

Normative-Consequential Structures and Moral Dilemma Limitations in Islamic Social Ethics: A Developmental Analysis of Phase F Instructional Materials

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Abstract: *This research identifies the normative-consequential structures and the scarcity of moral dilemmas in Phase F Islamic Social Ethics materials, analyzed through Piagetian and Kohlbergian developmental frameworks. Utilizing a qualitative content analysis approach, the study evaluated the 2021 Grade XI PAI textbook and official curriculum standards, coding 508 meaning units based on five distinct moral reasoning indicators. Results indicate that instructional content is heavily weighted toward the "Understanding of Social Rules" (48.03%) and "Consideration of Social Consequences" (35.04%). In contrast, the "Reflection on Moral Dilemmas" indicator is nearly absent (0.79%), highlighting a significant gap in facilitating the transition from heteronomous to autonomous moral stages. The findings suggest that current materials reinforce conventional moral adherence but lack the reflective-dialogic depth necessary to foster post-conventional reasoning among adolescents. A primary limitation of this study lies in its focus on document analysis, which precludes an assessment of live classroom dynamics and student receptivity. It is recommended that future inquiries employ mixed-methods designs to evaluate teacher-led interventions that utilize open-ended ethical conflicts to stimulate higher-order moral cognition.*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengidentifikasi struktur normatif-konsekuensial serta kelangkaan dilema moral dalam materi Etika Sosial Islam Tingkat F, yang dianalisis melalui kerangka perkembangan Piaget dan Kohlberg. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan analisis isi kualitatif, penelitian ini mengevaluasi buku teks PAI Kelas XI tahun 2021 dan standar kurikulum resmi, serta mengklasifikasikan 508 unit makna berdasarkan lima indikator penalaran moral yang berbeda. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa konten pengajaran sangat condong ke arah "Pemahaman Aturan Sosial" (48,03%) dan "Pertimbangan Konsekuensi Sosial" (35,04%). Sebaliknya, indikator "Refleksi atas Dilema Moral" hampir tidak ada (0,79%), menyoroti kesenjangan signifikan dalam memfasilitasi transisi dari tahap moral heteronom ke otonom. Temuan ini menyarankan bahwa materi saat ini memperkuat kepatuhan moral konvensional namun kurang memiliki kedalaman reflektif-dialogis yang diperlukan untuk menumbuhkan penalaran pasca-konvensional di kalangan remaja. Keterbatasan utama studi ini terletak pada fokusnya pada analisis dokumen, yang menghalangi penilaian terhadap dinamika kelas langsung dan responsivitas siswa. Disarankan agar penelitian di masa depan menggunakan desain campuran (*mixed-methods*) untuk mengevaluasi intervensi yang dipimpin guru yang memanfaatkan konflik etis terbuka guna merangsang kognisi moral tingkat tinggi.

1. Introduction

The increasing number of social issues among adolescents, such as low empathy, intolerance, and the use of violence in conflict resolution, indicates a deficiency in their

moral development. Reports from national news media indicate incidents of youth violence, including group fights in Bekasi that resulted in injuries to civilians.¹ Official data from the National Criminal Information Center of the Indonesian National Police (Pusiknas Bareskrim Polri) also shows that cases of youth violence reached 16 incidents within the first four months of 2025.² Furthermore, the same institution reported that 460 children were involved in assault and group violence cases within the first two months of 2025.³ These figures demonstrate that adolescent moral issues remain a significant social concern.

This phenomenon cannot be interpreted merely as juvenile delinquency; it must also be examined from the perspective of how adolescents understand values and evaluate their actions. One contributing factor to these issues is the limited ability to understand the consequences of actions. Previous studies suggest that adolescent moral problems are not solely related to deviant behavior, but also to limitations in moral reasoning and decision-making in complex social situations.⁴ In other words, the issue lies in the process of moral reasoning rather than behavior alone. In this context, moral education at the senior high school level appears insufficient in equipping students with the critical reasoning skills necessary to navigate increasingly complex social realities.

Within the Indonesian formal education system, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is positioned as a subject that emphasizes the development of social morality and ethical behavior.⁵ PAI is not merely a religious instruction subject but also a space for students to internalize religious values and apply them in daily life. Social ethics education constitutes a core component of this subject, as it directly influences students' attitudes and behaviors in social interactions.⁶ Values such as justice, responsibility, tolerance, sympathy, and empathy are introduced as foundational elements of harmonious social relationships.⁷ However, the teaching of social ethics should not be limited to distinguishing right from wrong, but should also engage students in understanding the moral reasoning behind actions and the potential consequences of their decisions.

