification, particularly when courses emphasize foundational doctrines that underpin legal interpretation.

A pre-course analysis indicated that misunderstandings about legal concepts were prevalent alongside theological misconceptions. Some students struggled to grasp the nuanced legal implications of *tawhīd*, leading them to adopt beliefs associated with *bid'ah*, which could result in flawed legal reasoning often shaped by popular culture or non-scholarly sources. These observations are consistent with existing literature that highlights misconceptions about the role of religious principles in legal development, as well as the foundational ethical and jurisprudential teachings of Islamic law.<sup>10</sup>

The most effective strategies for addressing these mistakes highlighted the importance of legal case studies and the analysis of jurisprudence. Students valued class discussions centered around legal scenarios, as well as multimedia resources that examined historical legal rulings and contemporary Islamic legal issues through a case-based framework. These educational methods resonate with those utilized in comparative legal education, which promotes learning by engaging with real legal challenges, exploring precedents, and participating in collaborative legal reasoning.<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, the diversity of student backgrounds had a measurable influence on legal understanding. Students from faculties with a more humanistic orientation (e.g., English, Law) displayed a greater openness to jurisprudential inquiry and legal critical thinking, whereas students from technical faculties initially showed greater rigidity in legal interpretation. These

<sup>9</sup> Muhammad Harfin Zuhdi and Mohamad Abdun Nasir, "Al-Mashlahah and Reinterpretation of Islamic Law in Contemporary Context," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 8, no. 3 (October 17, 2024): 1818, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjkh.v8i3.24918>.

<sup>10</sup> M Choudhury, "A Critique of Shari'ah Perspectives Contra Tawhid as Law: Terminologies," 2020, 7–40, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-49087-4\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-49087-4_2); M Choudhury, "Tawhid as Law Contra 'Shari'Ah-Compliance' in Malaysian Advisory Commission," 2020, 97–126, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-49087-4\\_6](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-49087-4_6); M Choudhury, "Tawhid as Law Contra Shari'ah in Standardizing a Theory of Islamic Financial Economy," 2020, 87–96, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-49087-4\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-49087-4_5); Arlis Arlis, Ahmad Bakhtiar Jelani, and Arif Taufiq, "Integrating the Principle of Monotheism Into Constitutional Law," *El-Hekam*, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.31958/jeh.v8i1.8227>.

<sup>11</sup> Philip Kretsedemas, "Explaining Asylum Law Using Qualitative Comparative Analysis," *Laws* 13, no. 4 (August 14, 2024): 53, <https://doi.org/10.3390/laws13040053>; Daniel Green and Cornelia Eißler, "A Reflective Essay on Piska's Casebook–Einführung in Die Rechtswissenschaften: Strategische Anleitung Und Arbeitsbuch/Casebook–Introduction to Legal Studies: Strategic Guide and Workbook (Facultas 2019)," *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law - Revue Internationale de Sémiotique Juridique* 37, no. 4 (July 5, 2024): 1431–45, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11196-024-10111-9>.



differences are consistent with international findings that show how legal reasoning development correlates with prior educational exposure and the broader intellectual legal environment.

### **Behavioral Impact and Legal Compliance**

The study found strong evidence of behavioral transformation in students following their participation in CGED courses, with significant implications for legal compliance and ethical conduct. Sixty-seven percent of respondents strongly affirmed that the courses had made them more committed to Islamic practice in daily life, including adherence to legal and ethical norms. An additional 27% agreed, while only a small minority (7%) remained neutral or skeptical.

This behavioral shift manifested in various ways that demonstrate enhanced legal consciousness: increased participation in prayer, ethical conduct aligned with legal principles, modest dress reflecting legal requirements, and interest in Islamic legal scholarship beyond the curriculum. These changes suggest that CGED instruction goes beyond cognitive input and activates students' moral and legal behavioral frameworks.

This internalization of Islamic legal and moral norms aligns with theories from Islamic legal epistemology, where belief (*iman*) and action (*'amal*) are intrinsically connected to legal compliance. Such findings lend empirical support to the concept of *fiqh al-akbar* (greater jurisprudence), where creed serves as the basis for all legal obligations and provides the foundation for legal reasoning and application.<sup>12</sup>

### **Family and Social Influence on Legal Culture**

One of the more significant findings of this study was the reported impact of CGED courses on students' families and their understanding of legal principles. Forty-three percent of respondents indicated that their learning had positively influenced the legal consciousness and religious behavior of family members. Another 43% agreed moderately, and only 14% disagreed.

