Research Article

The Role of Religious Education in Overcoming Moral and Social Crises among Adolescents

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Abstract

Religious education has a very important role in shaping moral and social values in adolescents, especially in the face of increasingly complex moral and social crises. The phenomenon of moral crisis among adolescents, such as violent behavior, drug abuse, and declining social values, shows the importance of efforts to restore morality through religious education. The purpose of this study is to analyze the role of religious education in overcoming moral and social crises among adolescents. This study uses a qualitative method with a literature study approach, which collects data from various articles, books, and journals related to religious education and social behavior of adolescents. The data analysis method used is content analysis by identifying relevant patterns and themes in the literature studied. The results of the analysis show that religious education has a positive impact on shaping adolescents' morality, reducing deviant behavior, and strengthening social values such as empathy, tolerance, and responsibility. In addition, religious education also plays a role in preventing violence and delinquent behavior through teaching the values of peace and conflict resolution. These findings underscore the importance of integrating religious education in the educational curriculum to equip adolescents with a solid moral foundation. However, the effectiveness of religious education in overcoming social crises is also influenced by the cultural context and the quality of teaching received by students.

Keywords: Religious Education, Moral Crisis, Youth.

INTRODUCTION

The moral and social crisis among adolescents has become an increasingly deep and complex issue in contemporary society. Adolescents, as a group that is in a transitional phase between children and adults, are often faced with various psychosocial challenges that affect their mindset and behavior. The moral crisis, which is characterized by a decline in ethical values and good social habits, as well as an increase in negative behaviors such as violence, juvenile delinquency, drug abuse, and a decrease in respect for social norms, has become an increasingly worrying phenomenon among adolescents in many countries (Kasingku & Sanger, 2023; Kurniawan et al., 2023). In this context, religious education has a very important role in shaping character and providing a strong moral foundation for adolescents, as well as introducing them to human values that can improve their attitudes and behaviors in the midst of the social crisis (Mahmudiyah & Mulyadi, 2021).

Religious education has a very important role in shaping a person's character and morals. As one of the main components in the education system, religious education aims to instill deep religious values in individuals, which includes not only aspects of understanding religious teachings, but also about how those teachings can be applied in daily life. Good religious education can foster spiritual awareness, morality, as well as tolerance and empathy among others (Ministry of Religion, 2019). Along with the progress of the times and rapid social changes, religious education is required to be more relevant in responding to global challenges faced by society. One such challenge is the growing moral crisis, which is often triggered by cultural changes and values that are developing in modern society.

A moral crisis is a phenomenon that develops along with the decline of ethical values and social norms that were previously upheld in society. In many cases, this moral crisis can be seen from the increase in deviant behavior, such as violence, criminality, and lack of mutual respect between individuals and groups (Mewar, 2021). Religious education has a strategic role to form individuals with noble character and have a good understanding of moral obligations, both towards God and fellow humans. However, in many cases, existing religious education systems tend to be incapable of touching the moral needs of individuals in depth, especially in the face of the increasingly complex moral challenges of modern life.

Global inequality is one of the factors that contribute to worsening the social and

moral conditions of society. This inequality is not only in the form of stark economic differences between developed and developing countries, but also in access to education, health, and opportunities to develop (UNDP, 2021). This social inequality is also seen in the difference in the quality of religious education received by individuals in various parts of the world. In developed countries, religious education is often implemented with a more contextual approach and integrated with moral education as a whole, while in developing countries, especially those with limited resources, religious education is often neglected or does not receive adequate attention in forming a complete social character.

Quality religious education can be a solution to address these inequalities by providing equal opportunities for all individuals to develop their morals and spirituality. For this reason, religious education must be designed in an inclusive manner and based on universal human values that can be accepted by various levels of society, regardless of their social or cultural background. In addition, it is important for religious education to prioritize interfaith dialogue and build tolerance in the face of increasingly complex social differences. With a more holistic and contextual approach, religious education can play an important role in creating a more just and harmonious world, both at the local and global levels (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020).

