



Implementation of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's Moral Education Theory in Fostering Polite Behavior

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Penelitian ini difokuskan pada pengkajian penerapan teori pendidikan akhlak yang dikemukakan oleh Abdullah Nashih Ulwan dalam upaya membina perilaku sopan peserta didik di SMP Negeri 2 Cikajang, sekaligus menelaah faktor-faktor yang mendukung, menghambat, serta dampak dari penerapannya. Penelitian ini menerapkan pendekatan kualitatif dengan rancangan studi kasus. Proses pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui pengamatan langsung, wawancara mendalam, serta telaah dokumen pendukung. Teknik analisis data dilaksanakan melalui tahapan pengorganisasian dan penyederhanaan data, penyajian temuan penelitian, serta perumusan simpulan. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa teori pendidikan akhlak Abdullah Nashih Ulwan diimplementasikan melalui berbagai strategi, antara lain pemberian teladan, pembiasaan perilaku positif, penyampaian nasihat, pemberian perhatian dan pengawasan, serta penerapan sanksi yang bersifat edukatif. Keberhasilan pembinaan tersebut didukung oleh konsistensi keteladanan guru dan kuatnya budaya religius yang berkembang di lingkungan sekolah, sementara hambatan utama berasal dari pengaruh lingkungan di luar sekolah. Penerapan teori Ulwan terbukti memberikan kontribusi positif terhadap pembinaan akhlak siswa, yang tercermin dalam meningkatnya kesantunan berbahasa, sikap hormat terhadap guru dan teman sebaya, serta tumbuhnya kesadaran spiritual. Oleh karena itu, teori pendidikan akhlak Abdullah Nashih Ulwan dapat dinilai relevan dan efektif dalam membentuk perilaku sopan siswa pada jenjang pendidikan menengah pertama.

Abstract

This research seeks to examine the application of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's moral education theory in cultivating polite behavior among students at SMP Negeri 2 Cikajang, and to explore the supporting and inhibiting factors, as well as the outcomes of its implementation. The study employs a qualitative case study design. Data were gathered through classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The data analysis process involved data condensation, data display, and the formulation of conclusions. The findings indicate that Ulwan's moral education theory has been applied through several strategies, including exemplary behavior, habituation, moral advice, attention and supervision, and educational discipline. Factors supporting the successful implementation include teachers' exemplary conduct and the development of a religious school culture, while external environmental influences constitute the main obstacle. Overall, the application of Ulwan's theory contributed positively to students' moral development, as reflected in improvements in polite speech, respectful attitudes toward teachers and peers, and enhanced spiritual awareness. Therefore, it can be concluded that

Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's moral education theory remains relevant and effective in shaping polite behavior among junior high school students.

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INTRODUCTION

The decline in students' manners remains a serious concern and shows an increasingly worrying trend (Hudi et al., 2024; Kurniawan et al., 2019). The reality on the ground shows that some students still exhibit rude behavior toward teachers, peers, and parents. The use of inappropriate language is often considered normal, discipline is declining, and politeness in social interactions is neglected. In fact, many students dare to be rude to their parents. This behavior not only occurs outside the classroom, but also during the learning process. In fact, Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System positions education as a means of developing the full potential of students, including strengthening faith, forming noble character, developing physical and spiritual health, creative thinking skills, independence, and readiness to become responsible citizens in society and the state (Compilation of Indonesian Laws on the National Education System, 2012). Based on these conditions, it can be understood that the problems that occur reflect a crisis of morals and character in students that requires serious and continuous handling.

In this study, the construct of polite behavior is operationalized as observable manners reflected in students' daily interactions at school. For the purposes of this research, polite behavior is indicated by students' ability to: (1) greet teachers and school staff when meeting them; (2) speak using appropriate and respectful language; (3) ask permission before speaking or leaving the classroom; (4) listen and respond politely to teachers' instructions; (5) avoid verbal aggression such as mocking, insulting, or shouting at peers; and (6) show courtesy toward the community around the school environment. These indicators are used as the main reference in examining the outcomes of moral education practices in this study.

