



TRANSFORMATION OF CHARACTER EDUCATION: AN EMERGENCY SOLUTION TO THE CRISIS AND CONTROVERSY OF TEENAGERS' MORALS

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Abstract:

This study focuses on efforts to transform moral education as a rapid response to challenges and debates surrounding adolescent morality in the digital age. The focus is on evaluating the methods implemented by teachers and schools in integrating moral values into the learning process and their impact on student behavior. This study adopted a qualitative approach with a case study conducted at Nurul Jadid Junior High School in Paiton, Probolinggo. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and document collection from the principal, teachers, guardians, and students. The findings indicate that the transformation of moral education is carried out through collaborative learning methods, teacher role models, and spiritual habituation activities such as Spirit Morning and Good Character Habits (PKB). This approach successfully forms empathy, politeness, and a sense of social responsibility among students. This study implies that relevant and sustainable moral education can serve as a strategic model for building adolescent character and strengthening moral values in the digital age.

Keywords: *Moral Education, Adolescent Morals, Educational Transformation*

INTRODUCTION

Today, the moral crisis affecting adolescents has become a serious concern in the world of education (Anggraini et al., 2023; Maharani, 2023). Rapid social changes due to globalization and digitalization have led to significant shifts in values, particularly in thought patterns, behavior, and social interactions. Many adolescents have lost their moral direction due to the weak instillation of moral values in their daily lives (Nahriyah, 2022; Pamuji, 2024). As a result, negative behaviors such as intolerance, hedonism, and bullying have emerged in the school environment. This demonstrates that moral education is not merely about conveying moral concepts; it must also strive to foster character that is realistic, contextual, and adaptable to current developments. Therefore, this research is crucial because it addresses a fundamental issue: how the education system can provide concrete solutions to the moral crisis and deviant behavior among secondary school students.

The phenomenon of bullying is found in various forms: verbal, physical, and social (Sitanggang et al., 2024). Several cases indicate that this behavior arises from students' weak moral awareness, low empathy, and a lack of understanding of ethical values. The impact not only causes psychological harm to victims but also creates a disharmonious school climate (Badrudin & Shidiq, 2022; Syarif et al., 2025). Teachers have attempted to address bullying through

coaching, counseling, and disciplinary sanctions, but the results are often temporary. This situation highlights the need for a new, more in-depth approach, namely through a transformation of moral education that goes beyond simply teaching values to instilling them sustainably through role models, habituation activities, and collaboration between teachers, parents, and the Islamic boarding school environment.

Several previous studies have highlighted the effectiveness of moral education in reducing deviant behavior in schools. Puspitasari et al. (2025) noted that a holistic approach based on moral values can reduce bullying rates in elementary schools. Ixfina & Rohma (2025) emphasized the importance of integrating moral values into the school curriculum to foster students' social awareness. Meanwhile, Prayogi & Najiyah (2023) demonstrated that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers' strategies through intracurricular and extracurricular activities are effective in instilling character. However, these studies have not examined how the transformation of *akhlakul karimah* values is implemented collaboratively between schools, Islamic boarding schools, and parents to prevent bullying in secondary schools. The novelty of this research lies in its collaborative and applied approach, which focuses on internalizing moral values in students' daily lives, not just within the formal curriculum.

This study aims to examine in depth how the transformation of *akhlakul karimah* educational values can be applied to prevent bullying behavior in secondary schools. This study aims to answer three main questions. First, what strategies are used by teachers and schools to incorporate *akhlakul karimah* values into learning activities and the overall school culture? Second, to what extent does the implementation of these *akhlakul karimah* values impact changes in students' behavior in their daily lives. Third, how collaboration between schools, Islamic boarding schools, and parents can shape students' character with noble (Maulidah et al., 2024), thus creating an integrated educational synergy between formal, non-formal, and family environments. This goal is expected to comprehensively describe an effective and sustainable model of moral development among school-aged adolescents.