This outcome supports claims from contemporary Islamic educational literature that religiously and legally educated students act as transmitters of legal value systems within their households.<sup>13</sup> Theological education helps pass down religious knowledge and values from one generation to the next. This process strengthens legal and ethical beliefs in families and communities. It is important to combine both clear teaching and subtle lessons in Islamic legal studies to support ongoing character development and create a positive impact on society.<sup>14</sup> Students shared anecdotal evidence of encouraging family adherence to legal principles, challenging legally questionable practices (e.g., shrine veneration), and promoting *Sahih Aqidah* alongside proper legal understanding in community discussions.

The ripple effect highlighted here emphasizes the important social role of university-level religious education in shaping legal and moral standards within communities. It reinforces the university's role as a catalyst for grassroots legal reform and fosters a more nuanced understanding of Islamic law. In light of the increasing prevalence of legal misconceptions and extreme ideological interpretations in South Asia, this student-centered approach to religious and

<sup>12</sup> Antiga Pashayeva, "Religion and Law: The Ratio of Law and Morality in Islam," *International Journal of Islamic Thought* 22, no. 1 (December 1, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.24035/ijit.22.2022.236>; Sami Al-Daghistani, "The Foundation of Norms in Islamic Jurisprudence and Theology," *Journal of Law and Religion* 37, no. 1 (January 18, 2022): 207–9, <https://doi.org/10.1017/jlr.2021.75>.

<sup>13</sup> Syarifah Rahmah and Muhammad Ilham, "Management of Students' Religious Culture," *Development: Studies in Educational Management and Leadership* 1, no. 1 (June 30, 2022): 39–54, <https://doi.org/10.47766/development.v1i1.644>; Yahya Obaid et al., "Revealing Identity to Form Student Character: Application of the Hidden Curriculum in Islamic Legal Education," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 8, no. 3 (October 9, 2024): 1782, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhgk.v8i3.24061>.

<sup>14</sup> Andrey Orekhov et al., "Theological Education as a Way to Reproduce 'Religious Capital' (Philosophical and Legal Aspects)," *Journal Of Advanced Pharmacy Education And Research* 11, no. 2 (2021): 119–23, <https://doi.org/10.51847/fxrhplm3p>.

legal engagement provides a sustainable way to enhance legal literacy and address misunderstandings within the legal system.<sup>15</sup>

### ***Rejection of Superstition, Fanaticism, and Legal Extremism***

A central hypothesis of this research was that CGED courses would help eradicate irrational beliefs, religious fanaticism, and extreme legal interpretations. Seventy percent of students confirmed this, stating that their exposure to Sahih Aqidah corrected their previously held superstitions and improved their capacity to distinguish between authentic Islamic teachings and cultural distortions, while also developing sound legal reasoning skills. Thirty percent were less certain, citing the need for greater curricular depth in legal applications.

The phenomenon of shrine worship, intercession through saints (*tawaşşul*), and related legal misconceptions was repeatedly cited as a concern. Many students reported that they were previously unaware of the contested legal status of such practices in Islamic jurisprudence. Through coursework, they were introduced to primary legal sources (Qur'an, Hadith, classical legal texts) that clarified the limits of tawhid and the legal implications of shirk, while developing their capacity for independent legal reasoning.

This result aligns with wider educational reforms, which argue that the integration of critical religious and legal content into the curriculum can dismantle inherited misconceptions and promote sound legal thinking. The effectiveness of CGED courses in this domain mirrors pedagogical successes noted in Indonesia and Nigeria, where curriculum development focused on creed, ethics, and legal principles reduced extremist inclinations and promoted balanced legal understanding.<sup>16</sup>

This research highlights the significant legal and educational benefits of creed-based teaching, particularly the instruction of Sahih Aqidah, in fostering Islamic legal awareness (*fiqh consciousness*) among university students. This supports earlier studies that highlight the powerful impact of Islamic. Within the academic environment of IIUC, the structured delivery of *Sahih Aqidah* not only clarified theological doctrine but also deepened students' understanding of the legal underpinnings of Islamic practice, affirming the university's mission to produce graduates grounded in both moral virtue and legal compliance.

