



# Fostering Adolescent Morality: A Parental Study in Pasar Inuman

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## Article

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## Abstract

This study examines the efforts of parents in fostering the moral character of adolescents in Pasar Inuman Village, Indonesia. The research focuses on three main areas: the current moral condition of adolescents, the strategies employed by parents in moral development, and the challenges faced throughout this process. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through a combination of observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The findings reveal that adolescents in Pasar Inuman Village face various moral challenges, including a lack of discipline in religious observance, disrespect toward elders, and involvement in deviant behaviors. These issues are further exacerbated by the growing influence of technology and social media, which introduce new ethical dilemmas for both parents and adolescents. The moral development efforts undertaken by parents involve multiple strategies such as role modeling, providing advice, habituation, supervision, religious education, emotional support, assigning responsibilities, and creating a supportive environment. However, parents encounter significant obstacles in instilling moral values. These challenges include limited time, insufficient knowledge of contemporary youth issues, family conflicts, negative peer influences, and the pervasive effects of digital technology. The study highlights the complex interaction of these factors and their cumulative impact on the moral development of adolescents in the village. This research underscores the importance of synergy among families, schools, and communities in fostering adolescent morality. It emphasizes the need for adaptive and holistic approaches to moral education that effectively address the unique challenges of the contemporary social landscape. The study contributes to a broader understanding of moral development in transitional societies and provides valuable insights for developing more effective character education strategies in similar contexts.

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## INTRODUCTION

Morality serves as the fundamental foundation in shaping a complete human personality and occupies a central position in Islamic teachings. Its importance becomes even more crucial for adolescents, who are in a developmental phase marked by identity formation and behavioral transition. Adolescence, as a transitional period from childhood to adulthood, is characterized by significant physical, psychological, and social changes. During this stage, adolescents often experience emotional turbulence and intense identity exploration, making moral guidance essential to direct them toward positive behaviors aligned with religious values and social norms.

In today's modern context, the moral challenges faced by adolescents are increasingly complex. Globalization and technological advancement, while offering many benefits, also bring negative impacts that can threaten adolescent morality and ethics. Recent studies reveal that 68% of Indonesian teenagers spend more than five hours per day on social media, a habit that significantly influences their psychosocial development (Sari, 2023). Furthermore, data from the National Narcotics Board (BNN, 2023) show that 24% of drug users in Indonesia are adolescents, indicating a serious problem of substance abuse among youth.

Parents play a vital and irreplaceable role in nurturing the moral values of adolescents. The family, with parents as the primary figures, serves as the first "madrasah" or educational environment in shaping a child's character and personality. However, a study by Utomo (2022) found that 45% of urban adolescents experience a lack of quality time with their parents, which can have a significant impact on their moral development.

This study aims to explore the role of parents in fostering adolescent morality in Pasar Inuman Village, Inuman Subdistrict, Kuantan Singingi Regency, Riau. The research is essential due to the growing gap between the ideal parental role in moral development and the actual challenges faced in the digital era. Through this research, a deeper understanding is expected regarding the dynamics of moral upbringing among adolescents within the context of contemporary Indonesian families.

The findings of this study are expected to make a significant contribution to the development of developmental psychology and family education theories, particularly within the Indonesian sociocultural context. By identifying the factors that influence the effectiveness of parental roles in moral guidance, this research aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice in family-based moral education.

The novelty of this study lies in its specific focus on rural communities in the digital era. Unlike previous research that mostly centered on urban contexts, this study provides new insights into how moral development among adolescents unfolds in relatively traditional settings that are nevertheless affected by globalization and technological influence.

The main objective of this study is to obtain a comprehensive understanding of adolescent morality in Pasar Inuman Village, to identify the efforts made by parents in nurturing their children's moral values, and to analyze the challenges faced by parents in this process. Through a deeper understanding of these aspects, the research aims to provide an empirical foundation for developing effective strategies and interventions in adolescent moral development within the digital age—while remaining sensitive to the local socio-cultural context.

## METHODS

This research adopts a qualitative approach with a case study design, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the role of parents in nurturing adolescent morals within the specific context of Pasar Inuman Village, Inuman District, Kuantan Singingi Regency, Riau. The choice of this method is based on its strength in capturing the complexity of social phenomena in their natural settings (Yin, 2018). The study was conducted over two months, from February 15 to April 14, 2024, in a semi-urban area undergoing socio-cultural transitions.

Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, consistent with the principles of qualitative research that emphasize information richness rather than statistical generalization (Patton, 2015). A total of 18 participants were involved, consisting of six parents with adolescent children (aged 13–18 years), nine adolescents, and three community leaders involved in youth development. The sample size was determined based on the principle of data saturation, whereby data collection was concluded when no new significant information emerged (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

As the primary instrument, the researcher employed multiple data collection techniques to obtain a holistic understanding of the studied phenomenon. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with all participants, using an interview guide validated by experts. Participant observation was also carried out, allowing the researcher to engage in the participants' daily activities to observe parent–teen interactions and relevant social dynamics. Additionally, document analysis was performed on youth development records, school archives, and family documents (when available) to enrich the data (Bowen, 2009).

To ensure data validity, the study employed source and method triangulation, as well as member checking. Triangulation enabled data verification across multiple sources and methods, while member checking involved participants in reviewing interview transcripts and preliminary interpretations, enhancing the credibility of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. This iterative process was carried out throughout the research, allowing continuous refinement of understanding. Thematic analysis was also applied to identify core patterns within the data, providing deeper insight into the dynamics of moral development among adolescents within family and community contexts in Pasar Inuman Village.

Ethical considerations were a primary concern in this research. Informed consent was obtained from all participants after a clear explanation of the study's purpose, participants' rights, and confidentiality guarantees. For adolescent participants, parental or guardian consent was also secured. All data collected were kept confidential and securely stored. Ethical clearance was granted by the institutional ethics committee before the research commenced, ensuring compliance with required ethical standards (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004).

Through this comprehensive methodology, the study aims to achieve a deep, contextual understanding of the parental role in moral development among adolescents in the digital era—particularly in rural communities undergoing socio-cultural transitions. The findings are expected to contribute significantly to developing effective and contextually relevant strategies for moral education among youth in Indonesia.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Portrait of Adolescents' Morality in Pasar Inuman Village

#### 1. Lack of Discipline in Performing Religious Obligations

The findings indicate a tendency among adolescents to neglect their religious duties, particularly the five daily prayers. As one participant stated, “Teenagers today often neglect prayer times and the command to recite or read the Qur’an. They prefer to play with their phones rather than follow their parents’ instructions” (Sugito, 2024). This phenomenon aligns with Jalaluddin (2015), who emphasized the importance of understanding and internalizing religious values in shaping adolescents’ religious behavior. The lack of discipline in worship can be attributed to a low level of religious value internalization, which in turn affects moral development.

#### 2. Declining Respect Toward Parents and Elders

The study found a decline in adolescents’ respect for their parents and elders. One respondent observed, “Children today are difficult to advise when they make mistakes; they often ignore prayer times and become irritated when given advice” (Rosdiana, 2024). This finding supports Santrock (2019), who noted that adolescence is often marked by increased conflict with parents regarding autonomy and control. However, such conflicts should not result in a loss of respect toward parents.

#### 3. Use of Impolite Language

The research also discovered that many adolescents frequently use harsh or disrespectful language, even when speaking to elders. One informant noted, “Teenagers today often speak rudely... when advised by older people, they respond with even harsher words” (Ernita, 2024). This behavior aligns with Bandura’s (1977) social learning theory, which explains that behavior is learned through observation and imitation. Thus, adolescents’ use of harsh language may stem from exposure to inappropriate behavioral models in their social or media environments.

#### 4. Deviant Behavior

The study revealed several forms of deviant behavior among adolescents, including smoking, alcohol consumption, and drug abuse. As one respondent stated, “Teenagers today have become active smokers at a young age... some are involved with drugs, alcohol, and even cases of teenage pregnancy” (Erizon, 2024). This finding corresponds with Jessor’s (2014) research on adolescent risk behavior, which identifies deviance as part of identity formation during adolescence. However, peer pressure, lack of parental supervision, and easy access to harmful substances heighten this risk.

## 5. Low Interest in Religious Activities

The study observed a declining interest in religious activities among adolescents. A community leader mentioned, “We have tried organizing various engaging religious programs for youth, but participation remains low” (Hadi, 2024). This aligns with Erikson’s (1968) theory of identity development, which views adolescence as a critical period for identity formation, including religious identity. The lack of interest may reflect a phase of exploration and meaning-seeking typical of adolescence.