The decline in student manners in junior high schools can be evidenced by field findings, such as at SMP Negeri 2 Cikajang, where the moral crisis has become a concern for teachers, parents, and even the general public around the school. Based on initial observations, students' rude behavior often manifests as rule violations, a lack of respect for teachers, and individualistic attitudes that disregard moral values. The author's initial interviews with Islamic education teachers at the school and several members of the community around the school also revealed students' rude behavior, such as not greeting teachers when they meet them, not showing courtesy to the community around the school, speaking without permission, speaking rudely to friends, and ignoring teachers' advice. This condition indicates that moral guidance has not been optimally implemented, both through teaching and learning activities and through habitual activities at school. This impolite behavior can also be caused by a lack of parental attention and the negative influence of social media (Rohman, 2024). Of course, this further shows that today's educational process,

especially in PAI learning, has not been fully successful in instilling the value of politeness in every student, and this is a serious problem for PAI teachers today.

Research on fostering polite behavior in students has been conducted by Ilham Hudi et al., whose results indicate a crisis of morals and ethics, especially among adolescents. One action that needs to be taken is implementing character education. The character education referred to is general character education and Islamic character education (Hudi et al., 2024; Abnisa & Ihsan, 2023). Further research conducted by Mohd. Sya'roni states that the strategies used by Islamic education teachers in fostering students' morals include habituation, exemplary behavior, and advice (Sya'roni, 2022; Suseno, 2021). Further research conducted by Abdul Ahad states that Nashih Ulwan's child education method is effective when used at the right time, namely education through role modeling, education through customs and habits, education through advice, education through love and advice (Dzulqarnain Izzuddin Abdul Ahad & Perawironegoro, 2024; Lillah et al., 2023). However, these studies have not specifically examined the implementation of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's moral education theory in junior high school students.

This study is based on the theory of moral education developed by Abdullah Nashih Ulwan. According to Ulwan, moral education must include physical, intellectual, and spiritual development, with the aim of shaping individuals who are faithful, responsible, and behave appropriately in social life. This theory can be implemented in schools through role modeling, habituation, advice, and educational punishment (Imron, 2016).

Based on the above explanation, it can be seen that there is a common focus in the research: the study of student manners and the concept of moral education, as outlined by Abdullah Nashih Ulwan. However, previous studies have not specifically addressed the application of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's moral education theory to foster polite behavior among junior high school students. Most existing studies remain limited to conceptual and theoretical discussions, without accompanying practical implementation in the school environment, whereas their application is more commonly found among elementary school students. In fact, Ulwan's moral education theory offers a comprehensive approach that encompasses the spiritual, moral, social, and emotional dimensions of the educational process. Therefore, the novelty of this study lies in its contextual contribution, namely examining how Ulwan's moral education theory is implemented systematically in a junior high school setting and how it relates to changes in students' polite behavior based on clearly defined indicators.

Based on the study's background, the issues examined focus on several main aspects. First, how Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's moral education theory is applied in fostering polite behavior among students at SMP Negeri 2 Cikajang. Second, what factors play a supporting or inhibiting role in the implementation of this moral education theory in the school environment? Third, what are the results of fostering polite behavior among students after Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's moral education theory is systematically applied.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design, conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Cikajang, Garut Regency, West Java, over a period of two months, from September to October 2025. Although the duration of the research was relatively short, data collection was carried out intensively and repeatedly, ensuring that the information obtained reached the point of saturation, as indicated by the absence of new or significant findings after the final interviews. The research subjects consisted of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, homeroom teachers, and students directly involved in the school's moral development program. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on specific criteria, namely active involvement in moral education activities, experience in observing student behavior, and willingness to provide information openly. The total number of informants included three PAI teachers representing each grade level, three homeroom teachers from each grade, and thirty students from grades VII, VIII, and IX, with ten students from each grade. This composition ensured that the data reflected diverse experiences and perspectives from various relevant parties.

In its implementation, the study adhered to ethical research principles. Each informant was provided with a clear explanation of the research objectives, procedures, and their rights, including the option to decline or withdraw participation at any time, through the mechanism of informed consent. The confidentiality of informants was safeguarded by applying the principle of anonymity, whereby real names were not disclosed in the report and were replaced with codes. Furthermore, the research was conducted after obtaining official permission from the school authorities and with the support of the principal of SMP Negeri 2 Cikajang, ensuring that the process complied with institutional procedures.

