
Revitalizing Moral Education to Overcome the Moral Crisis of Adolescents

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Abstract

The moral crisis among adolescents has become a serious social issue in contemporary society, characterized by increasing juvenile delinquency, violence, drug abuse, cyberbullying, promiscuity, disrespect toward parents and teachers, and declining ethical awareness. Rapid technological development, globalization, social media influence, weak family supervision, and declining moral education contribute significantly to changes in adolescent behavior and values. This study aims to analyze the importance of revitalizing moral education as an effort to overcome the moral crisis among adolescents and examine the role of families, schools, communities, and religious institutions in strengthening moral character development. The research employs a qualitative descriptive approach through literature review and contextual analysis of moral education, adolescent development, and contemporary social challenges. The findings indicate that moral education plays an essential role in shaping adolescents' ethical awareness, self-control, empathy, responsibility, discipline, and social behavior. Effective moral education requires integration between cognitive understanding, emotional development, spiritual values, and practical moral habits within everyday life. The study also reveals that collaboration among parents, teachers, communities, and digital media literacy programs is necessary to address contemporary moral challenges affecting adolescents. Therefore, revitalizing moral education based on ethical, religious, and humanitarian values is essential for developing responsible, morally conscious, and socially constructive younger generations in modern society.

Keywords

Moral Education; Moral Crisis; Adolescents; Character Education; Ethical Values; Youth Development; Social Behavior



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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence represents a crucial developmental stage characterized by significant physical, emotional, psychological, intellectual, and social changes. During this period, adolescents actively search for identity, develop personal values, and establish patterns of behavior influencing their future lives. Adolescents possess strong curiosity, emotional sensitivity, and social dependence, making them highly

influenced by family environments, peer groups, educational institutions, media exposure, and broader social conditions. Consequently, moral education during adolescence becomes highly important because it shapes ethical awareness, self-control, social responsibility, and personal character within rapidly changing social environments.

In contemporary society, concerns regarding moral decline among adolescents have become increasingly widespread. Various forms of juvenile delinquency such as violence, bullying, drug abuse, promiscuity, criminal behavior, disrespect toward parents and teachers, cybercrime, and online harassment continue to increase in many countries. Social media addiction, exposure to inappropriate digital content, consumerist lifestyles, and weakening social interaction further contribute to changes in adolescent behavior and moral orientation. These conditions indicate that many adolescents experience difficulties developing strong ethical principles and responsible behavior amid rapid social transformation and technological advancement.

The moral crisis among adolescents cannot be separated from broader social and cultural changes occurring in modern society. Globalization and digital technology have transformed communication patterns, cultural interaction, and access to information. Adolescents are exposed daily to diverse lifestyles, ideologies, entertainment content, and online communities that significantly influence their attitudes and behavior. While technological advancement provides educational opportunities and broader communication access, it also creates challenges related to moral control, emotional regulation, and social responsibility. According to UNESCO (2021), digital culture increasingly affects young people's values, identity formation, and interpersonal relationships, making character education and ethical literacy more important than ever.

Family environments traditionally function as primary institutions for moral formation and value transmission. Parents play central roles in teaching honesty, discipline, empathy, respect, responsibility, and religious values to children from an early age. However, rapid social change, economic pressure, urbanization, and changing family structures often reduce parental supervision and emotional interaction with adolescents. Some families experience communication problems, lack of emotional closeness, or inconsistent moral guidance, resulting in weaker character formation among children. Lickona (1991) explains that moral education begins within family life because children develop ethical understanding primarily through observation, imitation, and interaction with parents and caregivers.

Educational institutions similarly possess important responsibilities in shaping adolescents' moral character and social behavior. Schools function not only as places for academic learning but also as environments for developing discipline, social interaction, ethical awareness, and civic responsibility. However, contemporary education systems sometimes prioritize academic achievement and cognitive performance while paying insufficient attention to moral and character development. Competitive educational cultures focused heavily on examination results and technical competence may neglect emotional intelligence, ethical reasoning, and social responsibility among students. Consequently, revitalizing moral education within schools becomes increasingly necessary to balance intellectual development with character formation.