In reality, teachers still face many challenges in implementing Islamic Education (PAI) in schools. Several studies indicate that the teaching process still largely relies on conventional approaches, in which moral values are often presented as rules to be memorized and obeyed, leading students to receive information passively rather than

¹ Yoni Syukriani et al., "Cross-Sectional Survey of Underreported Violence Experienced by Adolescents: A Study from Indonesia," *BMC Public Health* 22 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-12427-8>.

² Pusiknas Bareskrim Polri, "Aksi Tawuran Di Banten 'Menelan' Korban Pelajar," Pusat Informasi Kriminal Nasional Badan Reserse Kriminal Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia, 2025.

³ Pusiknas Bareskrim Polri, "Ratusan Anak Terlibat Tindak Kriminal Sejak Awal Tahun 2025," Pusat Informasi Kriminal Nasional Badan Reserse Kriminal Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia, 2025.

⁴ Mohd Zailani Mohd Yusoff et al., "The Effect of Moral Reasoning and Values as the Mediator Towards Student's Prosocial Behaviour," *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth* 27, no. 1 (2022): 33–34, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2021.2021959>.

⁵ Chairul Anwar, Antomi Saregar, and Uswatun Hasanah, "The Effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education in the Universities: The Effects on the Students' Characters in the Era of Industry 4.0," *Tadris: Jurnal Keguruan dan Ilmu Tarbiyah* 3, no. 1 (2018): 77–87, <https://doi.org/10.24042/tadris.v3i1.2162>.

⁶ Muhammad Zuhdi, "Challenging Moderate Muslims: Indonesia's Muslim Schools in the Midst of Religious Conservatism," *Religions* 9, no. 10 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel9100310>.

⁷ Muhammad Taufik, "Strategic Role of Islamic Religious Education in Strengthening Character Education in the Era of Industrial Revolution 4.0," *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 20, no. 1 (2020): 86–104, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jiif.v20i1.5797>.

engage in discussion or develop their own critical thinking.⁸ Ismail et al. even criticized the implementation of PAI, which they deemed insufficiently dialogic and failing to provide students with adequate space for critical thinking.⁹ A similar critique was raised by Ubaidillah et al., who argued that an overly normative and traditional approach leads to the acceptance of moral values dogmatically, rendering it inadequate to address today's increasingly complex social challenges.¹⁰

From a moral development perspective, this situation certainly poses a unique challenge. Adolescents are actually at a higher stage of cognitive development than children, which allows them to think more abstractly and to begin reflecting more deeply on values. They no longer accept rules at face value, but also consider the consequences of their actions. Developmental psychology research conducted by Mardiyah et al. shows that during adolescence, individuals begin to evaluate moral rules from a fairness perspective, consider the intentions behind actions, and think about the consequences of their actions—not merely because of pressure or orders alone.¹¹ If moral education in school does not provide space for this kind of thinking, then adolescents' moral development risks not developing optimally because they are not truly trained to reason and consider the rationale behind a value.

Several previous studies have shown that adolescents' moral reasoning cannot be developed simply by imparting values; rather, it requires a process of reflection and understanding of real-world social issues. This is evident in Sari's research, which found that religious and ethical education in schools is indeed capable of instilling values such as discipline, honesty, empathy, and social concern through habitual practice, but has not yet been clearly directed toward training students' moral thinking.¹² The same point is emphasized by Effendy, who observes issues of moral degradation among adolescents and a lack of sufficiently contextual and innovative character education designs.¹³ This situation ultimately hinders the deeper development of students' moral reasoning.

Furthermore, regarding research on the analysis of Islamic Education (PAI) textbooks, several studies indicate that PAI textbooks have integrated values of religious moderation—such as tolerance (*tasamuh*), moderation (*tawassuth*), and balance (*i'tidal*)—into their content. However, the representation of other values such as *muwathanah* and *musawah* remains relatively limited. Additionally, visual elements and the integration of technology in the presentation of the material remain minimal, which may reduce the effectiveness of value internalization. These findings indicate that although the value of moderation is present in substance, its presentation is not yet fully

⁸ Masruri et al., "Analisis Efektifitas Metode Pengajaran PAI Dalam Meningkatkan Nalar Kritis Siswa SMA Negeri Kalimantan Barat," *Permata: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 5, no. 1 (2024): 149, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.47453/permata.v5i1.1969>.