Religious education not only teaches about spiritual beliefs, but also provides a moral foundation that can be a useful life guide for teenagers in living the challenges of daily life. According to Suryani (2018), religious education has great potential to teach universal ethical values, such as honesty, responsibility, empathy, and respect for others, which are indispensable in overcoming the existing moral crisis. By providing a deeper understanding of religious teachings and their relationship with social life, it is hoped that adolescents can have a solid moral foundation to make the right and wise decisions in their lives.

However, although religious education has a strategic role in shaping character, the major challenge faced is how to design and implement effective religious education in the midst of rapid social change. Globalization, technological development, and cultural plurality have had a profound impact on the way young people think and behave, often at odds with the religious values taught in formal education. Several studies show that many adolescents are exposed to various information that is not in accordance with social and religious norms, causing them to experience moral and

identity confusion (Safira et al., 2023; Subhan, 2022). Therefore, it is important to dig deeper into how religious education can be adapted to the needs of adolescents in this modern era, so that it can have a positive impact in overcoming moral and social crises.

The purpose of this study is to explore the role of religious education in overcoming moral and social crises among adolescents, as well as to identify effective strategies in integrating religious values into adolescents' lives. This study aims to provide a clearer picture of how religious education can help adolescents develop a stronger moral understanding, as well as to understand the challenges faced in the implementation of religious education in the midst of social change. Thus, it is hoped that the results of this study can make a positive contribution to the development of a more effective religious education system, which can help adolescents face moral and social challenges in a better and wiser way.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design with a literature review approach. The purpose of this study is to explore the role of religious education in addressing the moral and social crises among adolescents by synthesizing and analyzing existing theoretical frameworks, research findings, and scholarly articles related to the topic. A literature review is an appropriate method because it allows for a comprehensive understanding of the current state of knowledge on how religious education can influence moral development and social behavior in young people. This approach also helps identify gaps in the literature, areas of consensus, and conflicting viewpoints on the issue. According to Creswell (2018), a literature review is essential in qualitative research as it helps build a theoretical foundation and context for the study (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

The sources of data for this research include peer-reviewed journals, books, articles, and government reports that discuss the relationship between religious education and adolescent moral and social development. These sources were selected based on their relevance, credibility, and the publication date to ensure that the study reflects the most current and authoritative perspectives on the subject. Articles were sourced from academic databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and Scopus, focusing on studies that explore the impact of religious education on moral development, social behavior, and the mitigation of social problems such as juvenile delinquency and

substance abuse among adolescents (Moelong, 2018).

Data collection was carried out through systematic search and retrieval of relevant literature. The search terms included "religious education," "moral development," "social crises among adolescents," "juvenile delinquency," and "role of education in moral formation." Studies that were published in reputable journals between 2010 and 2023 were prioritized. The collected literature was then reviewed and categorized based on common themes, theories, and findings. This process allowed for an in-depth analysis of how religious education has been applied to address various social and moral issues among adolescents (Bowen, 2009).

For data analysis, thematic analysis was used to identify patterns, themes, and trends across the literature. This method allows for a structured approach to organizing and interpreting qualitative data, particularly in literature-based research (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The analysis focused on categorizing the ways in which religious education is theorized to influence adolescents' moral values, attitudes, and behaviors, as well as the strategies that have been proposed or implemented to address social crises such as substance abuse, violence, and societal disintegration. By identifying key themes and synthesizing findings from multiple studies, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of religious education in mitigating the moral and social crises faced by adolescents.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Religious Education in Moral Development

Islamic religious education has a very important role in shaping the morality and character of adolescents, especially in facing various social challenges and changing times. Islam not only teaches aspects of ritual worship, but also instills ethical values, morals, and social responsibility that guide daily life. By understanding and internalizing the teachings of Islam, adolescents can have a strong moral foundation, which guides them in making decisions and living their lives with full awareness of the values of goodness.

One of the fundamental aspects of Islamic religious education is the formation of character and integrity. Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of honesty, responsibility, and trust, all of which are the main pillars of a Muslim's life. In the

Qur'an, Allah commands Muslims to always be with the righteous, as mentioned in the Qur'an. At-Taubah verse 119. The Prophet's hadith also reminds that one of the signs of hypocrisy is when a person tells a lie, breaks a promise, and betrays the trust given to him. These principles are very important in shaping the personality of teenagers who have a strong and trustworthy character. In real life, these values are reflected in various examples in the social environment, such as a student who honestly returns the extra money he received while shopping, or a student at a pesantren who is taught to always be honest in all situations, including when facing school exams.

