Preventive Strategies against Students' Moral Degradation through Islamic Religious Education at SMP Negeri 3 Aceh Barat

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Abstract
The development of information and communication technology in the digital era has significantly impacted adolescent morality, including that of junior high school students. This study aims to describe the forms of moral degradation occurring among students, analyze the roles and strategies of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers in preventing moral decline, and identify supporting and inhibiting factors in implementing these strategies at SMPN 3 Aceh Barat. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach with purposive sampling to determine informants: the school principal, five IRE teachers, and five students. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, while data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The validity of the findings was ensured through source and technique triangulation. The findings reveal that although students' overall moral behaviour is considered reasonably good, various forms of moral degradation are still evident, such as low discipline, lack of courtesy, and misuse of social media. IRE teachers play a strategic role through exemplary behaviour, integrating moral values into instruction, and habituating religious activities at school. Supporting factors for the success of these strategies include teacher commitment, parental support, and a religious school environment. In contrast, the main obstacles include external environmental influences, low internal motivation among students, and limited parental supervision. This study recommends strengthening the synergy between schools, families, and communities to foster morally upright and virtuous student character.

Introduction

The advancement of information and communication technology in the digital era has significantly impacted the lives of adolescents, including junior high school students. One emerging negative consequence is the decline in moral quality among students. Phenomena such as a lack of respect for teachers and parents, increased deviant behaviour, and the erosion of values such as honesty, responsibility, and courtesy are clear indicators of moral degradation. According to Luthfi et al. (2024), moral degradation among adolescents in the digital age is caused by insufficient

guidance from schools, families, and the surrounding community and a weak contextual understanding of Islamic moral values.

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) plays a strategic role in shaping students' character and noble morals. IRE does not merely teach the cognitive aspects of Islamic teachings, but also instils spiritual, social, and moral values in everyday life. Saffana and Subhi (2023) emphasize that IRE is crucial in fostering a civil society by promoting moral values early on within the family, school, and broader community settings.

SMPN 3 Aceh Barat, one of the educational institutions in a region that upholds Islamic values, is responsible for nurturing students' character through religious education. However, the school faces considerable challenges in instilling moral values, particularly amid the growing influence of external environments and the increasingly unregulated use of social media. Therefore, strategic and well-planned efforts are required to prevent moral degradation by optimizing the role of Islamic Religious Education.

Ideally, junior high school students are expected to develop strong moral character, demonstrating respect for teachers and parents, honesty in all actions, a sense of responsibility, and courtesy in daily interactions. Such qualities are essential for personal development and fostering a harmonious and value-based school environment. However, the reality at SMPN 3 Aceh Barat shows a different picture. Instances of disrespect towards teachers and parents, increasing deviant behaviour, and weakening fundamental moral values such as honesty, responsibility, and courtesy have become evident. The growing influence of uncontrolled social media use and external environments that do not align with Islamic values has exacerbated these problems, making it more challenging for the school to fulfil its role in character building.

Based on the above background, this study seeks to answer several research questions. First, what do students at SMPN 3 Aceh Barat experience in the form of moral degradation? Second, how do Islamic Religious Education teachers perform their roles in preventing the decline of students' morals? Third, what supporting and inhibiting factors influence the implementation of moral prevention strategies through Islamic Religious Education at SMPN 3 Aceh Barat?. The findings of this study are expected to make a meaningful contribution to strengthening character education based on Islamic values within the environment of SMPN 3 Aceh Barat.

Literature Review
Moral Degradation

Moral degradation is a decline in the awareness of how to behave according to society's values, norms, and regulations. This describes a condition in which an individual or group deviates from moral guidance due to a weakening awareness of obligations, conscience, or internal moral values (Musa, 2023). In general terms, degradation refers to the decline of ethical values and norms previously considered fundamental, such as honesty, responsibility, and respect, as reflected in the behaviour of individuals or groups (Nurlita, 2024). Thus, moral degradation can be understood as a process that erodes goodness within a person, causing their behaviour to increasingly contradict religious, social, and legal norms increasingly.