Changing student behavior is not sufficient through sanctions or moral admonitions, but rather through a process of transforming moral education values that address cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. By consistently instilling Islamic values in daily activities, students are expected to develop internal moral awareness and self-control against negative actions such as bullying. If this implication is successfully implemented, it will not only reduce bullying cases but also create a school culture that is civilized, respectful, and oriented toward humanitarian values. Thus, contextually transformed moral education is a strategic and urgent solution to address the moral crisis facing today's adolescents.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study approach to gain in-depth insight into the phenomenon of preventing moral crises and controversies among adolescents in schools through the instilling of moral values. This research was conducted at Nurul Jadid Junior High School in Karanganyar Village, Paiton District, Probolinggo Regency, East Java. This location was chosen because of its strong commitment to moral education and its relevant environment for exploring the dynamics of student morality in school life. This research aims to understand the processes, strategies, and real-

world impacts of implementing these values in shaping students' social behavior and creating a school atmosphere that fosters character and noble morals. The sources of information in this study consisted of various parties directly involved in the moral education process at school, namely the principal, the Guidance and Counseling (BK) coordinator, the school discipline department, teaching staff, foster parents, and a number of students as the research sample. Data collection techniques were carried out through three main stages: observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were used to observe students' behavior, social interactions, and the application of moral values in their daily lives. Interviews were conducted to obtain in-depth data on the informants' perceptions and experiences. Documentation was used to review relevant archives, activity reports, and school records. After data collection, the researchers employed qualitative data analysis with three main stages: data reduction (filtering and focusing important information), data display (presenting data in a systematic narrative), and verification or drawing conclusions to identify patterns, themes, and meanings from the data. This process aims to produce a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of moral education as an emergency solution to adolescent moral crises and controversies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Transformation of Moral Education as an Approach to Youth Moral Development

The transformation of moral education is crucial for providing students with an education that is easily understood and accepted. Our research shows that, through the transformation of moral education, Nurul Jadid Middle School can foster adolescent morality through a learning process that focuses on hands-on practice, social interaction, and teacher role models (Amali et al., 2024). Moral education at this school is not only delivered through theory, but also integrated into teaching and learning activities and students' daily lives. The teacher's role as a central figure goes beyond imparting knowledge but also shapes students' character through concrete behavior, advice, and moral reinforcement in every classroom activity. This transformation demonstrates that moral education functions as a moral development process that meets the needs of modern adolescents and also serves as a solution to prevent bullying in schools.

The following table presents the results of interviews with several informants, illustrating the implementation of the transformation of moral education through learning methods:

No	Source	Answer
1.	Educator	By working in groups, students can learn to respect each other, collaborate in problem-solving, and speak politely."
2.	Student	"Discussions make us closer to our friends, and we learn to respect each other and be fair in expressing our opinions"
3.	Educator	"Methods used to instill moral values include discussions, lectures, pair work, and reading."
4.	Foster Parents	"The school coordinates with us to guide our children morally and socially."

Table 1. Results of interviews with several informants

This table explains that the transformation of moral education is carried out collaboratively and in layers between teachers, students, and guardians. Furthermore, it utilizes several learning methods to comprehensively shape students' morals.

Based on interviews, teachers use group discussions to foster empathy, mutual respect, and build students' social awareness. This approach encourages students to be more active, help each other, and become accustomed to resolving conflicts peacefully. Furthermore, the lecture method is implemented with an emotional approach through touching stories and advice, rather than simply normative commands. Literacy activities are also an important means of broadening students' horizons and fostering moral reflection on Islamic values. The principal and guardians play a role in strengthening the moral environment by continuously monitoring and guiding students. Overall, the implemented learning system demonstrates a harmony between theory, practice, and habits oriented toward the formation of noble morals.

From field findings, a clear pattern emerges that the transformation of moral education is taking place through a collaborative and communicative learning approach. First, every teacher interaction is filled with mutual respect because teachers function as role models, creating a humanistic learning environment. Second, students become active subjects who can learn to develop moral values through direct experiences, such as discussions, group work, and role-playing. Third, schools and Islamic boarding schools can play a role in creating a positive culture through collaboration, thus strengthening moral values, such as empathy, politeness, and politeness. Fourth, lecture and literacy methods are utilized to deepen the understanding of moral values. Moral values are not only to be studied but also internalized and practiced in students' daily lives at school, as this pattern demonstrates the integration of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions.

This pattern can be interpreted as a concrete form of transformation in moral education, shifting from a conventional approach to a more interactive and humanistic learning model. This change occurs because teachers and schools realize that adolescent morality cannot be formed solely through one-way lectures, but must be fostered through social experiences and concrete examples. Discussions, group work, and literacy activities create a space for dialogue that fosters empathy, tolerance, and a sense of social responsibility.

Meanwhile, the teacher's emotional approach in lectures fosters psychological closeness with students, making moral messages more easily accepted. This demonstrates that the transformation of moral education is not simply about new methods, but about a paradigm shift from merely teaching morals to instilling morals in students' souls. This approach has proven effective in developing civilized adolescent character.