⁹ Shalahudin Ismail et al., "Analisis Kritik Terhadap Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran PAI Di Sekolah," *JPI: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 11, no. 2 (2020): 181–82, <https://doi.org/10.22236/jpi.v11i2.5901>.

¹⁰ Cecep Ubaidillah, Asep Ahmad Fathurrahman, and Marwan Setiawan, "Transforming Islamic Religious Education: Building Critical Thinking and Religious Tolerance," *ZEI: Zona Education Indonesia* 1, no. 6 (2024): 352, <https://ejournal.zona-edu.org/index.php/ZEI/article/view/99/108>.

¹¹ B. Siti Mardiyah et al., "Implikasi Psikologi Perkembangan Moral Kohlberg Terhadap Pembentukan Karakter Religius Siswa," *Paedagogy: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan dan Psikologi* 6, no. 1 (2026): 219, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.51878/paedagogy.v6i1.8080>.

¹² Deviana Sari, "Implementasi Pembelajaran Akidah Akhlak Dalam Meningkatkan Perilaku Siswa," *Fathir: Jurnal Studi Islam* 2, no. 1 (2025): 123, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.71153/fathir.v2i1.221>.

¹³ Muhammad Ibnu Ma'ruf Effendy, "Behavioural Modernity dan Tipologi Akhlak Remaja Islam: Tinjauan Pendidikan Agama Islam dan Peranannya Dalam Pembelajaran," *SAP: Susunan Artikel Pendidikan* 8, no. 3 (2024): 416–17, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.30998/sap.v8i3.20284>.

comprehensive.¹⁴ This situation highlights the need to enrich the dimensions of value representation in PAI textbooks.

On the other hand, another study reveals that Islamic education textbooks still contain narratives of intolerance that have the potential to foster exclusive attitudes among students. These narratives arise from weaknesses in the writing, reviewing, and editing processes. This indicates that textbooks not only have the potential to foster positive values but can also perpetuate biases and distortions of values. The implications of these findings are highly significant for students' character development and social orientation.¹⁵ Therefore, a critical analysis of the moral content in textbooks is of utmost importance.

Other research indicates that Islamic Education textbooks at the junior high school level generally promote tolerance in their instructional content.¹⁶ Furthermore, these textbooks also incorporate various character values implemented through integration into classroom learning and school-based self-development activities.¹⁷ This indicates that the textbooks have been explicitly designed to support character education. However, the focus on the declarative aspects of values is often not accompanied by the development of deep moral reasoning skills. Thus, there are indications that the internalization of values is not yet fully grounded in complex moral reasoning processes.

Furthermore, a study at the elementary school level indicates that the value of responsibility in textbooks is more prominent in the personal and social dimensions than in the ecological dimension. Additionally, the distribution of this value is uneven across grade levels.¹⁸ Another study also found that multicultural values such as tolerance, democracy, justice, and equality have been included in textbooks, but their development has not been proportional.¹⁹ From a quality management perspective, PAI textbooks have adhered to the principles of Total Quality Management, but the integration of character values and the balance of learning dimensions remain suboptimal.²⁰ These findings reinforce the need to address the imbalance in the representation and development of values in PAI textbooks.

¹⁴ Asnil Aidah Ritonga and Nurmayati Nurmayati, "Analysis of the Representation of Religious Moderation Values in Senior High School Islamic Religious Education Textbooks under the Merdeka Curriculum: A Qualitative Study Using Content Analysis," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 14, no. 1 (2025): 105–17, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2025.141.105-117>.

¹⁵ Ikhrom Ikhrom et al., "Intolerance in Islamic Textbooks: The Quest for an Islamic Teaching Model for Indonesian Schools," *Cogent Education* 10, no. 2 (December 11, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2268454>.

¹⁶ Mita Mawadda et al., "Tolerance Learning in Islamic Religious and Character Education Textbooks," *Analisa: Journal of Social Science and Religion* 8, no. 1 (2023): 51–66, <https://doi.org/10.18784/analisa.v8i1.1901>.