From an Islamic perspective, moral degradation is seen as a deterioration in morals and behaviour that should be grounded in Qur'anic values and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This may include weakening the internalization of values such as honesty, responsibility, and respect toward others. Research by Hibatullah and Hasyim (2024) shows that tauhid-based and socially oriented education rooted in the Qur'an, such as the teachings

of Prophet Ibrahim, Prophet Yaʿqub, and Luqman, serves as a strong foundation for protecting youth from immoral acts, violence, or moral abuse. This approach is practical when teachers and parents serve as role models, delivering guidance with kindness, compassion, and consistency (istiqamah). Such efforts should be prioritized in education to ensure the younger generation is intellectually capable and morally upright.

According to research published in Ta'dib: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam, the characteristics of moral degradation among adolescents include minor violent behaviors such as frequent quarrels, stubbornness, disobedience to parents or teachers, reluctance to study accompanied by frequent truancy or running away from school, use of harsh language, as well as dressing styles and attitudes that display indifference to social norms, for example, neglecting dress ethics and formal conduct (Hoerudin et al., 2025). Based on this understanding, the researcher asserts that moral degradation cannot be assessed solely from its definition or concept but must be examined through observable behavioural indicators in students. Identifying these characteristics is a strategic step in assessing the severity of the problem and determining the most effective approaches for addressing it.

Various factors contribute to the moral degradation of adolescents, which can be categorized into internal and external factors. Internal factors include weak self-control, identity crises, and insufficient inculcation of religious values from an early age, all of which can undermine an individual's moral steadfastness. External factors encompass the influence of peer environments, unsupportive families, social media, and popular culture that often promotes harmful content. Research by Rahmawati and Kusrina (2025) identifies one of the leading causes of students' moral degradation as parental neglect in moral education, weak understanding of Pancasila values, and the influence of gadgets or social media. This is reinforced by Syapitri and Arifin (2022), who highlight that teenagers' tendency to spend time on social media, along with family and peer pressure, accelerates moral decline. These findings indicate that moral degradation is triggered by individual weaknesses and results from a complex interplay between personal factors, social environment, and changing values brought about by technological advancements in the digital era. If left unaddressed, these factors will significantly impact students' academic and psychological development.

Moral degradation among students, such as increasing dishonesty, apathy toward norms, or involvement in harmful acts, can lead to a decline in personal functioning, thereby affecting the learning process. Students experiencing moral conflicts may feel guilt, shame, or social rejection, resulting in loss of motivation and focus, lowering their academic achievement. Research by Fauziah et al. (2023) shows a significant correlation between moral degradation and student learning outcomes. At a deeper level, moral degradation may also trigger psychological problems such as anxiety, depression, and loss of self-confidence, further impairing concentration, time management, and classroom engagement. This mental distress reduces short-term academic performance and may also lower long-term academic aspirations and overall well-being (Chu et al., 2023). Therefore, moral degradation poses behavioural and psychological threats to students' academic development and mental health.

In the school environment, moral degradation often triggers conflicts among educational stakeholders, whether between students and teachers or among students themselves, as reflected in high disciplinary violations such as truancy, bringing mobile phones to class, smoking, or tardiness. Such conflicts disrupt order and learning, create a tense school atmosphere, weaken collaboration among teachers (subject teachers and homeroom teachers), and increase the workload of guidance and counselling teachers handling such cases. Research by Dari et al. (2019)

found that violations such as smoking, truancy, fighting, and repeatedly bringing mobile phones to school were common. Counselling teachers faced difficulties coordinating with parents, homeroom teachers, and other school stakeholders to resolve these conflicts effectively. Moral degradation in schools thus threatens a conducive educational climate and hinders the creation of a harmonious learning environment for the entire school community.