Figure 1. Good Character Stickers

Figure 1 below shows good character stickers that students can directly practice in their daily lives. These stickers are placed in each classroom so students know how to properly respect teachers. This encourages students to consistently apply good character in real-life actions, such as shaking hands before and after class, helping friends in need, and maintaining a clean school environment. Furthermore, teacher-led morning motivational activities are crucial for instilling the values of discipline, honesty, and responsibility for oneself and others.

Another image shows a dynamic group discussion, where students respect each other's opinions and demonstrate empathy in resolving differences of opinion. This visualization demonstrates that the implementation of moral education at Nurul Jadid Middle School extends beyond the classroom and fosters a positive culture that lives in students' daily lives.

Moral and Ethical Education for Adolescents

Moral education plays a crucial role in shaping the morals and personality of adolescents, especially in the school environment. Teachers are the primary role models who guide students not only in academics but also in building character based on Islamic values (Judrah et al., 2024; Shofiyyah et al., 2023). Through simple habits such as shaking hands, being mindful of speech, dressing modestly, and respecting teachers, students begin to learn the importance of social ethics and morality.

Furthermore, motivational activities before learning activities and regular guidance from teachers and guardians help strengthen adolescents' moral awareness of their social responsibilities. These findings demonstrate that moral education is not merely a theoretical construct; it needs to be implemented through habits, role models, and ongoing mentoring that encompasses all aspects of students' lives, both at school and in Islamic boarding schools.



Figure 2. Group Discussion Activity

Based on observations and interviews, it appears that students at Nurul Jadid Junior High School have shown significant changes in their moral behavior. They are more polite in their interactions, show respect for their teachers, and care more about others. The tradition of shaking hands, motivational activities, and the application of moral values through learning and social interactions are key factors driving this change.

Teachers not only teach but also serve as role models, setting good examples. Foster parents at the Islamic boarding school (pesantren) also reinforce moral values through daily mentoring and active communication with the school and parents. Interviews revealed that students reported a better understanding of empathy, justice, and social responsibility. Thus, these data confirm that moral education can have a significant impact on the moral

development of adolescents. Based on visual analysis and field findings, it appears that the habituation process has created a social atmosphere that reflects the values of moral education. This pattern consists of three components

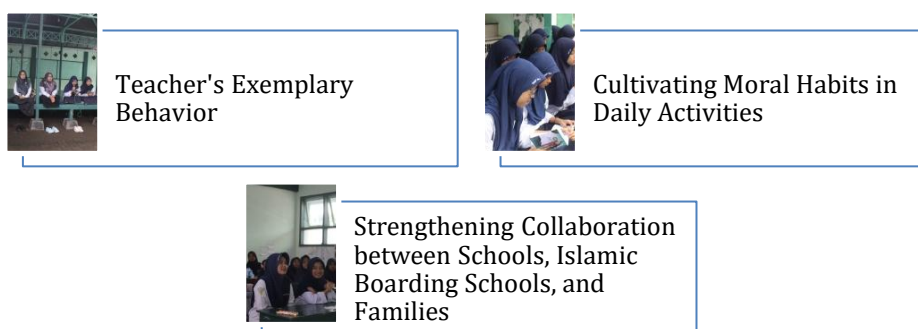


Figure 1. Patterns that Reflect Moral Education Values

Through direct interaction, teachers' role models serve as a source of moral inspiration that can shape students' character. Meanwhile, activities such as shaking hands, polite speech, and motivational activities before teaching

serve to reinforce the consistency of moral values. The active role of guardians and parents also strengthens the supportive environment for character formation, so that moral values don't stop at school but are continually applied in daily life. This synergy demonstrates that comprehensive moral education can foster a sustainable moral culture among adolescents.

The results of this study indicate that the success of moral education is largely determined by a comprehensive and sustainable approach. Teacher role models are a key factor with a strong influence, as adolescents fundamentally learn by observing and imitating the behavior of those around them. Meanwhile, cultivating moral habits through routine activities can instill positive habits that gradually develop into part of one's character.

Collaboration between schools, Islamic boarding schools, and families helps strengthen students' moral ecosystem, creating a mutually supportive environment for character development. Conceptually, these findings align with the Islamic educational principles of ta'dib (ethical education) and tazkiyah (soul purification), which emphasize a balance between knowledge and the practice of values. Therefore, the transformation of moral education at Nurul Jadid Middle School can be seen as a concrete example of the application of relevant and effective moral education amidst modern socio-cultural dynamics.

Moral Crisis and Controversy Among Teenagers in the Modern and Digital Era

As the digital age advances, the phenomenon of moral crisis among teenagers is increasingly worrying. Social media, popular culture, and technological advances have had a significant impact on changing adolescent mindsets and behavior. Values of politeness, empathy, and social responsibility are beginning to be displaced by instant gratification, hedonism, and the desire for recognition in the digital space. Based on documentation of activities at Nurul Jadid Middle School, it appears that the school is implementing various strategies for moral education to address this situation.