¹⁷ Awalina Maftukhah, "Value Education and Character in Textbook of PAI and Character on Junior High School Year 2017 (Analysis Content, Implementation and Strategy)," *Mudarrisa: Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 2 (2017): 163–87, <https://doi.org/10.18326/mdr.v9i2.163-187>.

¹⁸ Yusnaili Budianti, Masganti Sit, and Indah Purnamasari, "Content Analysis of Responsibility Values in Islamic Religious Education Textbooks for Elementary Students," *Fitrah: Journal of Islamic Education* 6, no. 2 (December 30, 2025): 513–28, <https://doi.org/10.53802/fitrah.v6i2.1279>.

¹⁹ Hajiannor Hajiannor et al., "Analysis of the Content and Accuracy of Multicultural Values in Islamic Religious Education and Moral Textbook," *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan* 15, no. 1 (2023): 212–18, <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v15i1.2859>.

²⁰ Mustaqim Mustaqim, Masyitoh Masyitoh, and Rabiatal Adawiyah, "Quality Management Analysis in Islamic Religious Education Textbooks Upper Secondary School Character Education Oriented," *PENANOMICS: International Journal of Economics* 4, no. 3 (December 6, 2025): 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.56107/penanomics.v4i3.272>.

Although various studies indicate that ethics and Islamic Education (PAI) shape students' moral attitudes and social behavior, most research continues to focus on outcomes, such as behavioral changes, rather than on the processes that influence adolescent morality. Discussions that specifically examine the content of social ethics in the PAI curriculum as a foundation for learning—particularly as it relates to the development of adolescents' moral reasoning—remain relatively limited. In fact, the structure of material presentation and the emphasis on the values presented have direct implications for the direction of classroom learning and the quality of students' moral thinking processes. In line with this, previous studies have also tended to focus on the descriptive identification of value content without elaborating on how the structure of moral reasoning is built within the learning materials. Specifically, analyses of the normative-consequential structure, the presence of moral dilemmas, and the integration of moral development perspectives, such as those of Piaget and Kohlberg, in PAI textbooks remain very limited, indicating a significant research gap in understanding the quality of moral reasoning facilitated by social ethics materials.

Based on this, this study aims to identify the normative-consequential structure and the limitations of moral dilemmas in the social ethics materials of Islamic Education (PAI) Phase F, based on Piaget's and Kohlberg's perspectives on moral development. This study analyzes how materials are structured to establish a relationship between norms and moral consequences. Additionally, this study examines the extent to which the materials present moral dilemmas that can foster students' moral reasoning. This study will enrich the analysis of PAI textbooks from a moral development perspective. Consequently, the findings of this study can serve as a foundation for the development of learning materials that are more reflective, contextual, and oriented toward strengthening higher-order moral reasoning.

2. Methods

This study employs a qualitative content analysis design to examine the representation of moral reasoning in the social ethics materials of Phase F of the Islamic Education (PAI) curriculum. This approach was chosen because the study focuses on interpreting the meanings contained in the texts and the conceptual patterns that emerge in the instructional materials.

The primary data sources consist of official documents, namely the Learning Outcomes (LO) for PAI and Character Education in Phase F of the Merdeka Curriculum, as well as the PAI and Character Education textbooks for 11th-grade high school students published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia (2021). Secondary data was obtained from scientific literature discussing the theories of moral development by Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg, which were used as an analytical framework for interpreting the findings

The analysis focuses on Chapters 2, 3, 6, and 8 because they explicitly address social ethics related to adolescents' social interactions. The units of analysis in this study are meaning units—sentences or sections of paragraphs that represent a single coherent moral reasoning concept. These units include material descriptions, learning activities, reflections, evaluations, and character application tables. Texts in the form of translations of Qur'anic verses, hadiths, and direct quotations from religious figures were not used as units of analysis because they are presented as normative sources rather than as the author's pedagogical elaborations.

The analysis procedure was conducted in several stages: (1) identification of text units relevant to social ethics, (2) data selection based on inclusion and exclusion criteria,

(3) coding using five indicators of moral reasoning: understanding of social rules, consideration of the social impact of actions, adoption of a social perspective, reflection on moral dilemmas, and moral decision-making, (4) analysis of trends through the frequency of indicator occurrence as a form of limited quantification, and (5) interpretation of findings using the theoretical frameworks of Piaget and Kohlberg. Each text unit was coded individually based on the most dominant indicator (dominant coding) to maintain consistency in categorization. Finally, to ensure data validity, this study employed consistent coding procedures, maintained a data audit trail by documenting sources and page numbers, and used a well-established theoretical framework as the basis for interpretation.