On a broader scale, systematic moral degradation among the younger generation not only undermines individual potential but also carries serious consequences for the quality of social life, ranging from increased delinquency and crime rates, erosion of trust and solidarity, to declining leadership quality in the future. As the findings show, a generation with degraded morals is more likely to engage in harmful actions that negatively impact themselves and others. Consequently, public trust in the younger generation's capability and responsibility declines. (Liputan6.com, 2024). Consequently, unaddressed moral degradation will weaken social foundations and reduce the quality of the nation's future generation.

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that moral degradation among students is a complex phenomenon influenced by interactions between internal and external factors, with far-reaching implications for personal development, academic achievement, and social stability. The decline in moral awareness can damage individual character, disrupt the educational climate, and weaken the foundations of social life in the future. Therefore, a holistic approach involving synergy among families, schools, communities, and policymakers is necessary to strengthen the inculcation of religious and moral values from an early age, promote the positive use of technology, and create an environment conducive to nurturing a generation of high integrity that contributes positively to the nation.

Islamic Religious Education

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is an educational process aimed at instilling the values of faith, piety, and noble character in accordance with Islamic teachings so that students become individuals with an Islamic character and actively contribute to society. According to Fitri (2018), IRE functions as a medium for character building and moral cultivation based on the Qur'an and Hadith, enabling students not only to master religious knowledge but also to apply Islamic values in daily life. Thus, IRE is a fundamental pillar in fostering the moral and spiritual development of a balanced and harmonious young generation.

IRE encompasses a scope of learning that includes aqidah (belief), sharia (worship), akhlaq (morals), and muamalah (social interactions), developed in an integrated manner so that students can understand and practice Islamic teachings in everyday life. In formal education, IRE is systematically taught through school and madrasah curricula to shape students' character, morals, and faith as essential for living in a national and societal context (Rahmati & Silahuddin, 2024). In non-formal education, IRE is implemented through religious gatherings, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), and dakwah programs oriented toward strengthening spirituality and moral development outside the formal school system (Hayatuddin & Hamid, 2024). The primary goal of IRE, whether in formal or non-formal settings, is to instil moderate Islamic values (Islam wasathiyah) and the principles of rahmatan lil 'alamin, thereby developing individuals who are faithful, pious, and able to make positive contributions to society.

The role of IRE is crucial in shaping students' morals and character, particularly in instilling values such as honesty, responsibility, and patience as the foundation for virtuous behaviour (Darlan et al., 2021). Research by Yusup (2025) indicates that consistent implementation of IRE

can reduce negative behaviours and enhance ethical awareness among adolescents, effectively preventing the moral degradation that is increasingly prevalent in the modern era. However, the main challenge in moral development through IRE lies in the rise of materialistic culture and the influence of digital technology, which often contradicts religious values (Muthoin & Isbah, 2024). Therefore, strengthening IRE must be accompanied by adaptive and contextual approaches to remain relevant to contemporary social dynamics.

Effective IRE teaching models and methods should encourage the internalization of values through a combination of approaches, such as lectures for conveying fundamental concepts, discussions to foster critical thinking, worship practices for spiritual habituation, storytelling for moral messaging, and scientific approaches to connect Islamic teachings with real-life contexts (Ritonga et al., 2025). The teacher's role is key to success as a knowledge transmitter, role model, and moral motivator who embodies noble character in daily behaviour (Amellia et al., 2025). Studies show that when teachers consistently apply exemplary conduct and participatory teaching methods, students are more likely to understand, internalize, and practice religious teachings sustainably (Yusuf et al., 2024). This suggests that the effectiveness of IRE is not solely determined by the variety of teaching methods, but also by the alignment between instructional strategies and the teacher's real-life moral example. The synergy between these two aspects fosters a deeper, more sustainable, and contextually relevant internalization of values in addressing students' moral challenges in today's world.