## B. Parental Efforts in Nurturing Adolescent Morality in Pasar Inuman

### 1. Exemplary Method (Uswah Hasanah)

The exemplary method emerged as the primary approach used by parents, emphasizing modeling behavior in daily life, particularly in worship and ethics. As Mr. Soni explained: “In nurturing my child’s morals, I strive to teach obedience, instill religious values, and encourage prayer regularly.” This supports Bandura’s (1977) social learning theory, which highlights observation and modeling as key learning processes. Husni (2013) also found that parental example significantly influences moral development.

### 2. Advice and Guidance (Mau‘izah)

Many parents rely on verbal communication to provide moral guidance. However, some reported difficulties in advising adolescents effectively. As Mrs. Rosdiana stated: “Children today are difficult to advise when they make mistakes; they often ignore prayer times and show irritation when advised.” This suggests the need for more psychologically attuned communication. Yusuf (2008) emphasized that advice should consider adolescents’ emotional and psychological states.

### 3. Habituation of Good Behavior (Ta‘widiyah)

Parents also apply habituation by establishing routines that reinforce positive behavior. As Mrs. Epi explained: “Parents must guide and habituate children to do good deeds, pray regularly, and participate in congregational prayers from an early age.” This reflects Skinner’s (1938) behaviorist theory and is supported by Arief (2002), who confirmed the effectiveness of habituation in shaping character.

### 4. Supervision and Control (Muraqabah)

Active monitoring of children’s behavior, particularly in digital activities, is a key parental strategy. Mr. Sugito stated: “Teenagers prefer using their phones over performing prayers or reading the Qur’an.” This aligns with Erikson’s (1968) psychosocial theory and Steinberg’s (2001) emphasis on balancing supervision and autonomy.

### 5. Religious and Moral Education

Religious education remains fundamental in moral formation. As Mr. Soni reiterated: “I always try to instill religious values and encourage my child to worship Allah through regular prayers.” This is consistent with Kohlberg’s (1984) theory of moral development and Halstead’s (2007) findings on the importance of moral education.

### 6. Fulfilling Emotional Needs

Providing emotional support, affection, and understanding is vital. As Mrs. Windriani stated: “Children raised in harmonious families tend to be obedient and confident, as they receive full attention and moral guidance.” This

aligns with Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory and Eisenberg et al. (2006), who highlighted the role of emotional security in moral growth.

#### **7. Assigning Responsibility**

Parents instill discipline and accountability by assigning responsibilities. As Mr. Aris explained: "I teach my child to respect elders, fulfill entrusted duties, and distinguish between right and wrong through example." This reflects Erikson's (1968) psychosocial framework and Steinberg & Silk's (2002) emphasis on fostering autonomy through responsibility.

#### **8. Family Dialogue and Discussion**

Open dialogue between parents and children encourages understanding and reflection. Although some parents face challenges in this area, it is essential for moral reasoning. This aligns with Piaget's (1972) cognitive development theory and Grusec & Goodnow (1994).

#### **9. Creating a Supportive Environment**

Parents emphasize the importance of a conducive environment. As Mr. Asman stated: "The social environment, including friends, neighbors, and technology, influences children's moral development." This corresponds with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory and is supported by Darling & Steinberg (1993).

### **C. Parental Challenges in Moral Development of Adolescents in Pasar Inuman**

#### **1. Internal Factors**

##### **a. Limited Time and Attention**

Parents struggle to dedicate sufficient time and attention due to work and daily obligations. As Mr. Sugito mentioned: "Teenagers prefer using their phones rather than obeying their parents' instructions to pray or read the Qur'an." This resonates with Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory, emphasizing quality parent-child interactions, and Roehlkepartain et al. (2006), who found that consistent parental involvement positively correlates with moral and spiritual growth.

##### **b. Lack of Parental Knowledge and Skills**

Some parents lack effective strategies to guide their children amid modern challenges. As Mrs. Nurlanis stated: "Children often avoid instructions and only comply when forced." This aligns with Baumrind's (1991) findings on the importance of parenting competence, and Sanders & Mazzucchelli (2013), who showed that parental self-efficacy training improves family functioning.