A central theme emerging from this study is the students' increased clarity in distinguishing between authentic Islamic jurisprudential norms and culturally embedded misconceptions. This shift demonstrates the pedagogical potency of creed-based education as a legal corrective. Participants consistently reported gaining insight into the boundaries between *shar'i* obligations and unlawful innovations, reflecting the corrective role of creed in legal discourse. This aligns with the argument that religious education strengthens resistance to pseudo-legal superstitions and fosters moral-legal rectitude.<sup>17</sup> Islamic epistemology serves as a protective measure against cultural practices that misinterpret the core principles of shari'ah. Consequently, Sahih Aqidah should not be regarded only as a set of dogmatic teachings, but instead as a vital legal-educational resource aimed at enhancing jurisprudential understanding.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Orekhov et al.; Alexey Ovchinnikov and I Kozhokar, "Legal Theology in Interdisciplinary Discourse," *WISDOM*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.24234/wisdom.v1i1.671>.

<sup>16</sup> Obaid et al., "Revealing Identity to Form Student Character: Application of the Hidden Curriculum in Islamic Legal Education."

<sup>17</sup> Oleg T. Slanov, "THE PEDAGOGICAL INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ON THE LEGAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF A STUDENT," *Russian Journal of Education and Psychology* 15, no. 1 (February 29, 2024): 7–31, <https://doi.org/10.12731/2658-4034-2024-15-1-431>.

<sup>18</sup> Muhammad Nazir Alias et al., "SCIENTIFIC APPROACH AS THE BASIS FOR THE FORMATION OF MAQĀSID AL-SHARĪAH CONCEPT AND PRINCIPLES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY," *Malaysian Journal of Syariah and Law* 12, no. 2 (August 12, 2024): 350–63, <https://doi.org/10.33102/mjssl.vol12no2.568>; Joseph E. B. Lombard, "Islam and the Challenge of Epistemic Sovereignty," *Religions* 15, no. 4 (March 26, 2024): 406, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15040406>.





This study also supports the long-standing jurisprudential claim that *correct belief informs correct practice*—a central tenet of classical Islamic legal theory (*fiqh al-akbar*). Students who engaged deeply with CGED content reported enhanced observance of obligatory rituals such as prayer and fasting, improved ethical awareness, and increased alignment with normative Islamic legal behavior.<sup>19</sup> These outcomes confirm that Islamic education cultivates both ethical and legal accountability. It is essential to highlight that the affective and psychomotor aspects of religious learning play a vital role in developing individuals who are not only morally conscious but also legally responsible. Within this framework, the connection between belief and action, which is fundamental to Islamic legal epistemology, is empirically supported.<sup>20</sup>

The legal impact of creed-based education extends beyond individual transformation to encompass family and community contexts. Numerous respondents indicated that their comprehension of Islamic laws has influenced their family environments, resulting in a reduction of practices deemed unlawful, such as grave veneration and intercessory rituals. This indirect legal influence exemplifies a form of informal jurisprudential outreach, or *da'wah*, initiated through formal education.<sup>21</sup> The social impact noted in faith-based public interventions, where institutional education prompted broader behavioral change. Likewise argued that religious education, when institutionally structured, can contribute meaningfully to communal regulation and legal awareness. In the Islamic context, this can be understood as a contemporary enactment of *al-amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*—commanding right and forbidding wrong—through legal-pedagogical frameworks.<sup>22</sup>

Among the most salient legal outcomes of the CGED courses was the eradication of superstitious and unlawful religious practices. Students developed legal discernment regarding

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<sup>19</sup> Kamel Essabane, C Sterkens, and P Vermeer, “The Relationship between Islamic Religious Education and Citizenship Education in Liberal Democracies,” *Religious Education* 118 (2023): 297–311, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00344087.2023.2262888>; Adnan Zulfiqar, “Belief as Status: Premodern Islamic Law, Duties, and the Martyr Conundrum,” *American Journal of Legal History*, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ajlh/njad022>; Novita Mayasari Angelia et al., “Maḥāsin Al-Syarī'ah on The Implementation of Maḥdah Worship: Overview of Islamic Legal Philosophy,” *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam*, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjkh.v6i2.12394>; Mohammad Hosseini, “An Argument About the Realism of Legal Propositions Based on Islamic Philosophy,” *Philosophy East and West* 0 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.1353/pew.2025.a957083>; Ezieddin Elmahjub, “Islamic Jurisprudence as an Ethical Discourse: An Enquiry into the Nature of Moral Reasoning in Islamic Legal Theory,” *Oxford Journal of Law and Religion*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OJLR/RWAA023>.