Data collection techniques included participatory observation of moral education activities at the school, in-depth interviews with teachers, homeroom teachers, and students, as well as documentation analysis of school regulations, disciplinary records, and moral development programs. The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction was carried out by organizing and focusing information according to the research objectives, data display was presented in systematic descriptive narratives, and conclusions were drawn by verifying findings through triangulation of sources and methods. The validity of the data was ensured through triangulation, member checking, and persistent observation conducted repeatedly, so that the research results were scientifically valid and accountable.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Biography of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan

Abdullah Nashih Ulwan is a Muslim scholar, jurist, preacher, and educator with a keen interest in Islamic education. He was born in the village of Qadhi Askar, in the Halab (Aleppo) region of Syria, in 1347 AH (1928 AD). Ulwan came from a religious family known for its piety and devotion, and his lineage

can be traced back to Al-Husain bin Ali bin Abi Thalib. He completed his primary education in his hometown before continuing his studies at Madrasah Khusruwiyah in 1943 AD to deepen his knowledge of Sharia. He completed his secondary education in 1949 AD. He then continued his higher education at Al-Azhar Asy-Syarif University, earning a bachelor's degree from the Faculty of Ushuluddin in 1952 AD, followed by a master's degree in 1954 AD. After completing his education, Ulwan returned to Halab and devoted himself to teaching Islamic education. His journey in preaching and education then took him to Jordan, before finally settling in Saudi Arabia. In that country, he worked as a lecturer at King Abdul Aziz University and continued his doctoral studies, ultimately earning a doctorate in fiqh and da'wah. Abdullah Nashih Ulwan settled in Saudi Arabia and died on Saturday, 5 Muharram 1398 AH (August 29, 1987 AD) in Jeddah. His body was then taken to Mecca and buried in the holy city (Ulwan et al., 2012; Handayani & Irawan, 2022).

2. Moral Education According to Abdullah Nashih Ulwan

Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's theory of moral education is a process of nurturing and guiding all human potential, whether physical, intellectual, or spiritual, to become Muslims who are faithful, pious, and noble in character, in accordance with Islamic teachings. According to Ulwan, moral education should not be purely theoretical but must be realized through habit formation, role modeling, and a supportive environment, so that students' moral values truly come to life (Ulwan et al., 2012).

3. The Purpose of Moral Education According to Abdullah Nashih Ulwan

According to Ulwan in his book *Tarbiyatul Aulad fil Islam*, the main objective of moral education is to shape children who are always strong in faith, obedient in worship, and always under Allah's supervision (*muraqabatullah*). A child is expected to have a good Islamic personality, be able to interact with anyone, communicate effectively, and get along well with others. This, of course, is to produce individuals with Islamic character values and noble morals in their daily lives (Faqih, 2020).

Moral education for children is not only to instill morals and ethics, but also to build positive habits with piety inherent in the child, so that they are able to protect themselves from various bad traits and stay away from sinful deeds. Thus, children are educated to always remember Allah and be able to behave in accordance with Islamic teachings (Nurhakim & Wasehudin, 2024).

4. Principles of Moral Education According to Abdullah Nashih Ulwan

Abdullah Nashih Ulwan argues that education based on Islamic principles must begin with instilling moral values and character rooted in faith and piety toward Allah SWT, which must be cultivated and made a habit from childhood to adulthood. Some of the principles include: moral education must begin at an early age to establish a solid foundation of faith; educational approaches must have a method; education is not just about imparting knowledge; children's defenses are built from a strong memory of Allah SWT; and the habit of doing good must be accepted as a habit and become a pleasure in a child's life (Faqih, 2020).

In summary, the main principles of moral education according to Abdullah Nashih Ulwan focus on faith in Allah as the foundation for children, character building from an early age, and the use of effective methods, such as role modeling and habituation, to shape consistent, sustainable, noble moral behavior in everyday life.