The effectiveness of IRE is significantly influenced by environmental and external factors, where the family acts as the first madrasah that instils religious values through habituation and example. At the same time, society provides reinforcement or, conversely, negative influences depending on prevailing social norms (Fauziah & Salik, 2021). Social media, on the one hand, can serve as an interactive medium for religious education, but, on the other hand, has the potential to disseminate content that contradicts Islamic teachings if not adequately monitored (Putri et al., 2016). Furthermore, integrating IRE with local and national cultural values can strengthen religious identity while fostering students' sense of national character, as long as such integration is carried out selectively and remains grounded in Islamic principles (Hamzah & Iksan, 2025). This demonstrates that the success of IRE depends not only on classroom teaching quality but also on the harmonization of roles between family, society, and media in creating a conducive ecosystem; when these three elements work in alignment with local cultural wisdom consistent with Islamic teachings, the internalization of religious values among students will be stronger, more relevant, and resistant to harmful environmental influences.

Implementing IRE in schools faces challenges, ranging from uneven teacher qualifications, conventional teaching methods, and teaching motivation affected by internal and external factors (Budianti et al., 2022). Additionally, the emergence of conflicts between religious values and the currents of modernity and secularism requires IRE teachers to possess a high level of adaptability to bridge these differences without compromising the essence of Islamic teachings (Rosadi et al., 2024). Another challenge lies in integrating IRE with other disciplines and the general curriculum, which is often hindered by limited instructional time and a lack of cross-subject collaboration, even though such integration is essential for shaping contextual religious understanding in line with scientific advancements (Kurniawan et al., 2025). Thus, the successful implementation of IRE requires continuous teacher quality improvement, adaptive strategies to address value clashes with modernity, and integrative efforts across disciplines; without these measures, IRE risks losing its relevance in forming a faithful and competitive generation in the global era.

Overall, IRE holds a strategic role in shaping a generation that is intellectually capable and morally and spiritually mature. Its success depends heavily on the synergy between teacher quality, relevant teaching methods, the support of family and community environments, and the ability to integrate Islamic values with scientific developments and contemporary challenges. Amid globalization and modernity, which often bring values conflicting with religious teachings, IRE must remain adaptive without losing the substance of its message. Therefore, strengthening IRE should be carried out comprehensively through curriculum renewal, enhancement of teacher professionalism, positive utilization of media, and active involvement of all stakeholders, thereby producing students who are faithful, pious, and highly competitive in global life.

Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to explore strategies for preventing students' moral degradation through Islamic Religious Education at SMPN 3 Aceh Barat. The data sources consisted of the school principal, five Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers, and five students, making a total of 11 informants selected using purposive sampling based on their involvement and relevance to the research focus. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis, using instruments such as interview guides, observation sheets, and document analysis forms. The data analysis followed data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The validity of the findings was ensured through source triangulation and technique triangulation to confirm the credibility of the data.

Findings
Forms of Moral Degradation Among Students at SMPN 3 Aceh Barat

In general, the moral condition of students at SMPN 3 Aceh Barat is considered reasonably good. The principal stated that although most students exhibit positive behaviour, some behaviours still indicate a decline in moral values. These forms of degradation include a lack of respect toward teachers, low levels of discipline, and an increase in the use of inappropriate language within the school environment. Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers affirmed this view, adding that some students lack academic discipline and are easily influenced by negative peer associations outside of school. On the other hand, students acknowledged that moral and religious values significantly shape daily behaviour. They recognized that by applying these values, they could show greater respect for others and live according to proper principles.

Based on interviews with the principal, Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers, and students at SMPN 3 Aceh Barat, it was found that the forms of moral degradation among students are quite diverse. The principal reported several manifestations of moral decline, including impolite speech, noncompliance with school rules, a lack of responsibility in completing school assignments, and behaviours such as mocking others and disrespecting peers and teachers. In addition, the irresponsible use of social media, such as posting negative comments and engaging in unethical behaviour online, has become a growing concern. IRE teachers further emphasized that commonly observed negative behaviours include harsh language, procrastination in completing assignments, and a tendency to use social media to bully peers. From the students' perspective, similar admissions were made. They noted the presence of classmates who speak disrespectfully, challenge teachers, neglect schoolwork, and use mobile phones during classroom instruction.