3. Results

The analysis of moral reasoning within the Phase F Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum reveals a structured emphasis on normative compliance and social accountability. This section presents the findings from the qualitative content analysis of the official Learning Outcomes (LO) and the prescribed Grade XI textbook, using the developmental frameworks of Piaget and Kohlberg. The data are categorized to reflect the prevalence of specific moral indicators, ranging from understanding established social rules to navigating complex moral dilemmas. Initial observations suggest that while the curriculum successfully integrates social ethics across various religious elements, the pedagogical construction remains heavily oriented toward a normative-consequentialist paradigm. Consequently, the following subsections detail the thematic distribution of these orientations and the specific indicators that define the current landscape of moral instruction for Indonesian Muslim adolescents.

3.1. Normative and Reflective Orientations in the Learning Outcomes (LO) for Islamic Education (PAI) Phase F

The Learning Outcomes (LO) for Islamic Education (PAI) and Character Education Phase F in the Merdeka Curriculum serve as the primary foundation for determining the direction of PAI instruction in 11th-grade high school. At this stage, students are considered to have entered adolescence, a phase in which they begin to think more abstractly and engage in deeper reflection on values. Therefore, religious education is no longer sufficient if it focuses solely on mastering content or normative knowledge; it must also aim to foster more mature attitudes and social behavior. Social ethics material in PAI Phase F is not presented as a separate component. However, it is integrated into the five main elements of the subject: the Qur'an and Hadith, Aqidah, Akhlak, Fiqh, and the History of Islamic Civilization. Of these five elements, the Ethics component serves as the clearest vehicle for conveying social values, particularly through discussions on keeping promises, guarding one's speech, concealing others' faults, avoiding alcohol and drugs, tolerance, and proper etiquette in social media use.

To see more clearly how this structure is formulated, the Learning Outcomes (LO) for Islamic Education (PAI) and Character Education Phase F, as outlined in BSKAP Decision No. 032/H/KR/2024,²¹ can be viewed in the following table:

²¹ Badan Standar Kurikulum dan Asesmen Pendidikan Kemendikbudristek, "Keputusan Kepala Badan Standar, Kurikulum, dan Asesmen Pendidikan Nomor 032/H/KR/2024 Tentang Capaian Pembelajaran Pada Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, Jenjang Pendidikan Dasar, dan Jenjang Pendidikan Menengah Pada Kurikulum Merdeka" (Jakarta, 2024), 27–28.

Table 1. Learning Outcomes (LO) for Islamic Education (PAI) and Character Education Phase F (11th Grade High School)

Elemen	Learning Outcomes
Quran and Hadith	Students understand Quranic verses and Hadith regarding the importance of critical thinking, science and technology, the preservation of human life, and religious moderation.
<i>Aqidah</i> (Creed)	Students understand various branches of faith (<i>shu'ab al-iman</i>) and the interconnectedness between <i>iman</i> (faith), Islam, and <i>ihsan</i> (excellence/perfection).
<i>Akhlaq</i> (Ethics)	Students understand the benefits of avoiding social maladies, as well as communal etiquette and digital ethics within an Islamic framework.
<i>Fiqh</i> (Jurisprudence)	Students understand the provisions regarding <i>khutbah</i> (sermons), <i>tabligh</i> and <i>da'wah</i> (proselytizing/outreach), <i>muamalah</i> (civil transactions), <i>munakahat</i> (marriage law), and <i>mawaris</i> (inheritance law).
History of Islamic Civilization	Students understand the roles of religious scholars (<i>ulama</i>) in the global development of Islamic civilization and the contributions of Islamic organizations in Indonesia.