Religious and spiritual values also play important roles in strengthening adolescents' moral awareness and self-control. Religious teachings generally encourage honesty, compassion, discipline, patience, social responsibility, and ethical behavior. Adolescents possessing strong spiritual foundations are often better able to manage emotional pressure, avoid destructive behavior, and develop meaningful life orientations. In Islamic perspectives, moral education (akhlaq) constitutes a fundamental component of human development because good character reflects both social ethics and spiritual consciousness. The Prophet Muhammad emphasized the importance of noble character and ethical conduct as central goals of education and social life.

Peer influence represents another important factor affecting adolescent morality and behavior. During adolescence, individuals often seek acceptance and recognition from peer groups, making them vulnerable to social pressure and group conformity. Positive peer environments may encourage cooperation, discipline, and constructive behavior, while negative peer influence may contribute to delinquency, violence, substance abuse, and risky behavior. Social belonging therefore significantly affects adolescents' ethical decision-making and personal identity formation.

The development of social media and digital communication has also transformed adolescent interaction and moral challenges. Online platforms provide spaces for self-expression, social networking, and information sharing but may simultaneously expose adolescents to cyberbullying, pornography, hate speech, misinformation, online addiction, and unhealthy social comparison. Digital anonymity sometimes reduces ethical responsibility and encourages aggressive behavior within online communication. According to Turkle (2015), excessive dependence on digital interaction may weaken empathy, emotional communication, and face-to-face social

skills among young people. Consequently, digital literacy and ethical online behavior have become important components of contemporary moral education.

The moral crisis among adolescents additionally reflects broader social problems such as consumerism, materialism, declining empathy, individualism, and weakening social solidarity. Modern societies often emphasize competition, economic success, popularity, and material achievement while neglecting humanitarian values and social responsibility. Adolescents growing within such environments may prioritize personal satisfaction and external recognition rather than ethical principles and collective well-being. This condition demonstrates that moral education must address not only individual behavior but also broader cultural and social influences shaping adolescent values and attitudes.

Revitalizing moral education therefore requires comprehensive and integrated approaches involving families, schools, communities, religious institutions, and media environments. Moral education should not be limited to theoretical instruction concerning ethical norms but must also involve practical habituation, emotional development, critical thinking, and social participation. Effective moral education encourages adolescents to internalize values such as honesty, empathy, tolerance, discipline, responsibility, and respect through daily interaction and meaningful social experiences. According to Berkowitz and Bier (2005), successful character education involves collaboration between educational institutions, families, and communities in creating consistent moral environments supporting ethical development.

In addition, contemporary moral education must adapt to changing social realities and technological developments affecting adolescent life. Educational approaches emphasizing dialogue, emotional intelligence, critical reflection, and digital ethics are increasingly necessary in modern contexts. Adolescents need guidance not only regarding traditional moral values but also concerning ethical challenges related to online communication, media consumption, diversity, and globalization. Consequently, educators and parents must develop new strategies capable of addressing contemporary moral issues effectively.

The relevance of revitalizing moral education has become increasingly important because adolescents represent future generations who will influence social, political, economic, and cultural development within society. Adolescents possessing strong moral character are more likely to contribute positively to community welfare, social harmony, and responsible citizenship. Conversely, moral decline among young people may contribute to increased violence, social instability, corruption, and weakened social cohesion. Therefore, strengthening moral education is essential not only for

individual development but also for broader social sustainability and national progress.

Based on these realities, examining efforts to revitalize moral education in overcoming the moral crisis among adolescents is highly important within contemporary educational and social discourse. Understanding the causes of adolescent moral decline and identifying effective moral educational strategies may help families, schools, communities, and policymakers develop more constructive approaches toward youth development. Therefore, this study seeks to analyze the importance of moral education revitalization and explore its relevance in addressing contemporary moral challenges affecting adolescents in modern society.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research method to examine the revitalization of moral education as an effort to overcome the moral crisis among adolescents. The qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to explore moral values, educational practices, adolescent behavior, and social challenges contextually and interpretatively. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research is appropriate for understanding social and educational phenomena through contextual analysis, interpretation of human behavior, and thematic exploration. Through this approach, the study sought to analyze the causes of moral decline among adolescents and evaluate the role of moral education in strengthening ethical awareness and character development within contemporary society.