In addition, Islamic education also instills an awareness of social responsibility. Islam teaches that a Muslim must be a human being who is beneficial to others. This is emphasized in the hadith of the Prophet which states that the best human being is the most beneficial to others. The concepts of zakat, infaq, and alms in Islam aim to foster empathy and social concern. In various Islamic schools, for example, students are taught to participate in social activities such as social services and orphan compensation. This kind of activity aims to teach them that helping others is not only a social obligation, but also part of worship to Allah. In the pesantren environment, students often help each other in terms of academics and daily needs, showing that concern for others is part of Islamic morals that must be applied in daily life.

Islamic religious education also plays a role in keeping adolescents from deviant behavior. The biggest challenge faced by adolescents today is the increasing negative influence of promiscuity, drugs, and various other forms of juvenile delinquency. Islam strictly prohibits all forms of acts that damage oneself and the environment, as mentioned in QS. Al-Isra' verse 32 which prohibits Muslims from approaching adultery because it is a heinous and bad act. The Prophet's hadith also reminds that every sin can be forgiven except for those who openly do it without remorse. This doctrine helps youth to understand the consequences of every action they do. Examples can be found in various Islamic schools, where students are given an understanding of the dangers of promiscuity through a religious-based approach and health science. Many teenagers who are active in mosque activities also tend to avoid deviant behavior because they are busy with positive activities, such as Islamic studies, sunnah sports, and religious-based social activities.

In addition to shaping character and preventing deviant behavior, Islamic religious education also provides mental and spiritual resilience for adolescents in facing

various life challenges. Islam teaches the concepts of patience, gratitude, and tawakal, which provide serenity in facing the trials of life. In QS. Al-Insyirah verse 6, Allah emphasizes that with difficulties there must be ease. This teaching provides hope and determination for teenagers in living life. For example, a student who fails in an exam will be more likely to get up and try harder because he understands that the result is a decree of God that must be accompanied by effort and prayer. The same goes for a teenager who has lost a parent, but remains firm because he is taught that God will always provide a better substitute for those who are patient. In Islamic schools, many students are trained to control emotions and stress through prayer, dhikr, and other religious activities, which helps them become calmer in the face of life's pressures.

Overall, Islamic religious education plays a very important role in shaping the morality and character of adolescents. By understanding and applying Islamic teachings in daily life, adolescents can become more responsible individuals, have high social awareness, and be able to face life's challenges more calmly and wisely. However, in order for Islamic education to be more effective, more innovative and relevant learning methods are needed. The use of digital technology, an experience-based approach, and the integration of Islamic values in the formal and non-formal education system can be solutions to ensure that Islamic teachings remain relevant and can be applied in real life by the younger generation.

Recent research shows that Islamic religious education has a great contribution in shaping the religious and social character of adolescents. Muryono (2024) said that the implementation of Islamic values in the education system can strengthen religious character and shape better behavior among students (Muryono, 2024). Meanwhile, Fadhila (2024) in her study emphasized that comprehensive Islamic education is indispensable to face the challenge of moral degradation in the digital era (Fadhila, 2024). Thus, Islamic education must continue to be developed and strengthened in order to be able to become an effective solution in building a generation with noble and responsible character in the future.

Effective Strategies in Integrating Religious Values into Adolescent Life

The integration of Islamic values in the lives of adolescents requires strategies that are effective and relevant to the times. Islamic religious education is not just a theory taught in schools or mosques, but must be part of the daily life of teenagers. To

achieve this, an innovative approach is needed that can make Islamic values easier to understand, accept, and apply by the younger generation.

One of the effective approaches is the contextual and applicative approach, where Islamic religious education is not only delivered in the form of theory, but also in the form of discussion and solving real problems that are often faced by teenagers. According to Hanapi's research (2024), da'wah among students who emphasize the formation of Islamic character has proven to be effective in building resilience in facing academic and social pressures (Hanapi, 2024). This shows that Islamic education that is contextualized with the reality of adolescent life can help them understand the relevance of Islamic teachings in daily life. For example, in some Islamic schools, teachers use a case-based discussion approach where students are invited to analyze social issues such as promiscuity, bullying, and the use of social media from an Islamic perspective. Thus, students not only understand the teachings of Islam theoretically, but also learn how to apply those values in real life.