<sup>20</sup> Muhammad Rivaldi and Narendra Jumadil Haikal Ramadhan, “CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS THROUGH ISLAMIC EDUCATION LEADERSHIP,” *Al-Masail: Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 2 (June 29, 2024): 80–89, <https://doi.org/10.61677/al-masail.v2i2.270>; Obaid et al., “Revealing Identity to Form Student Character: Application of the Hidden Curriculum in Islamic Legal Education”; Fella Lahmar, “Islamic Education: An Islamic ‘Wisdom-Based Cultural Environment’ in a Western Context,” *Religions* 11, no. 8 (August 7, 2020): 409, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11080409>.

<sup>21</sup> Piotr Roszak and Weronika Kudła, “Faith-Based Education in Polish Public Schools – From Battleground to Common Ground,” *International Journal of Educational Development* 99 (May 2023): 102773, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2023.102773>.

<sup>22</sup> Nada Benajiba et al., “Mosques and Public Health Promotion: A Scoping Review of Faith-Driven Health Interventions,” *Health Education & Behavior* 51 (2024): 677–90, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10901981241252800>; B Aboul-Enein et al., “A Narrative Review of Ethnic Minority Studies for Faith-Based Health Promotion Interventions with Special Reference to the Contemporary Christian Nurse,” *Journal of Religion and Health* 60 (2021): 1375–87, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-020-01150-0>; Patrik Flammer et al., “Engaging Religious Institutions and Faith-Based Communities in Public Health Initiatives: A Case Study of the Romanian Orthodox Church During the COVID-19 Pandemic,” *Frontiers in Public Health* 9 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2021.768091>; Roszak and Kudła, “Faith-Based Education in Polish Public Schools – From Battleground to Common Ground.”



prohibited actions such as shrine worship and the use of *wasilah* (intercessory agents) in impermissible forms. These results resonate with the objectives of cultural legal reform within Islamic da'wah, aimed at displacing illegitimate practices with legally sound, evidence-based doctrine.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, a necessity to adapt Islamic legal instruction to the digital and socio-cultural shifts of modern Muslim societies. This was evident in students' use of multimedia and mobile learning tools to enhance their understanding of legal content, suggesting that digital integration is not only relevant but essential to the future of Islamic legal pedagogy in tertiary institutions.<sup>24</sup>

The pedagogical strategies utilized in CGED instruction proved essential for the internalization of both doctrinal and legal content. Students responded positively to multimodal teaching approaches that integrated classical sources with contemporary media, case-based learning, and peer-led discussions. These methods align with pedagogical insights suggesting that interactive and context-sensitive instruction significantly enhances engagement with Islamic texts.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, it is emphasized that grounding legal education in Qur'anic principles and enhancing it through technological innovation leads to a deeper conceptual understanding. Student feedback consistently underscored the importance of qualified instructors, with instructor competence and the classroom environment identified as key factors influencing legal comprehension.<sup>26</sup>

The themes of tolerance and coexistence emerged as significant legal considerations. CGED courses assist students in navigating the intricate relationship between theological conviction and cultural diversity. This aligns with advocates of an Islamic education model that maintains legal and doctrinal integrity while encouraging harmonious social interactions. At IIUC, the CGED curriculum appears to achieve this balance effectively, cultivating an ethically informed student body capable of upholding Islamic legal values while engaging respectfully in a diverse society. This dual capability enhances both the university's reputation and the legal literacy of its

<sup>23</sup> Azhar Azhar, "Islamic Law Reform in Indonesia from the Perspective of Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'ah: Kerinci's Intellectual Views," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 8, no. 2 (May 11, 2024): 750, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v8i2.15051>.