Observational findings revealed that, in general, students' behaviour toward teachers remains relatively positive. Most students demonstrate respectful attitudes by habitually greeting teachers

with Islamic salutations upon meeting them, although a few appear rushed and less attentive to the presence of passing teachers. Students generally use polite language during classroom instruction and pay close attention to the teacher. As for peer interactions, students typically show mutual respect, although there are instances where some speak in loud tones or joke excessively, which can disrupt the learning process. No physical violence was observed among students; however, verbal disagreements occasionally occurred, sometimes involving inappropriate or impolite language.

In terms of compliance with school regulations, most students adhere to the established rules, such as wearing uniforms neatly and maintaining order within the school environment. However, a few students were found to arrive late to school, although such cases were relatively infrequent. No students were observed to have deliberately skipped classes or violated classroom attendance during instructional hours. These findings indicate that while students' overall moral behaviour is generally satisfactory, certain aspects, such as discipline, social media usage, and interpersonal conduct, still require further attention and guidance from the school.

The Role and Strategies of Islamic Religious Education Teachers at SMPN 3 Aceh Barat in Preventing Students' Moral Degradation

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers at SMPN 3 Aceh Barat hold a strategic role in preventing students' moral degradation. They function not only as instructors of religious content but also as role models through their daily behaviour and attitudes. According to the school principal, IRE teachers actively provide moral guidance to students and mentor them through various religious activities integrated with character development, such as congregational prayers, Islamic commemorative events, and programs based on Islamic values. The role of teachers in this context is crucial for instilling moral values rooted in religious teachings.

Furthermore, the Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teacher explained that moral values are consistently integrated into every subject taught during the learning process. The exemplary method is the primary approach, complemented by inspirational Islamic stories, group discussions on moral issues, and the habituation of religious practices such as reading the Qur'an and performing congregational prayers at school. These habits are further reinforced through regular activities such as greeting teachers with respect, maintaining a clean environment, showing mutual respect, and participating in special programs like Jumat Berkah (Blessed Friday) and Pesantren Kilat (Short Islamic Boarding School Program). This approach strengthens students' religious understanding and cultivates positive habits that become an integral part of their daily school life.

From the students' perspective, they acknowledged that the Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teacher consistently reminds and guides them to behave ethically. The teacher's exemplary conduct serves as a tangible model for students in terms of religious discipline, such as performing prayers on time and in social interactions. This aligns with observational findings indicating that the IRE teacher actively offers guidance using a gentle and patient approach. The teacher also demonstrates exemplary behaviour through simple actions, such as maintaining classroom cleanliness and speaking politely. The presence of the IRE teacher as both an educator and a moral mentor serves as a vital pillar in shaping students' character amidst the challenges of the modern era.

To prevent students' moral degradation, SMPN 3 Aceh Barat implements various religious programs integrated into the school's daily activities. The principal explained that several key programs include the Congregational Dhuhr Prayer Movement, the Jumat Berkah (Blessed Friday) initiative, which focuses on collecting and distributing student donations, Religion-Based

Counselling Services, and the routine of Qur'anic recitation before the start of lessons. In addition, character values are integrated into all subjects and extracurricular activities to strengthen students' moral development. The Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teacher further added that other religious activities, such as commemorations of Islamic holidays, religious competitions such as Qur'anic recitation (MTQ) and Islamic speech contests, as well as the Qur'an memorization (tahfizh) program, also constitute important components of the school's moral education strategy.