5. Methods of Moral Education According to Abdullah Nashih Ulwan

The five main methods outlined by Abdullah Nashih Ulwan in the moral education of a child are as follows:

- a. The Exemplary Method, the most effective, is when parents or educators serve as direct examples for each child. Children naturally imitate those around them.
- b. Habituation Method, which is through consistent repetition of good behavior so that it becomes a habit for the child. This habituation is very important for building faith, noble character, and virtue in the child.
- c. The Advice Method involves carefully guiding and teaching children so they understand Islamic principles and the importance of good character in life. Of course, this method must also take the child's age into account. As children get older, they become less receptive to constant advice.
- d. Through attention and supervision, children are given consistent guidance and control so they remain on the right path in their daily behavior.
- e. Punishment methods should be used proportionately to discipline the child and deter behavior that violates the rules and moral values taught. The effectiveness of these methods must be carefully considered, and their application must be thoroughly understood in relation to the child's age (Ulwan et al., 2012; Fatmela, 2021).

These five methods complement each other and must be applied simultaneously to shape children's characters into faithful, pious, and noble individuals, in accordance with Islamic teachings and the principles of moral education outlined by Abdullah Nashih Ulwan, as discussed earlier.

6. Implementation of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's Theory of Moral Education

SMP Negeri 2 Cikajang is a public junior high school located in Cibodas Village, Cikajang District, Garut Regency. This school has become an Adiwiyata school and one of the driving schools in Rayon 6, Garut Regency. The school's vision is "Realizing students who are faithful, noble, knowledgeable, and accomplished." In realizing this vision, the school continues to instill religious values in its students through intracurricular and extracurricular activities. Religious activities such as congregational prayers, morning Quran recitation, and group prayers before and after classes are part of the daily routine for students in grades VII, VIII, and IX. Additionally, teachers are actively involved in providing guidance and instilling good manners in students' daily lives.

Based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers with Islamic Education Teachers and several students, it is known that the implementation of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's moral education theory at SMP Negeri 2 Cikajang has been carried out through several forms of guidance activities as follows:

a. The Method of Exemplary Behavior (Uswah Hasanah)

Teachers serve as primary role models for students in attitude and conduct. Both Islamic Education teachers and other educators consistently demonstrate respectful behavior, such as greeting others, speaking courteously to colleagues and students, dressing tidily, and showing mutual respect among teachers and students. Interviews with several students indicate that they find it easier to emulate their teachers' actions and incorporate them into their daily school life.

b. Habituation Method

SMP Negeri 2 Cikajang has instilled positive habits through routine activities, such as greeting teachers when they meet them. This usually starts when new students arrive at school, and teachers welcome them at the school gate through a morning dew activity. After that, students are directed to the school field to start with habits such as morning recitation, reading shalawat, and morning lectures or cultum activities. Additionally, when entering the classroom, the children pray before studying and are instructed to maintain classroom cleanliness. When it is time for prayer, the children pray first in turns, whether they are studying in class or participating in extracurricular activities. Through these habits, the students have proven to be polite, disciplined, and accustomed to maintaining neatness and cleanliness in the classroom and school environment.

c. Method of Advice

Islamic Education teachers and other teachers routinely provide advice containing ethical values, both during the learning process and in interactions outside the classroom, especially when students exhibit inappropriate behavior. This method is also often used during ceremonies, when the ceremony leader gives a speech, or during religious activities. The advice is not given in a patronizing manner but rather with a gentle, persuasive approach, so that students feel valued and more open to improving themselves.

d. Attention and Supervision Methods

Teachers and homeroom teachers monitor students' moral development, both inside and outside of school. They pay particular attention to students' polite behavior when interacting with teachers, classmates, and the school community. When students begin to display rude behavior, teachers provide personal guidance and direction without reprimanding them in public.

e. Punishment that Educates

SMP Negeri 2 Cikajang implements an educational sanction system. In addition to using a point system for students who violate school rules, the school also imposes other punishments, such as memorizing short letters or searching for hadiths on manners, for students who arrive late or speak rudely. Another example is when checking male students' hair. Instead of physical punishment, the

school has the teacher cut and tidy the students' hair. This also encourages students to improve themselves with greater awareness.

7. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

The results of the researcher's observations and interviews during the study revealed supporting and inhibiting factors in the application of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's theory, including:

a. Supporting Factors

- 1) Full support from the principal, teachers, and parents for the character-building program is going well.
- 2) Establishing strong collaboration between teachers and parents is essential for providing students with guidance.
- 3) A conducive and religious school environment.
- 4) The existence of strict and educational rules and regulations.
- 5) Facilities that support both the availability of school mosques to strengthen the religious atmosphere and support the moral guidance of students, as well as counseling rooms for student guidance.
- 6) Consistent supervision by homeroom teachers, subject teachers, and school security guards of student behavior to ensure the continued instilling of moral values.

b. Inhibiting Factors

Although implementation has been going quite well, there are several obstacles encountered in applying the theory, including:

- 1) The environment outside school exposes students to inappropriate culture and behavior through social media, digital entertainment, and social interactions that do not align with Islamic moral values.
- 2) Lack of attention at home challenges this theory since not all parents support moral education at school. Parents often lack supervision because many work.
- 3) Limited learning time is an obstacle because it often conflicts with busy class schedules, reducing opportunities for moral guidance.
- 4) Diverse student backgrounds and characters make it difficult to apply politeness values equally to all.
- 5) Some students lack discipline, remaining disobedient to rules, arriving late, speaking rudely, and disrespecting teachers.
- 6) The lack of involvement of some non-Islamic Education teachers, meaning that some teachers consider moral guidance to be the responsibility of Islamic Education teachers. In addition, some general subject teachers have not fully integrated moral values into the learning process, resulting in guidance that is not comprehensive.

- 7) The lack of reinforcement from government programs is also an obstacle because character-building programs have not been fully integrated with the Islamic values taught by Abdullah Nashih Ulwan.
- 8) Periodic evaluations of the moral character program have not been carried out optimally, making it difficult to measure success quantitatively.
- 9) The influence of modern lifestyles and individualism affects students through modern culture, which emphasizes freedom and pleasure, causing students to sometimes neglect the values of politeness and good manners.

8. Results of Student Manners Training After Applying Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's Moral Education Theory

Based on findings from observations and interviews with teachers, homeroom teachers, and students, it was found that students showed improvement in several aspects of manners, including:

- a. Polite in speech, students are more careful in speaking to both teachers and peers. Students begin to use polite language such as “excuse me,” “thank you,” and “sorry.”
- b. Politeness in behavior and attitude is demonstrated through changes in behavior in terms of respecting teachers by greeting them and kissing their hands.
- c. Student discipline in arriving at school is evident in the low number of students who are late.
- d. Respect and care for others.
- e. Spiritual awareness, whereby students are more careful in their actions because they feel they are being watched by Allah SWT.
- f. A decrease in violations of school rules.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, the implementation of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's moral education theory at SMP Negeri 2 Cikajang shows that the development of students' polite behavior is carried out through five main approaches, namely exemplary behavior, habituation, giving advice, attention and supervision, and the application of educational sanctions. These five approaches do not stand alone but complement each other in forming integrated moral education practices through learning activities, the school's religious culture, and daily social interactions between teachers and students. The research findings show changes in students' polite behavior, reflected in increased politeness in language, respectful attitudes towards teachers and peers, and the development of spiritual awareness in school life.

Conceptually, the results of this study show that Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's theory of moral education has practical relevance in the context of formal junior high school education, especially when supported by consistent teacher role models and a religious school environment. However, these findings are not intended to be generalized broadly, but rather understood as an empirical description that is contextual in nature, in line with the characteristics of SMP Negeri 2 Cikajang as the case study location. The effectiveness of implementation is influenced by internal school conditions as well as external factors,

such as the influence of the social environment and digital media, which pose challenges in fostering students' character.

This study has several limitations that need to be considered. First, the limitation of the research sample, which involved specific informants, means that it does not comprehensively reflect the overall perspective of students. Second, the limitation of the research location, which focused on only one school, means that the transferability of the findings is limited to similar contexts. Third, the use of a qualitative approach with a case study design produced descriptive-interpretative findings, making it impossible to quantitatively measure the level of change in student behavior objectively. Therefore, further research is recommended to involve more research locations, expand participants, and integrate a mixed methods approach in order to obtain a more in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of implementing moral education theory in various educational contexts.

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