

THE PHENOMENON OF DISCREPANCY BETWEEN STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE AND MORAL BEHAVIOR

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Abstract. This study aims to analyze the discrepancy between students' moral knowledge and their moral behavior within the educational environment. The research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive design, intending to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon based on real conditions in the field. Data collection techniques include observation, in depth interviews, and documentation, with research subjects consisting of students, teachers, and other related parties. The results indicate that students generally possess a fairly good level of moral knowledge, particularly regarding values such as honesty, responsibility, and discipline. However, in practice, inconsistencies are still found between this knowledge and the behaviors displayed, such as cheating, lack of discipline, and irresponsibility. This suggests that moral knowledge has not been fully internalized within the students. The factors contributing to this discrepancy include internal factors such as low self-control and motivation, as well as external factors such as lack of role modeling from teachers, family environment, peer influence, and digital media exposure. Therefore, a more comprehensive and sustainable character education approach is needed one that integrates cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects to create alignment between students' moral knowledge and their actions.

Keywords: moral knowledge, moral behavior, character education, students

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental process in shaping the quality of human resources who are not only intellectually competent but also possess strong character and moral values. In the context of education in Indonesia, the development of students' morality is one of the primary objectives outlined in the national education system. However, reality shows that there are still various problems related to students' moral behavior, such as lack of honesty, low discipline, and weak social responsibility. This phenomenon indicates a gap between the moral knowledge possessed by students and the moral behavior they demonstrate in their daily lives.

This gap is known as a discrepancy between moral knowledge and moral behavior, referring to a condition in which students cognitively understand moral values but are unable to consistently implement them in real actions. In school practice, many students already understand the importance of values such as honesty, responsibility, and discipline, yet they still engage in violations such as cheating, being late, and disobeying school rules. This indicates that moral knowledge has not been fully internalized into actual behavior (Fiolanisa et al., 2023).

Theoretically, moral knowledge is part of the cognitive aspect related to an individual's ability to distinguish between right and wrong. However, moral development does not depend solely on knowledge but also involves affective and

behavioral aspects. Recent studies show that the integration of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behavior is key to forming students' holistic character. An imbalance among these three aspects can lead to a discrepancy between students' moral understanding and their actions (Nur et al., 2023).

In addition to internal factors, the educational environment also plays a crucial role in shaping students' moral behavior. Schools, as formal institutions, have the responsibility to instill moral values through character education. However, the implementation of character education in schools is often not optimal and tends to focus only on cognitive aspects without being balanced by habituation and role modeling. Research indicates that effective character education must involve guidance processes, exemplary behavior, and the creation of an environment conducive to students' moral development (Zega, 2022).

On the other hand, the advancement of technology and globalization presents new challenges in shaping students' morality. Access to vast information through digital media can have both positive and negative influences on moral development. In many cases, students are more influenced by the digital environment than by the values taught in schools. This is in line with research findings stating that technological development and modern culture pose challenges in maintaining students' moral and ethical values (Putri et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the phenomenon of moral degradation among students indicates that the education system still faces challenges in effectively integrating character values. Character education that has not been optimally implemented can lead to various deviant behaviors among students. Therefore, strengthening moral values through character education is essential to form a generation that is not only academically competent but also possesses integrity and good character (Yuliani et al., 2024).

Moreover, the educational orientation that still emphasizes academic achievement is another factor contributing to the discrepancy between moral knowledge and behavior. Students often focus more on learning outcomes than on the process of character formation, causing moral values to receive less attention. In certain situations, academic pressure may even encourage students to engage in actions that contradict moral values, such as cheating or dishonest behavior. This indicates an imbalance between the development of cognitive and affective aspects in education.

Thus, it can be understood that the discrepancy between students' moral knowledge and behavior is a complex issue influenced by various factors, both internal and external. Internal factors include self-awareness, motivation, and self-control, while external factors include family environment, school environment, and the influence of social media. Therefore, a more comprehensive approach to moral education is needed one that not only emphasizes knowledge but also focuses on shaping attitudes and behavior through habituation, role modeling, and the strengthening of a supportive environment.

Based on the above explanation, this research is important to be conducted in order to further examine the forms of discrepancy between students' moral knowledge and behavior, as well as the factors influencing it. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of more effective character education strategies, so that alignment between students' moral knowledge and behavior can be achieved in their daily lives.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design, aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of the discrepancy between students' moral knowledge and moral behavior within the context of real-life situations in the school environment. The qualitative approach is chosen because it is capable of exploring the meanings, perceptions, and experiences of research subjects holistically without manipulating the variables under study (Anam et al., 2023). Descriptive research is used to provide a systematic, factual, and accurate depiction of conditions occurring in the field.

The subjects of this study include students, teachers, and other related parties who are considered to have relevant information regarding students' moral behavior. The selection of subjects is conducted using purposive sampling, which involves choosing informants based on specific criteria such as their involvement in school activities and their experience in social interactions within the educational environment.

This is in line with qualitative research principles that emphasize the selective selection of informants to obtain in-depth and relevant data (Alwi et al., 2023).

Data collection techniques in this study include observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation is carried out to directly examine students' behavior in various situations, such as during the learning process, social interactions, and compliance with school rules. In depth interviews are conducted with students, teachers, and school authorities to explore moral understanding as well as factors influencing students' behavior. Documentation is used to complement the data in the form of violation records, school regulations, and other relevant archives. The use of these three techniques aims to obtain comprehensive and complementary data (Dewi & Kasrman, 2023).