From the students' perspective, they acknowledged that participating in activities such as congregational prayers, group Qur'anic recitation, Jumat Berkah, and listening to religious lectures motivated self-improvement. Observational findings indicated that the implementation of religious activities was generally well-conducted. Students enthusiastically attended activities such as congregational prayers and Islamic holiday commemorations. However, Qur'anic study sessions held outside regular class hours were less consistent and only conducted at certain times. Furthermore, many students appeared engaged in performing congregational prayers during these activities, although some showed a lack of focus during supplications. Reading the Qur'an before lessons was also carried out effectively by most students, though a few were observed to be less attentive.

From the perspective of the school's physical environment, the overall atmosphere was conducive to implementing religious activities. This was evident in the presence of a clean and comfortable prayer room (mushalla) and Islamic motivational posters displayed on the school walls, which contributed to a religious ambience that supports character development. However, observational findings also noted that some regions of the school remained less well-maintained in terms of cleanliness, despite ongoing efforts by the school administration to address these issues. A physically supportive environment remains important in facilitating the integration of moral and spiritual values among students within the school setting.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of Moral Degradation Prevention Strategies through Islamic Religious Education at SMPN 3 Aceh Barat

In the effort to foster students' moral development at SMPN 3 Aceh Barat, several supporting factors play a significant role in reinforcing the outcomes achieved. The principal emphasized that teacher commitment, particularly from Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers, is central to guiding and modelling exemplary student behaviour. Teachers deliver instructional content and demonstrate daily conduct that reflects moral and religious values. Additionally, parental support at home strengthens the character education efforts at school. The religious atmosphere of the school, enhanced by various religious programs and consistent policies promoting character values, also contributes substantially to shaping student behaviour. The IRE teacher added that character-building programs designed by the school and active parental involvement in supporting school activities are highly beneficial in reinforcing students' moral values. From the students' perspective, intrinsic motivation to become better individuals is also a crucial supporting factor. Their desire to make their parents and teachers proud and their aspiration to be positive role models for their peers strongly motivate them to improve their behaviour and internalize moral values in daily life.

Implementing moral development efforts for students at SMPN 3 Aceh Barat also faces several challenges encountered by the school and Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers. The principal noted that one of the main obstacles is the influence of external environments, particularly social media and unregulated peer interactions, which are difficult to control. In addition, students' diverse family backgrounds, especially in terms of parental attention to their children's moral

education, also play a significant role. Some students come from families with limited supervision and guidance, making them more vulnerable to adverse external influences. The IRE teacher added that, aside from these external factors, another challenge lies in the low level of internal motivation among some students to improve themselves and develop virtuous character. From the students' perspective, they acknowledged that peer pressure, unsupervised use of social media, and a lack of parental guidance are among the factors that make it difficult for them to maintain good behaviour consistently. These conditions indicate that moral development efforts require not only intervention at the school level but also strong support from families and the broader social environment.

Discussion

The study's findings at SMPN 3 Aceh Barat indicate that, although in general, students' moral behaviour falls within the fairly good category, there are clear indications of moral degradation that require serious attention. These forms of degradation include a lack of respect toward teachers, low levels of discipline, the use of inappropriate language, and hostile behaviour on social media, such as bullying. This phenomenon is consistent with the findings of Hartoni et al. (2023), who identified behaviours such as using offensive language, defying teachers, and neglecting assignments as common forms of moral degradation in school environments. However, the present study adds a new dimension by highlighting negative behaviour on social media as a form of moral degradation that is increasingly relevant in the digital era, an aspect not emphasized in Hartoni's research.

The role of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers is highly strategic in preventing and addressing students' moral degradation. IRE teachers serve not only as instructors of religious content but also as role models through their daily behaviour and attitudes. According to Kasnuri (2025), IRE teachers must be able to balance their role as character educators with the demands of advancing technology, while exemplifying moral conduct and teaching the wise use of social media. The strategies implemented by IRE teachers at SMPN 3 Aceh Barat, Such as integrating moral values into teaching, promoting regular worship practices, and organizing routine religious activities, have proven effective in shaping students' character. Fauziah and Darraz (2024) emphasize the importance of role modelling, habituation, moral advice, and integrating ethical values into learning as key methods for instilling character values in students. Nevertheless, this study reveals that the teachers' consistency also influences the success of such strategies in serving as moral exemplars and supervising students' behaviour on social media, an aspect that has not been a primary focus in previous studies.