Photo documentation, activity tables, and field notes indicate programs such as Spirit Morning, motivational sessions after congregational prayers, Good Character Building (PKB), and the ruqyah method. These efforts are aimed at strengthening the moral and spiritual awareness of students so that they are able to protect themselves from the negative influences of the digital era, as well as encouraging character formation based on the values of moral education.



Figure 3. Documentation of Good Character Building (PKB) Activities

The documentation above shows that the moral crisis in adolescents at Nurul Jadid Middle School is addressed not only through a theoretical approach but also through structured daily practices. The Spirit Morning activity and motivational activities after congregational prayers serve as a means of fostering self-awareness and social responsibility in students. The Good Character Development Program (PKB) strengthens spiritual values and refines social behavior, while the rukyah method provides an effective emotional and psychological approach for students exhibiting negative behavior. The posters and suggestion box add an educational and participatory element, encouraging students to be more open and reflective about their actions. Thus, this documentation clarifies that the values of *akhlakul karimah* (good morals) are truly integrated into the school culture to strengthen moral resilience in this challenging digital era. The following table shows activities supporting the transformation of moral education:

NO	Activity	Form of Activity
1.	Spirit Morning Activities	- Activities are held before morning teaching and learning activities begin, twice a month on Thursdays at 7:30 a.m. WIB. - More focused on providing stimulus and understanding to students.
2.	Self-Motivation After the Dhuhr Prayer	Explain more about techniques or ways of socializing or behaving well.
3.	Good Character Building (PKB)	- Such as reciting <i>istigosah</i>, reciting <i>sholawat</i>, <i>rotibul haddad</i>, and so on in sequence. - Held every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.
4.	Bringing in Scientific Studies	- Collaboration with alumni (police sector or military commander). - Every semester (twice a year) during national holidays.
5.	Rukyah Method	- Initiative from the BK coordinator - Extraordinary impact through a soft-hand approach with rukyah verses.
6.	Suggestion Box Supplies	Functions for students who are afraid to report their problems to the teacher without writing their identity.
7.	Procurement of Posters	- Posters on the impact of bullying. - Good character stickers.

Table 2. Activities that Support the Transformation of Moral Education

Based on visual documentation and activity tables, the apparent pattern indicates that moral development activities at Nurul Jadid Middle School are implemented systematically, in layers, and in an integrated manner. The frequency of religious activities such as Spirit Morning and PKB (Community Development Program) shows a consistent increase, while the graph of bullying cases shows a decreasing trend from semester to semester. Furthermore, the involvement of various parties, such as the guidance counselor, principal, and guardian, demonstrates strong synergy. This pattern demonstrates that moral education values are not merely formal activities but have become a collective habit and the school's moral identity.

The pattern from the documentation results indicates that Nurul Jadid Middle School's success in mitigating the moral crisis among adolescents is inseparable from the consistency and integration of moral education values into all school activities. Spiritual approaches such as PKB and the rukyah method have a profound impact because they address students' inner dimensions, not just cognitive aspects. Meanwhile, motivational activities, educational posters, and stickers of good character serve as moral reminders that foster ongoing awareness. The decrease in bullying cases demonstrates that repeated character development can create a positive moral habitus (Kurniawanto, 2025). This phenomenon confirms that sustainable moral education, addressing the challenges of the digital era, is an effective solution to addressing the moral crisis in adolescents, as it not only improves behavior but also instills values as part of the student's personality.

The results of this study indicate that the transformation of moral education as a contextual and applicable solution for adolescent morality aligns with the findings of Reksamunandar & Hadirman's (2022) research, which emphasized the importance of role-modeling-based learning in shaping student character. These findings are also consistent with the research of Judrah et al. (2024), which stated that teachers play a primary role in internalizing moral values through direct classroom interaction.

However, this study demonstrates a new benchmark: the transformation of moral learning methods beyond teacher role models to include the integration of technology and spiritual habituation activities that are more relevant to the digital context of today's adolescents. This broadens the theory of Islamic educational transformation, which previously focused solely on the religious dimension, into a more adaptive and responsive approach to the challenges of the modern era, which is rife with moral crises and the decline of social values.