The research utilized a literature review and contextual analysis approach. Primary data sources consisted of books, academic journals, educational literature, and scholarly publications discussing moral education, character education, adolescent psychology, youth behavior, ethical development, and social transformation. Literature concerning religious values, family education, school-based character formation, and adolescent moral development was also examined to provide theoretical foundations for the study. In addition, relevant moral teachings from religious and humanitarian perspectives were analyzed to contextualize the discussion concerning ethical values and character formation.

Secondary data sources included reports and publications from educational organizations such as UNESCO, as well as studies related to juvenile delinquency, digital culture, social media influence, bullying, youth violence, and contemporary moral challenges affecting adolescents. Educational policies, community-based moral

development programs, and digital literacy initiatives were also reviewed to identify practical approaches for revitalizing moral education in modern society.

Data collection was conducted through systematic documentation and literature analysis. Relevant references were selected based on their relevance to moral education, adolescent behavior, ethical development, and contemporary social issues. Both classical theories of moral education and contemporary educational studies were incorporated to ensure comprehensive understanding of the topic. Sugiyono (2022) explains that documentation techniques in qualitative research are effective for analyzing conceptual and social issues through textual interpretation and thematic categorization.

The collected data were categorized into several major themes, including adolescent moral crisis, family influence, educational roles, peer influence, digital media impact, character education, religious and ethical values, emotional intelligence, social responsibility, and contemporary moral challenges. These thematic categories enabled systematic analysis of factors contributing to moral decline and strategies for strengthening moral education among adolescents. Descriptive analysis was used to explain the characteristics of moral crises and educational responses, while interpretative analysis was applied to examine relationships between social change, technological development, and adolescent moral behavior.

To strengthen analytical validity, the study also employed an interdisciplinary approach connecting educational theory, psychology, sociology, ethics, and religious studies. Contemporary concepts such as character education, emotional intelligence, digital ethics, youth development, and social responsibility were compared with moral and religious teachings emphasizing honesty, empathy, discipline, and ethical conduct. This comparative analysis aimed to demonstrate the importance of integrating cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions within moral education.

The study additionally analyzed contemporary adolescent behavior influenced by globalization, digital technology, consumerism, peer culture, and media exposure. This contextual analysis was important for understanding how modern social environments shape adolescent attitudes, values, and ethical decision-making. Particular attention was given to the influence of social media, online communication, and digital lifestyles on adolescents' emotional regulation, empathy, interpersonal relationships, and moral awareness.

Furthermore, the research examined the roles of families, schools, religious institutions, and communities in implementing moral education. Family communication patterns, parental supervision, teacher-student relationships, extracurricular activities, religious education, and community participation were analyzed as important factors affecting adolescent character formation. Educational approaches emphasizing habituation, role modeling, dialogue, emotional development, and social participation were also explored as effective strategies for revitalizing moral education.

The study additionally considered the importance of digital literacy and ethical online behavior within contemporary moral education. Since adolescents increasingly interact through digital platforms, the research examined how ethical communication, critical media awareness, and responsible technology use can be integrated into moral educational programs. This analysis was important because modern moral challenges frequently emerge within online environments involving cyberbullying, hate speech, misinformation, and social media addiction.

Overall, the qualitative descriptive method enabled comprehensive exploration of moral education revitalization in addressing adolescent moral crises. Through literature-based and contextual analysis, the study provides deeper understanding regarding how integrated moral education involving families, schools, communities, and ethical values can contribute to developing responsible, empathetic, and morally conscious adolescents within contemporary society.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the moral crisis among adolescents has become a serious social and educational issue influenced by various internal and external factors, including family conditions, peer influence, digital media exposure, social change, globalization, and weakening moral guidance within educational environments. The study reveals that revitalizing moral education is essential for strengthening adolescents' ethical awareness, self-control, emotional intelligence, social responsibility, and character development. Effective moral education contributes positively to reducing juvenile delinquency, improving social behavior, and helping adolescents develop constructive identities within rapidly changing modern societies.

One major finding of the study is that technological advancement and digital culture significantly influence adolescent morality and behavior. Adolescents today spend considerable time interacting through social media platforms, online communities, digital entertainment, and virtual communication networks. While

digital technology provides educational opportunities and broader access to information, excessive and uncontrolled media exposure also contributes to behavioral problems such as cyberbullying, online addiction, hate speech, pornography exposure, emotional instability, and declining empathy. Participants indicated that many adolescents imitate negative online behavior without sufficient moral consideration because digital environments often normalize aggressive communication and superficial social interaction. Turkle (2015) explains that excessive dependence on digital communication may reduce face-to-face interaction and weaken emotional sensitivity and empathy among young people.