Data analysis in this study uses an interactive model consisting of three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction is carried out by selecting and simplifying data relevant to the research focus. Data display is presented in the form of descriptive narratives to facilitate understanding, while conclusion drawing is conducted by interpreting the analyzed data to identify patterns and relationships among variables. This analysis model is widely used in qualitative research as it provides an in-depth understanding of social phenomena (Kusumawati et al., 2024).

To ensure data validity, this study applies triangulation techniques, including both source triangulation and method triangulation. Source triangulation is conducted by comparing data from various informants, while method triangulation is performed by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation. This technique aims to enhance the validity and reliability of the research data so that the findings can be trusted (Ulum & Pramono, 2024). By employing this descriptive qualitative approach, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the forms of discrepancy between students' moral knowledge and behavior, as well as the factors influencing it within the educational context.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Students' Level of Moral Knowledge

Based on the results of the study conducted through interviews and observations, it was found that most students possess a fairly good level of moral knowledge. Students are able to understand basic moral values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, and mutual respect. This is reflected in their ability to explain the difference between right and wrong behavior in various everyday situations.

This moral knowledge is generally acquired through the learning process at school, particularly through subjects such as religious education and civic education, as well as through habituation implemented by teachers. In addition, the role of the family is also an important factor in shaping students' moral understanding from an early age. This is consistent with research stating that character education plays a significant role in forming students' understanding of moral

values as the foundation for behavior development (Putri et al., 2023).

However, the findings also indicate that students' moral understanding remains largely conceptual and has not been fully internalized into deep moral awareness. Students tend to perceive moral values as rules that must be followed, rather than as internal needs within themselves. This suggests that the process of internalizing moral values has not yet been optimal.

2. Students' Moral Behavior in Daily Life

Although students have a relatively good level of moral knowledge, observations reveal inconsistencies between this knowledge and their actual behavior. Several forms of behavior reflecting the discrepancy between moral knowledge and action include:

- a. Cheating during exams despite knowing it is dishonest
- b. Lack of discipline in following school rules
- c. Low sense of responsibility toward assigned tasks
- d. Lack of respect toward teachers and peers

This phenomenon indicates that moral knowledge does not automatically encourage students to behave in accordance with those values. This is in line with research findings that highlight symptoms of moral degradation among students, where understood moral values are not always reflected in real behavior (Revalina et al., 2023).

Furthermore, students' moral behavior is also influenced by certain situations and conditions. Under pressure, such as during examinations or academic demands, students tend to neglect the moral values they have learned. This shows that students' morality is still situational and has not yet become an inherent part of their character.

3. Factors Causing the Discrepancy

The results of the study indicate several factors contributing to the gap between students' moral knowledge and behavior, namely:

a. Internal Factors

Internal factors include psychological aspects within students, such as self-control, motivation, and moral awareness. Many students lack strong self-control, making them easily influenced by situations and environmental pressures. In addition, motivation to behave in accordance with moral values is still relatively low, as students tend to focus more on outcomes rather than processes. Research shows that the lack of integration between moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behavior can lead to inconsistencies between understanding and action (Nur et al., 2023).

b. School Environment Factors

The school environment plays a significant role in shaping students' moral behavior. A lack of role modeling from teachers and weak enforcement of school discipline can result in students not being accustomed to applying moral values in daily life. Moreover, character education that is not optimally integrated into the learning process also contributes to this issue. Recent research shows that the integration of character values into the curriculum has a significant influence on shaping students' moral behavior, particularly in aspects such as

honesty, responsibility, and cooperation (Safitri et al., 2024).

c. Social and Family Environment Factors

Family and peer environments also play a crucial role in shaping students' behavior. A lack of parental supervision and an unfavorable social environment can negatively influence students' moral behavior. Students tend to imitate behaviors they observe in their surroundings, whether positive or negative.

d. Influence of Digital Media

In the digital era, social media has become one of the dominant factors influencing students' behavior. Exposure to negative content can lead to changes in attitudes and behaviors that are inconsistent with the moral values taught in schools. Research indicates that the current generation faces significant challenges in maintaining morality due to the influence of technology and global culture (Sudirman et al., 2024).

4. Implications for Character Education

The findings of this study indicate that moral education cannot rely solely on theoretical instruction. A more comprehensive approach is required, involving cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects in a balanced manner. Character education should be implemented through habituation, role modeling, and the reinforcement of a supportive environment.

Effective character education programs can be carried out through various activities, such as value based learning, extracurricular activities, and the habituation of positive behavior within the school environment. This aligns with research stating that ethics and moral education integrated into the learning process can improve students' character and behavioral quality (Tuturop & Sihotang, 2023).

In addition, it is important for schools to create a conducive school culture where moral values are not only taught but also practiced in daily life. Teachers, as educators, must serve as role models so that students can imitate and internalize these values.

Thus, to overcome the discrepancy between students' moral knowledge and behavior, synergy between schools, families, and society is required to holistically shape students' character. A holistic and sustainable approach is expected to create alignment between moral knowledge and actual behavior.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that there is a significant gap between students' moral knowledge and moral behavior. Although students have a fairly good understanding of moral values such as honesty, responsibility, and discipline, they are not yet able to consistently implement these values in their daily lives. This indicates that their moral knowledge remains conceptual and has not been fully internalized into a deeply rooted character. This discrepancy is influenced by various factors, both internal and external. Internal factors include low self-control, motivation, and moral awareness, while external factors include the school environment that has not optimally provided role modeling, lack of parental supervision, peer

influence, and the negative impact of digital media. In addition, the educational orientation that places greater emphasis on cognitive aspects rather than character development also contributes to widening this gap. Therefore, it can be understood that the formation of students' morality cannot rely solely on the transmission of knowledge but requires a more comprehensive process involving habituation, role modeling, and support from a conducive environment

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