##### **c. Family Conflict**

Disharmony at home undermines moral growth. As Mrs. Windriani noted: "Children raised in harmonious families tend to be obedient and brave." This supports Cummings & Davies (2010) and Grych & Fincham (1990), who demonstrated the negative effects of parental conflict on children's emotional security and behavior.

#### **2. External Factors**

##### **a. Negative Environmental and Peer Influence**

The social environment significantly affects adolescent morality. As Mr. Erizon observed: "Teenagers today start smoking, drinking, and even engaging in premarital behavior." This aligns with Brown & Larson (2009)

and Dishion & Tipsord (2011), who highlighted the strong role of peer contagion in adolescent risk behavior.

**b. Challenges of Technology and Social Media**

Uncontrolled technology use poses major challenges. As Mr. Sugito pointed out: “They prefer playing with their phones rather than following parental guidance.” This finding is consistent with Shapka et al. (2018), who examined the complex relationship between social media and adolescent well-being, and Livingstone & Helsper (2008), who emphasized parental mediation in managing digital engagement.

This study reveals the complexity of challenges in nurturing adolescents’ moral character in the digital era within Pasar Inuman Village, a semi-urban area undergoing sociocultural transition. The findings indicate a decline in discipline in performing religious duties, low interest in religious activities, diminished respect toward parents, and deviant behaviors such as smoking and drug abuse. These phenomena can be understood through several theoretical frameworks. Berger’s (2014) secularization theory explains the diminishing role of religion in adolescents’ lives, while Shaw and McKay’s (1942) social disorganization theory highlights the disruption of social norms caused by rapid change. Hirschi’s (1969) social control theory provides insights into how weakened social bonds contribute to deviant behavior.

In response to these challenges, parents in Pasar Inuman employ various strategies for moral development encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects. This holistic approach aligns with Abdullah’s (2010) view on the effectiveness of integrating multiple methods in moral education. However, parents also face significant obstacles, particularly in addressing behavioral changes among adolescents and the pervasive influence of modern technology. This highlights the need for more adaptive and contextually responsive strategies to navigate contemporary dynamics.

The complex interaction between internal and external factors in adolescents’ moral development in Pasar Inuman reflects Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological systems theory. The findings underscore the importance of a multifaceted approach involving the family, school, and community in moral development efforts. As suggested by Kohlberg’s (1984) moral development theory, adolescents’ moral growth is a long-term process shaped by diverse experiences and social interactions.

The implications of this study emphasize the need for parental training and education programs, stronger collaboration among social institutions, and the development of strategies that account for local cultural contexts and the challenges of the digital age. A holistic approach—integrating intergenerational communication, the use of technology in religious activities, and the creation of positive social environments—can be key to addressing moral development challenges among adolescents in Pasar Inuman.

This research makes a significant contribution to understanding the dynamics of adolescent moral development in semi-urban areas undergoing sociocultural transitions. Its findings can serve as a foundation for designing more effective policies and interventions aimed at strengthening adolescents’ moral character while considering the complex factors influencing their moral and behavioral development in the modern era. Further studies are needed to evaluate the effectiveness of specific interventions and explore how cultural and religious factors can be leveraged to support moral development in the face of contemporary challenges.

## CONCLUSION

This study reveals the complexity of moral development among adolescents in Pasar Inuman Village within the context of social and technological change. Based on the findings, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The moral conduct of adolescents in Pasar Inuman Village shows a declining trend, reflected in decreased discipline in performing religious duties, diminished respect for others, and the emergence of deviant behaviors. This indicates a growing gap between traditional values and the social realities faced by today's youth.
2. Parents have implemented various methods of moral education, including role modeling, giving advice, habituation, and supervision. This multidimensional approach reflects parents' awareness of the complexities involved in shaping moral character in the modern era.
3. The challenges faced by parents are both internal (such as limited time and knowledge) and external (including environmental and technological influences). The interaction of these factors creates significant obstacles in the process of moral upbringing.

These findings highlight the need for a holistic approach to adolescent moral development—one that integrates the roles of family, community, and educational institutions. There is an urgent need for strategies that are adaptive to social and technological changes while remaining firmly rooted in moral and religious values.

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