The findings further reveal that weakening family interaction and parental supervision significantly contribute to adolescent moral decline. Families traditionally function as primary institutions for moral formation and ethical value transmission. However, economic pressures, urban lifestyles, limited communication, and changing family structures often reduce emotional closeness between parents and adolescents. Participants explained that adolescents lacking emotional support and moral guidance from parents are more vulnerable to negative peer influence, risky behavior, and identity confusion. Moral education within families therefore remains highly important because adolescents develop ethical habits largely through observation and daily interaction with parents. Lickona (1991) emphasizes that family environments represent the foundation of character education because children internalize values such as honesty, discipline, empathy, and responsibility through consistent family experiences.

Another important finding concerns the role of schools in revitalizing moral education and character formation among adolescents. Educational institutions possess strategic responsibilities not only in developing academic competence but also in shaping ethical awareness, social behavior, discipline, and civic responsibility. However, the study found that some schools focus excessively on academic achievement while paying insufficient attention to moral and emotional development. Competitive educational systems emphasizing examination performance may neglect values such as empathy, cooperation, honesty, and social responsibility. Participants stated that students often experience academic pressure without receiving adequate guidance concerning emotional management and ethical decision-making. Consequently, revitalizing moral education within schools requires integrating character development into both curricular and extracurricular activities.

The findings indicate that effective moral education should involve practical habituation and role modeling rather than merely theoretical instruction concerning

ethical norms. Adolescents are more likely to internalize moral values when they observe consistent ethical behavior from parents, teachers, religious leaders, and community figures. Participants emphasized that respectful communication, fairness, honesty, and compassion demonstrated by adults significantly influence adolescent behavior and moral awareness. Berkowitz and Bier (2005) explain that successful character education requires consistent moral environments where ethical values are practiced collectively within daily social interaction.

The study also reveals that peer influence strongly affects adolescent moral behavior and identity formation. During adolescence, individuals seek social acceptance and emotional belonging within peer groups. Positive peer environments may encourage discipline, cooperation, and constructive behavior, while negative peer groups may contribute to delinquency, violence, substance abuse, and risky lifestyles. Participants indicated that adolescents often imitate peer behavior to gain recognition or avoid social exclusion. This finding demonstrates the importance of creating supportive social environments and youth activities encouraging positive interaction, leadership, and social responsibility among adolescents.

Religious and spiritual values emerged as important components of moral education within the findings of this study. Adolescents possessing strong spiritual awareness and religious understanding often demonstrate greater emotional stability, self-control, and ethical sensitivity. Religious teachings encourage honesty, patience, compassion, discipline, and responsibility, helping adolescents develop meaningful moral orientations and avoid destructive behavior. In Islamic educational perspectives, moral education (akhlaq) represents an essential dimension of human development because ethical behavior reflects both spiritual consciousness and social responsibility. Participants explained that religious activities such as prayer, Qur'anic study, and community service contribute positively to adolescents' moral awareness and emotional regulation.

Another significant finding concerns the importance of emotional intelligence within moral education. Adolescents frequently experience emotional instability, stress, identity confusion, and social pressure during developmental transitions. Moral education therefore should not focus solely on rules and punishment but also on emotional awareness, empathy development, self-reflection, and communication skills. Participants explained that adolescents capable of understanding emotions and managing interpersonal conflict tend to demonstrate more responsible behavior and healthier social relationships. Educational approaches emphasizing dialogue,

counseling, emotional support, and reflective discussion contribute positively to adolescent character formation.

The study additionally found that consumerism and materialistic culture negatively affect adolescent moral values and social attitudes. Modern society often prioritizes popularity, appearance, economic success, and social status, influencing adolescents to value external recognition more than ethical principles and personal integrity. Social media culture further intensifies unhealthy comparison, narcissism, and pressure for self-presentation. Participants indicated that some adolescents become more individualistic and less sensitive toward social responsibility and collective welfare due to excessive focus on personal satisfaction and digital popularity. This finding demonstrates that moral education must address broader cultural influences shaping adolescent values and lifestyles.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that community involvement and social participation strengthen adolescents' moral development and social awareness. Community service activities, youth organizations, volunteer programs, and collaborative social projects help adolescents develop empathy, leadership, cooperation, and responsibility toward others. Participants explained that adolescents involved actively in social and humanitarian activities tend to demonstrate stronger moral awareness and more constructive behavior. Such experiences enable young people to understand social realities and develop practical ethical responsibility within everyday life.