In addition to the contextual approach, the use of digital technology is also a very effective strategy in integrating Islamic values into the lives of adolescents. In this digital era, teenagers spend more time in cyberspace than reading books or attending conventional studies. Therefore, da'wah and Islamic education must be present on the platforms that they often use. According to Diah's research (2025), the use of digital-based Islamic guidance and counseling has proven to be effective in helping adolescents deal with mental disorders and social pressure in the Islamic boarding school environment (Diah, 2025). As a real example, many young dai and ustadz are now actively preaching through social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok with interesting and easy-to-understand content for teenagers. In addition, many Islamic applications provide prayer reminders, interactive Qur'anic interpretations, and religious consultations that can be accessed at any time by teenagers.

Another strategy that is no less important is the example of parents, teachers, and religious leaders. Teenagers are individuals who are searching for their identity and tend to imitate the behavior of those around them. If the family and school environment shows Islamic values in real terms, then it will be easier for them to internalize these teachings in their lives. The Prophet PBUH himself is the main example in shaping the morals of Muslims, as Allah said in the Qur'an:

"Indeed, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah be pleased with him) is a good example for you." (QS. Al-Ahzab (21)

In real life, exemplary can be seen from the role of parents who always instill Islamic values in the family, such as getting used to congregational prayers at home, reading the stories of the Prophet before going to bed, or accompanying children in watching educational Islamic content. In Islamic schools, teachers who practice Islamic morals in their daily lives are good examples for students. In fact, in some Islamic boarding schools, the ustadz not only teach religious knowledge, but also provide direct examples in daily life practices, such as how to be honest, disciplined, and respect others.

In addition, experiential learning is also an effective strategy in internalizing Islamic values into the lives of adolescents. According to Amjad et al. (2024), an experiential educational approach is more effective in increasing moral and social understanding than conventional methods (Amjad et al., 2024). One clear example of this strategy is religious-based social programs, such as social service activities, visits to orphanages, or environmental care actions packaged in an Islamic perspective. In some Islamic schools, there are programs that require students to practice "social fasting", which is to reduce the use of social media and replace it with more productive activities, such as reading the Qur'an or participating in social religious activities.

In the field, several modern Islamic boarding schools have adopted this approach by providing challenges to students to carry out real charity activities in the community. For example, in one of the Islamic boarding schools in West Java, students are given the task of teaching the Qur'an to children in remote villages, so that they not only learn Islamic theory, but also experience the direct benefits of practicing religious values in real life. This is in line with the Islamic concept of charity, where each individual is not only required to worship ritually, but also contribute to society.

Overall, the strategy to integrate Islamic values in the lives of adolescents must be dynamic and keep up with the times. Contextual approaches that are relevant to adolescent life, the use of digital technology, examples from the environment, and experiential learning are the main keys in ensuring that Islamic religious education is not only a theory that is memorized, but also values that are practiced in daily life. If

this strategy is applied consistently, it is hoped that Muslim teenagers can grow into individuals with noble character, have strong mental resilience, and be able to live a life based on solid Islamic values.

Challenges in the Implementation of Religious Education in the Midst of Social Change

The application of Islamic religious education in the midst of social change faces various challenges that are quite complex. In this modern era, the influence of globalization, technological advancements, and changes in people's lifestyles often contradict the Islamic values taught in religious education. These challenges do not only come from external factors, but also from internal, such as less innovative teaching methods and the reduced role of the family in shaping the character of adolescents.

One of the biggest challenges is the influence of secularism and globalization, where religious values are beginning to be displaced by secular cultures that prioritize individual freedom without clear moral boundaries. In research conducted by Khalaf (2025), it is stated that Islamic teaching methods often experience obstacles in the modern education system that prioritize academic aspects over moral and spiritual education (Khalaf, 2025). As a result, many Muslim teenagers are more influenced by Western cultures that offer a free lifestyle, unlimited entertainment, and a materialistic mindset. On social media, for example, trends such as hedonism, promiscuity, and consumptive culture attract more attention to adolescents than the values of simplicity and piety in Islam.