The results of this study on adolescent moral and ethical education align with those of Ardiyanti et al. (2025) and Septantiningtyas & Palupi (2025), which confirmed that moral education can reduce bullying behavior in schools. However, this study demonstrates that the success of the program at Nurul Jadid Middle School is not solely due to formal activities such as scientific studies on morals, but also to systematic habituation through Spirit Morning activities, self-motivation after congregational prayer, and the ruqyah method. These findings expand character education theory by demonstrating that a sustainable spiritual approach has a significant impact on internalizing the values of moral education compared to a purely cognitive approach (Kholifah et al., 2024).

This research supports the views of Prayuti et al. (2024) and research (Tranggono et al., 2023), which revealed that adolescent moral degradation is

influenced by uncontrolled exposure to digital culture. However, this study adds a solution-oriented dimension by confirming that transforming moral education in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) can be an effective moral bulwark. Through consistent religious activities and spiritual practices, schools are able to develop adolescents' self-control from within, rather than through mere prohibitions. This finding reinforces the relevance of Islamic character education theory in a modern context.

The findings on the transformation of moral education as an approach to adolescent moral development occurred because the transformation of moral education at Nurul Jadid Middle School was built on the contextual needs of changing times. The learning system is no longer focused solely on transferring knowledge, but rather directed at developing meaning and behavior that can be applied in real life. The integration of humanistic and religious approaches makes the learning process more engaging with students' affective aspects. Teachers serve not only as transmitters of material but also as inspirational figures who serve as moral models. Thus, this transformation creates a meaningful learning environment that touches the spiritual dimension of students. The reason for this change is the institutional awareness that conventional methods are no longer effective in facing the challenges of the digital era brought about by globalization.

This success is due to the consistency of the program and the active involvement of all school elements, namely teachers, guardians, and educational staff, who work together to shape moral habits. This approach allows for the internalization of values through direct experience and self-reflection, not just verbal advice. Furthermore, reinforcement through visual media such as posters and suggestion boxes expands the space for moral learning outside the classroom. This is what makes bullying prevention effective, as students are not only reminded but also accustomed to living by the values of moral education. The findings of the crisis and controversy surrounding adolescent morality in the modern and digital era occur because the moral challenges of adolescents in the digital era require a moral education strategy that is adaptive, preventative, and addresses the psychological aspects of students. Nurul Jadid Junior High School's success in mitigating the moral crisis in adolescents is due to the synergy between Islamic values and a contextual approach based on technology and visual media. Moral education is delivered not only through lectures but also through concrete social and spiritual experiences, such as Good Character Habits (PKB) and scientific studies with the police.

This approach is successful because it taps into the dimension of moral awareness inherent in students, not simply external control. Thus, moral education in schools serves as a moral immune system that protects adolescents from the negative influences of digital media, while strengthening their sense of social and spiritual responsibility.

This research makes a significant contribution to the development of Islamic educational theory and practice, particularly in the context of the transformation of moral education in the digital era. Theoretically, this study broadens understanding of the concept of moral education, emphasizing not only normative aspects but also adapting to modern social realities. These findings enrich the literature on Islamic education by introducing a contextual, spiritual, and social-based moral learning model that is relevant for implementation in formal educational institutions. Practically, the results of this study can serve as a reference for educators, curriculum developers, and

educational institutions in designing moral development strategies that directly address students' affective and behavioral aspects. Furthermore, this research demonstrates that moral education can be an effective emergency solution in addressing adolescent moral crises and controversies, making it a crucial foundation for transforming national education toward character and noble character.

CONCLUSION

The main findings of this study indicate that changes in moral education at Nurul Jadid Junior High School have been a successful strategic step in addressing the moral challenges facing adolescents in the digital age. Learning methods that emphasize role models, habits, and collaboration between the school, Islamic boarding school, and parents have been able to foster ethical, caring, and responsible student behavior. A continuous moral development approach through programs such as Spirit Morning, self-development, and the application of ruqyah methods has proven effective in integrating good moral values. These findings convey an important lesson: moral education is not merely normative information, but also a character-building process that touches on students' spiritual and social aspects. From a theoretical perspective, this research makes a scientific contribution by broadening the perspective of Islamic education toward a more humanistic and relevant approach to addressing the moral challenges of adolescents today.

Limitations of this study lie in the case context and location, which only emphasizes one Islamic boarding school-based educational institution and does not encompass a wider range of gender, age, and social backgrounds. The research method used is descriptive qualitative, which also limits the generalizability of the results. Therefore, further research is urgently needed with a more comprehensive approach, such as through inter-school surveys, gender comparisons, and analysis of adolescent age groups in various regions. Such research will deepen our understanding of the effectiveness of moral education transformation and can serve as a foundation for formulating more appropriate and sustainable moral education policies.

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