



# Moral and Character Education: An Analysis

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## Abstract

This article aims to describe moral and character education. The research method used is library research. Character education is an effort to cultivate and shape character that emphasizes the importance of the three components of good character (components of good character), namely moral knowing or knowledge of morals, moral feeling or feelings about morals and moral action or moral actions. Then the areas of character education include: moral reasoning or cognitive development, social and emotional learning, moral virtue education, life skills education, health education, violence prevention, conflict resolution, and ethical or moral philosophy. Moral education is a conscious and unconscious effort made by an educator to form good habits in a student, so that a human being is formed who is obedient to god. Character education or moral education is a necessity to reduce the multidimensional crisis that has hit Indonesia. To be effective, character education must involve three bases. First, class basis, where the relationship between teachers and students occurs. Second, the basis of school culture, namely building a school culture that is able to shape the character of students, and third, the basis of community, namely family, society and the State must also build character which is reflected in daily life patterns.

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## INTRODUCTION

For the umpteenth time, the world of Indonesian education has been accused of the nation's depravity. From various current events, starting from corruption cases, hoax news, mutual slander, intolerance, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, drugs circulating among students, brawls between students and even between students are enough evidence of the collapse of the potential of the Indonesian nation or in rather harsh language "the depravity of the nation". This problem is part of the decline in morals and character which shows that there is a failure in education in cultivating people with character and noble morals or in simple language, our education has not been able to change people to be better in terms of knowledge, attitudes and skills. So that in various positions in the world, the Indonesian nation is also experiencing setbacks.

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Realizing this, in 2010 the government took steps to launch a vision of implementing character education or education on the nation's cultural character values. As a follow-up to Presidential Instruction Number 01 of 2010 concerning National Character culture, entrepreneurship and the Creative Economy as well as Presidential Instruction No. 06 of 2009 concerning the Creative Economy. Character education must be instilled and owned by every human being who wants to change their attitudes and behavior in life from an early age (Awhinarto & Suyadi, 2020; Werdiningsih, 2018). Whether elements of society, teachers, lecturers, government, students and scholars, all these elements must have strong basic qualities and character as the nation's next generation (Anam, 2018; Aziz, 2017; Tirtoni, 2022). Character education is very important because it is the spirit of education in human formation.

There are ten signs of the times to watch out for: i) increasing violence among teenagers ii) worsening use of language and words, iii) the influence of peer-group strong in violence, iv) increased self-destructive behavior such as the use of alcohol, drugs, free sex, v) blurring of good and bad moral guidelines, vi) decreased work ethic, vii) low respect for parents and teachers, viii) low sense of individual and citizen responsibility, xi) the culture of dishonesty, and x) the existence of mutual suspicion and hatred between people.

Looking at several cases of incidents in Indonesia as described previously, then we match them with the signs presented, then the Indonesian nation is included in the category of a country that is headed for destruction (Alnashr, 2019; Pasandaran, 2017; Yanggo, 2018). So that character education or moral education becomes a fixed price. This paper attempts to make the Islamic educational philosophy paradigm a tool for analysis of the concept of moral and character education as a universal religion whose teachings are not only limited to partial things, but cover all aspects of human life.

## **METHODS**

This research uses a qualitative method with a content analysis approach, all data is taken from various sources originating from classical scriptures, books, theories and opinions of Islamic education experts (Kasmar et al., 2019; Murniyetti et al., 2016; Rahman et al., 2018). This research approach design can be carried out to discuss certain problems, issues or topics originating from the literature collected as a whole and then take themes that are appropriate to the required data. After the author has collected all the data, the next step is to select the required data according to the problems raised in this article. The next step is to discuss the collected data and then use it as a discussion theme. The method for determining research results with these themes is also in accordance with the opinions of previous researchers. Discussion of results using a content analysis approach can be carried out using themes or main reviews in accordance with the issues and problems discussed.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Character building**

Education comes from the basic word which means maintaining and providing training (teaching, leadership) regarding morals and intelligence of the mind. Education functions to develop abilities and improve the quality of life and human dignity (Adiyono & Rohimah, 2021; Arifah, 2018; Diantoro et al., 2021; Sudarsana, 2016). The aim of education is the formation of character which is manifested in the essential unity of the subject with his behavior and attitude to life. Character is defined as character, character, psychological traits, morals, or manners that differentiate a person from others. Character itself can be interpreted as a human's inner nature that influences all thoughts and behavior, character and basic habits (Agus, 2023; Dianti, 2017; Rahmah, 2019). Character refers to a series of behavioral attitudes, motivation and skills which include the desire to do the best.