On the ground, this phenomenon is seen in the lifestyle changes of teenagers in various major cities, where they are more familiar with pop culture that offers unlimited freedom, while Islamic values are considered outdated. One concrete example is the decreasing number of teenagers who are active in religious activities in mosques, because they are more interested in modern entertainment activities. In fact, in Islam, mosques are not only places of worship, but also centers for character and social development. The Prophet PBUH himself built the mosque as a center for education and discussion that strengthens Islamic values in people's lives.

In addition to the influence of secularism, less relevant teaching methods are also an obstacle in the implementation of Islamic religious education. Many Islamic schools still use conventional methods that are less appealing to teenagers, such as one-way

lectures without interaction or real-life application. According to Vahedi's research (2025), an Islamic education system that does not experience innovation will be increasingly abandoned by the younger generation who are more accustomed to dynamic and technology-based learning methods (Mollaebrahimlou et al., 2025).

In formal schools, for example, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects often only focus on memorizing verses of the Qur'an and hadith without being associated with the reality of adolescent life. As a result, many students feel that religious lessons are irrelevant to their daily lives. On the other hand, in some traditional Islamic boarding schools, teaching methods are still very textual and lack of discussion of modern problems faced by adolescents, such as the use of social media, emotional management, and ethics in digital socializing.

A clear example of this problem can be seen in many public schools, where students tend to be more interested in science and technology-based subjects than religious subjects. As a solution, some modern Islamic schools have begun to adopt technology-based learning methods, such as Islamic e-learning applications that offer interactive studies, educational videos, and online discussions about adolescent problems from an Islamic perspective.

Another challenge that is also quite significant is the reduction of the role of the family in educating children in an Islamic way. The family should be the first school for children to introduce religious values. However, in many cases, parents are too busy with work to leave their children's religious education entirely to schools or teachers. According to research by KhoddamiAbbasiyeh et al. (2025), the role of the family in building religious education for adolescents is decreasing, especially in urban environments (KhoddamiAbbasiyeh et al., 2025).

This phenomenon is seen in everyday life, where many children are closer to gadgets compared to their parents. In many families, interaction between parents and children is minimal due to busy work, so religious education at home is just a formality. For example, there are many cases where Muslim children can read the Qur'an but do not understand its meaning because religious education is only limited to memorization without parental assistance. In fact, in Islam, parents have a great responsibility in educating their children. The Prophet PBUH said:

"Every child is born in a state of fitrah (Islam), so both parents make him Jewish,

Christian, or Magi." (HR. Bukhari and Muslim)

In some Islamic communities that still maintain the tradition of family education, this challenge can be overcome by the existence of Islamic family development programs, where parents are invited to be more active in educating their children at home. An example is the "Islamic Parenting" program implemented in several Muslim communities, where parents are given training on how to educate their children based on Islamic teachings, including how to face the challenges of the digital age.

Overall, the challenges in the implementation of Islamic religious education in the midst of social change are very complex and require systematic solutions. The influence of secularism and globalization can be overcome by strengthening Islamic values in daily life, both through mosques, schools, and communities. Teaching methods must be updated to be more relevant to the times, so that adolescents can understand Islam in the context of their current lives. In addition, families must again take an active role in educating their children in an Islamic way, so that they not only know religion as a theory, but also as a real guideline for life. If these challenges can be overcome, then Islamic religious education will remain the main pillar in shaping the character of teenagers who are strong and have noble character in the modern era.

CONCLUSION

Religious education plays a vital role in addressing the moral and social crises among adolescents by shaping their values, guiding their behavior, and promoting positive social interactions. It helps adolescents navigate the challenges of peer pressure, social norms, and delinquency, ultimately contributing to the creation of a more moral and socially responsible generation. However, its effectiveness depends on the cultural context, the quality of teaching, and the integration of religious education into broader educational frameworks. Future research is needed to explore the broader applicability and effectiveness of religious education in different societal contexts and to identify strategies for enhancing its impact on adolescents' moral and social development.

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