<sup>24</sup> Mulyadi Mulyadi, "Grasping The Management Of Islamic Education Amidst The Digital Era," *International Journal of Public Health*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.62951/ijph.v1i2.24>; Khairil Umami, Soleh Hasan Wahid, and Yudhi Achmad Bashori, "MAQASID SHARIAH-BASED DIGITAL ECONOMY MODEL: INTEGRATION, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSFORMATION," *Malaysian Journal of Syariah and Law*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.33102/mjssl.vol12no2.647>; Ihsan Mustofa et al., "LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE USE OF E-LEARNING FOR ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION LEARNING," *Al-Masail: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.61677/al-masail.v2i1.181>; Muhamad Husni Hasbulah et al., "Mobile Learning of Islamic Studies: A Comprehensive Review," *Journal of Advanced Research in Applied Sciences and Engineering Technology*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.37934/araset.48.2.211224>; Laras Agustin and Fajarwati, "PARENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY IN LEARNING ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION," *Al-Masail: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.61677/al-masail.v1i2.230>.

<sup>25</sup> Rachana Rao Umashankar, "The Multisensory Engagement with the Qur'an: Teaching the Qur'an beyond the Written Word," *Teaching Theology and Religion* 23 (2020): 231–39, <https://doi.org/10.1111/teth.12569>; Asma Ahmed, "Improving the Pedagogy of Islamic Religious Education in Secondary Schools: The Role of Critical Religious Education and Variation Theory by Ayse Demirel Ucan (Review)," *Journal of Education in Muslim Societies* 5 (2024): 145–49, <https://doi.org/10.2979/jems.00008>; Hanif Cahyo Adi Kistoro, N Burhan, and Eva Latipah, "Probing Experiential Learning Approach in Islamic Religious Education," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v9i2.24374>; I Suddahazai, "Reflecting on Teaching Practice: Adopting Islamic Liberatory Pedagogies within Muslim Institutes of Higher Education in UK (MIHEUK)," *Religions*, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14020223>.

<sup>26</sup> Rouhollah Khodabandelou et al., "A Systematic Review on University Instructors' Roles and Competencies in Online Teaching Environments," *Interactive Learning Environments*, December 6, 2022, 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2022.2152057>.



graduates, supporting the premise that higher education should nurture ethically grounded, globally minded citizens.

The implications of these findings for institutional policy, public perception, and student morale are substantial. When religious-legal instruction is coherent and delivered competently, it enhances individual moral clarity and bolsters institutional credibility. Character development is fundamental to Islamic pedagogy, and when this development encompasses legal awareness, it fosters trust and respect for Islamic educational institutions. Furthermore, one could argue that curricular coherence in Islamic legal education contributes significantly to student satisfaction, motivation, and overall well-being—all of which were evident in the student testimonies analyzed in this study.

To summarize, integrating Sahih Aqidah into university curricula not only addresses theological and ethical goals but also meets significant legal and civic needs. The findings of this study advocate for the establishment of creed-based education as a core element of Islamic higher education. Instead of being a secondary part, this type of education equips Muslim students with a unified framework that includes beliefs, legal knowledge, and civic duties. The broader consequences indicate a direction towards fostering a legally informed, ethically responsible, and spiritually robust Muslim populace. This outcome aligns closely with the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (the primary objectives of Islamic law).

## Conclusions

This study illustrates the transformative impact of creed-based education, particularly through the CGED curriculum at the International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC). It enhances students' theological clarity, legal awareness, and moral conduct. Structured instruction in Sahih Aqidah not only deepens students' understanding of Islamic jurisprudence but also fosters civic responsibility and ethical integrity. The incorporation of digital learning tools and contextual pedagogy further amplifies the effectiveness of legal-religious education. Importantly, the findings indicate that these benefits extend beyond the classroom, positively influencing families and communities while contributing to a culture of legal literacy and religious moderation. By empirically validating the pedagogical and social effects of creed instruction, this research makes a significant contribution to the interdisciplinary fields of Islamic education and legal studies. Future research could delve into longitudinal impacts, comparative analyses with other institutions, and the influence of emerging technologies in Islamic legal education.

## CRedit Authorship Contribution Statement

**Mr. Marsudur Rahman:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing-original Draft. Supervision, Methodology, Writing - review & editing, **Md. Amjad Hossain Shipon:** Methodology, Writing - review & editing,

## Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing financial interests or personal relationships that could influence the work reported in this paper.

## Data Availability

Data will be made available on request.

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