Character can be developed through the stages of knowing, acting and habit. Character is not only limited to knowledge, but requires treatment and habits of action (Anshori, 2016; Ma`arif, 2019; Zamathoriq, 2021). A person who has knowledge about goodness is not necessarily able to act according to that knowledge if he does not practice doing that goodness (Algeri & Zhang, 2022; Chengdi, Lian, Yangke, Weihu, 2024; Long, 2023; Schepsmeier, 2019). Included in moral character are three components of character (components of good character), namely knowledge about morals (moral knowing), feelings about morals (moral feeling), and moral actions (moral actions). These three things are needed so that a person is able to understand, feel and implement virtuous values in everyday life, such as positive thinking, sympathy, empathy, honesty, religion, caring, humility, and so on.

School age is the most important period of character development in the human life phase (Page et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2024). This phase is called the Period of Formal Operation. At this age, a person is experiencing a phase of self-discovery which is characterized by the ability to think symbolically and be able to understand something meaningfully without needing concrete objects, even visual objects. At the Period of Formal Operational stage, 7 (seven) intelligences called Multiple Intelligences are also being developed. The seven types of intelligence include linguistic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, musical intelligence, interpersonal-intelligence, and intrapersonal intelligence. Thus, education, especially junior high school students, cannot ignore the importance of character formation, or later known as character education. There are 4 (four) basic characteristics in character education. First, interior order where every action is measured based on a hierarchy of values, or values become the normative guidelines for every action. Second, coherence which gives courage, makes a person firm in principles, not easily swayed by new situations or afraid of risks. Coherence is the basis that builds a sense of trust in each other. A lack of coherence can undermine a person's credibility. Third, autonomy allows a person to internalize rules from outside until they become personal values. This can be seen from assessing personal decisions without being influenced or pressured by other parties. Fourth, steadfastness and loyalty. Firmness is a person's endurance to judge what is considered good. Meanwhile, loyalty is the basis for respecting the commitments that have been chosen.

Thus, character education is a process that is integrated with education broadly and gradually, from education in the family, educational institutions (for example schools, whether formal, informal or non-formal), to social life. Character education also includes the process of instilling religious, cultural, customs and aesthetic values. In other words, character education is an effort so that students know, care about, and internalize values so that they can behave as human beings.

### **Moral Education**

The third theme is spiritual activities. According to informants, this spiritual activity aims to develop character religion, and curiosity. An example of this spiritual activity is the cult which is held every night, and also attending lecture studies such as Islam pedia, tasqif. This spiritual activity will increase student knowledge and can also increase piety, so character religious will be attached to the student's personality. This theme was conveyed by informants as excerpts from the below:

In terms of terminology, morals are things related to human behavior. Morals are traits embedded in the human soul that can give birth to good or bad actions spontaneously without the need for external thoughts and encouragement. And five characteristics found in moral acts, namely: i) moral acts have become a personality strongly embedded in a person's soul, ii) moral acts are acts that are done with acceptance and without thinking, iii) moral acts are acts without coercion, iv) acts done with real elements without any theatrical elements, v) acts done to uphold the word of God.

Moral teachings in Islam are known as moral teachings. Morals are defined as the science of manners, a science that seeks to recognize human behavior, then assign value to good or bad actions in accordance with norms and morals. In Islam, morals occupy an important position and are considered to have a vital function in guiding people's lives. Islamic morals truly maintain human existence as honorable creatures in accordance with their nature (Fajrussalam et al., 2023; Hermawan, 2020; Mustofa et al., 2022). The quality of a person's morals can be seen from three indicators. First, consistency between what is said and what is done, in other words there is compatibility between words and actions. Second, Consistent orientation, namely the existence of conformity between views in one area and views in other areas. Third, consistent with a simple lifestyle.