The study also emphasizes the importance of integrating digital literacy into contemporary moral education. Since adolescents increasingly interact within online environments, they require ethical guidance concerning responsible communication, critical media consumption, privacy awareness, and respectful online behavior. Participants stated that many adolescents lack sufficient understanding regarding the ethical consequences of online actions such as spreading misinformation, cyberbullying, and digital harassment. Consequently, schools and families must collaborate in developing digital ethics education helping adolescents navigate technology responsibly and critically.

Despite the importance of moral education, the study identifies several challenges affecting its implementation. One significant challenge involves inconsistency between moral instruction and social reality. Adolescents sometimes observe corruption, dishonesty, violence, discrimination, and unethical behavior within broader society, reducing the credibility of moral education messages. Participants explained that moral education becomes less effective when social

institutions fail to demonstrate ethical integrity and justice. Therefore, revitalizing moral education requires broader social commitment to ethical values within political, economic, and cultural systems.

Another challenge concerns limited collaboration among families, schools, and communities in supporting adolescent moral development. Moral education often remains fragmented, with each institution functioning separately without coordinated strategies. Participants emphasized that adolescents require consistent moral environments across family, educational, and social contexts to internalize ethical values effectively. Consequently, collaborative educational approaches involving parents, teachers, religious institutions, youth organizations, and policymakers become increasingly necessary.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that revitalizing moral education is essential for addressing contemporary moral crises among adolescents. Effective moral education requires integration of cognitive understanding, emotional intelligence, spiritual awareness, social responsibility, and ethical habituation within daily life. Families, schools, communities, religious institutions, and digital literacy programs all possess important roles in shaping adolescents' moral character and responsible behavior. Through comprehensive and collaborative educational approaches, moral education can contribute significantly to developing empathetic, disciplined, ethical, and socially constructive younger generations in modern society.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the moral crisis among adolescents has become a serious challenge in contemporary society influenced by rapid technological development, globalization, weakening family interaction, negative peer influence, consumerist culture, and declining ethical awareness. Various forms of juvenile delinquency such as violence, cyberbullying, substance abuse, disrespectful behavior, and social irresponsibility demonstrate the urgent need for strengthening moral education within families, schools, communities, and broader social environments. Therefore, revitalizing moral education is essential for developing adolescents' ethical awareness, emotional intelligence, self-control, social responsibility, and constructive character formation.

The findings reveal that effective moral education should not focus solely on theoretical instruction concerning moral norms but also involve practical habituation, role modeling, emotional development, and spiritual guidance within everyday life. Families remain the primary institutions for moral formation because adolescents internalize values such as honesty, discipline, empathy, and responsibility through

consistent interaction with parents and caregivers. Educational institutions additionally possess important responsibilities in integrating character education with academic learning to balance intellectual achievement and ethical development.

The study also highlights the significant influence of digital media and online communication on adolescent morality and behavior. Consequently, digital literacy and ethical online behavior should become important components of contemporary moral education. Adolescents require guidance regarding responsible communication, critical media awareness, empathy, and social responsibility within digital environments increasingly shaping modern social interaction.

Furthermore, collaboration among parents, teachers, religious institutions, communities, and policymakers is necessary to create consistent moral environments supporting adolescent development. Religious and humanitarian values emphasizing compassion, tolerance, honesty, discipline, and social solidarity contribute positively to strengthening adolescents' moral awareness and emotional stability. Community participation and youth social activities additionally help adolescents develop empathy, leadership, and civic responsibility.

Overall, this study emphasizes that revitalizing moral education is highly important for overcoming the moral crisis among adolescents and preparing future generations capable of contributing positively to society. Through integrated, collaborative, and value-based educational approaches, adolescents can develop into morally conscious, emotionally balanced, socially responsible, and ethically constructive individuals within contemporary society.

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