In the context of character education, the strategies implemented at SMPN 3 Aceh Bara, such as the habitual practice of greeting, maintaining cleanliness, reciting the Qur'an before lessons, and performing congregational prayers, are part of the school's efforts to shape students' character. These strategies align with the findings of Tharaba (2020), who emphasized the importance of integrating character values into school activities to foster positive student behaviour. Moral education in Islam is also a foundation for shaping students' personalities. However, this study adds the finding that the physical condition of the school environment, such as the presence of a clean prayer room (mushalla) and Islamic motivational posters, has a significant influence on strengthening students' moral values. At the same time, poorly maintained areas may undermine these efforts.

The implementation of these strategies is not without challenges. External environmental influences, particularly those from social media and unsupervised peer interactions, pose significant obstacles to students' moral development. Samsudi et al. (2021) identified the negative impact of social media as one of the contributing factors to students' moral degradation. A contextual distinction appears in Aceh Barat, where the diversity of family backgrounds and varying levels of parental attention to children's moral education play a decisive role. This supports the findings of Suaib et al. (2023), who argued that moral education for adolescents in the Society 5.0 era must include cultivating religious awareness, behavioural supervision, education on the wise use of technology, and effective communication between parents and children.

Synergy among schools, teachers, parents, and the broader social environment is essential to address these challenges. Rohmah et al. (2022) emphasised the importance of collaboration between IRE teachers, school administrators, and parents in shaping students' character. Furthermore, a holistic and integrative approach to character education, as proposed by Rizki and Anwar (2021), can strengthen moral development through religious activities and the habituation of positive values.

Overall, efforts to prevent students' moral degradation at SMPN 3 Aceh Barat require a comprehensive approach that involves multiple stakeholders and remains adaptive to contemporary challenges. The role of IRE teachers as educators, role models, and moral mentors is crucial in shaping students' character to be morally upright and ethically sound. With the support of the school environment, families, and the wider community, along with effective character-building strategies, moral degradation among students is expected to be minimised, and moral values can be instilled within them.

Conclusion

Based on the research conducted at SMPN 3 Aceh Barat, it can be concluded that the overall moral condition of students is generally categorized as relatively good, although several forms of moral degradation require serious attention. These include a lack of respect for teachers, low levels of discipline, the use of impolite language, and the misuse of social media. Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers play a central role in preventing moral degradation by modelling exemplary behaviour, integrating moral values into the learning process, and fostering religious practices and activities within the school environment. Programs such as the Congregational Dhuhr Prayer Movement, Jumat Berkah (Blessed Friday), and the routine of reciting the Qur'an before lessons are practical tools for shaping students' character. Factors that enhance these efforts include teacher commitment, parental support, a religious school atmosphere, and students' intrinsic motivation. Conversely, inhibiting factors include the negative influence of social media, limited parental attention to moral education, and the low motivation of some students to improve their behaviour. Therefore, moral development strategies must continue to be strengthened through collaboration among schools, families, and communities, using more innovative and adaptive approaches to contemporary developments.

As a follow-up to the findings of this study, it is recommended that the school, particularly Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers, continue to develop creative and contextually relevant moral development methods that align with the needs of today's adolescents. This includes enhancing students' digital literacy to promote more responsible and ethical use of social media. The school should also strengthen collaboration with parents and the wider community to sustain character education within and at home. Moreover, the habituation of religious activities should be

conducted more regularly and systematically, with an emphasis on instilling moral values that apply to students' everyday lives. To address the issue of low intrinsic motivation, a more personalized approach and mentoring programs are needed to actively engage students in character-building activities. Finally, greater attention must be given to managing the physical school environment to serve as a supportive space for fostering a religious culture and promoting positive student behaviour.

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