Moral teachings that are anticipatory towards the need for change have a number of flexible principles that can direct members of society towards change, for example the principle of bringing benefits. This principle is one that keeps momentary reactions that are generally negative towards new ideas and styles from turning them off.

So it can be seen that moral education in Islam has the same orientation as moderate character education booming currently, namely character formation. The difference is only in perspective, moral education seems eastern and Islamic, while character education seems western and secular, but this is not a reason for conflict. In reality, both have room to complement each other. Thus, if so far character education has been successfully formulated by its activists to a very operational stage including methods, strategies and techniques, while moral education is full of information on ideal criteria and sources of good character, then combining the two becomes a very inspiring offer. This is at the same time becoming the entry *point* that character education has strong ties to spirituality and religious values (Sewell, 2020).

### **Problems of Moral and Character Education**

The reality of character education in the field (in schools) still shows no signs of improving its quality. Moral values have not been fully accommodated by religious education materials and citizenship education materials. Religious material, including morals, presented by religious teachers is still normative and "high" in nature. The model for integrating character education in all subjects, including integration into co-curricular and extra-curricular programs, has not been implemented optimally, either by the government or educational actors (school principals and teachers). In general, there are four weaknesses that cause character education to not be optimal.

First, Teachers do not yet fully understand how to integrate character values in each subject matter. So when you include character values when preparing the syllabus. Second, because the syllabus is only a formality, the learning process runs conventionally according to the style of each teacher and does not reflect the implementation of the syllabus, so that the message of instilling character values is also not realized. Third, there is still a strong educational orientation towards the knowledge dimension (cognitive oriented) and pays less attention to aspects of attitude development. It causes students to know a lot of things, but not have enough system positive values, attitudes, interests and appreciation of what he knows. Fourth, there is still a strong assumption that if aspects of cognitive development are developed correctly then affective aspects will also develop (Robinson et al., 2023; Wilkinson & Luo, 2022).

This assumption is wrong considering that affective development can be as fast as cognitive development, if affective learning experiences are given as much as cognitive learning experiences. Until now, perhaps the pattern of habituation and exemplary approaches are still very effective in instilling character or ethical values in students. Habit means a pattern of activities that is carried out continuously. With habituation patterns, character values can emerge such as discipline, responsibility, honesty, caring, and of course religion.

## Moral and Character Education Solutions

Character education in the Indonesian context uses two development strategies. Namely macro character development strategies and micro character development strategies; First, Macro Character Development Strategy. Macro character development strategy means the entire context of planning and implementation of value/character development involves all stakeholders of national education. At the planning level, character tools are developed that are excavated, crystallized and formulated using various sources, among other considerations: i) philosophical religious, Pancasila, UUD 1945, ii) At the implementation level, learning experiences are developed (learning experiences) and the learning process which leads to the formation of character in individual students. This process is carried out through acculturation and empowerment processes as outlined as one of the principles of implementing national education, iii) At the evaluation stage the results are measured (assessment) for purposeful continuous improvement.

Second, Micro Character Development Strategy. Character development strategies in a micro context take place in a holistic educational unit or school context (Hubbard et al., 2022). School as leading sector, seeks to utilize and empower all existing learning environments to continuously initiate, improve, strengthen and perfect the character education process in schools. At a micro level, value/character development can be divided into four pillars, namely teaching and learning activities in the classroom, daily activities in the form of creating school culture (school culture); co-curricular or extracurricular activities, as well as daily activities at home and in the community.

So the synergy of parents, teachers, education staff and school principals in forming the character of students is absolutely necessary. Only in this way will a school climate or atmosphere that is conducive to the cultivation of agreed noble values be formed. Then it is necessary to implement an integral character education curriculum. This character education is implemented into the curriculum through: self-development programs, integration into all subjects, integration into co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, habituation/exemplification.

## CONCLUSION

Character education or character education (morals) in Islam is a necessity to reduce the multidimensional crisis that has hit Indonesia. To be effective, character education must involve three bases. First, class basis, where the relationship between teachers and students occurs. Second, the basis of school culture, namely building a school culture that is able to shape the character of students, and third, the basis of community, namely family, society and the State must also build character which is reflected in daily life patterns. The approach that is currently considered effective in developing character education is habituation and example as applied in Islamic boarding schools and boarding school systems.

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