Table 1 demonstrates that the Ethics (*Akhlaq*) element represents the most explicit inclusion of social ethical substance, particularly through its emphasis on avoiding social maladies, establishing communal etiquette, and understanding digital ethics. The formulations within the Learning Outcomes (LO) generally employ verbs such as *understand*, *practice*, and *avoid*. To identify more specific trends, the LO wording was mapped into two categorical orientations: normative and reflective, as presented in the following table:

Table 2. Normative and Reflective Orientations in Phase F PAI Learning Outcomes

Elemen	Learning Outcome Formulation	Orientation
Quran and Hadith	Understanding verses and hadiths regarding critical thinking and religious moderation.	Normative with reflective potential
<i>Aqidah</i> (Creed)	Understanding the branches of faith and the interconnectedness between <i>iman</i> , Islam, and <i>ihsan</i> .	Normative
<i>Akhlaq</i> (Ethics)	Understanding the benefits of avoiding social maladies, communal etiquette, and digital ethics.	Normative
<i>Fiqh</i> (Jurisprudence)	Understanding legal provisions within social relations.	Normative
History of Islamic Civilization	Understanding the roles of Islamic figures and organizations.	Normative

As illustrated in Table 2, the formulation of Phase F PAI Learning Outcomes is predominantly dominated by a normative orientation in establishing social ethics learning objectives. Social values and attitudes are presented as established standards that students must both comprehend and implement. Meanwhile, a reflective orientation has not yet been explicitly formulated in the form of outcomes that encourage students to explore value dilemmas, consider moral conflicts, or construct rational arguments during decision-making processes.

3.2. Distribution of Moral Reasoning Indicators in Social Ethics Material within the Grade XI Senior High School PAI Textbook

Content analysis was conducted on the Grade XI Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Character Education textbook [1] by establishing "meaningful text units" that contain dimensions of social ethics as the units of analysis. These text units include sentences or paragraph segments containing a single, complete moral reasoning idea authored by the book's writers. Texts consisting of translations of Quranic verses, Hadiths, summaries, or direct quotes from religious figures were not categorized as units of analysis, as they are considered primary normative sources rather than the authors' pedagogical elaborations.

Based on the identification and coding process of Chapters 2, 3, 6, and 8, a total of 508 social ethics text units were obtained. Each unit was coded based on five moral reasoning indicators: 1) Understanding of Social Rules (SR); 2) Consideration of the Social Impact of Actions (SI); 3) Social Perspective-Taking (PT); 4) Reflection on Value Conflicts/Moral Dilemmas (MD); and 5) Moral Decision-Making (DM). The results of the coding distribution are presented in the author's processed table below:

Table 3. Distribution of Moral Reasoning Indicators in Grade 11 High School Religious Education and Character Education Textbooks

Chapter	SR	SI	PT	MD	DM	Total Units
Chapter 2	65	63	6	6	4	144
Chapter 3	80	69	17	6	0	172
Chapter 6	35	26	9	28	0	98
Chapter 8	64	20	8	2	0	94
Total	244	178	40	42	4	508
Average	48,03%	35,04%	7,87%	8,27%	0,79%	100%

Note: SR (Social Rules); SI (Social Impact); PT (Perspective-Taking); MD (Moral Dilemma); DM (Decision-Making).

Based on the coding results of 508 meaningful text units in Chapters 2, 3, 6, and 8 of the Grade XI PAI and Character Education textbook, it was revealed that the most dominant indicator is the Understanding of Social Rules (SR) at 48.03% (244 units), followed by the Consideration of the Social Impact of Actions (SI) at 35.04% (178 units). Meanwhile, the Social Perspective-Taking (PT) indicator appeared at 8.27% (42 units), Moral Decision-Making (MD) at 7.87% (40 units), and Reflection on Value Conflicts/Moral Dilemmas (DM) at only 0.79% (4 units).

The dominance of SR indicates that the moral construction within social ethics material is primarily built through the reinforcement of norms as behavioral standards that must be understood and followed. This is evident, for instance, in the following statement:

"As a person of faith, always fulfill promises, not only because it is a tangible proof that must be realized but also because it is part of the commendable character (*akhlaq terpuji*) that should adorn a Muslim's personality."²²

The aforementioned quotation positions the fulfillment of promises as a prescriptive moral norm and directly links it to religious identity. In addition to norms, morality is also frequently explained through the social consequences of an action. The Social Impact (SI) indicator appears in the form of emphasizing the negative repercussions of certain behaviors on both individuals and society, for example:

"Drugs are a serious matter. If not handled comprehensively (integrated and thoroughly), they result not only in economic loss but also in human resource degradation, a lost generation, and collateral crimes such as corruption, money laundering, mugging, and robbery."²³

This construction demonstrates that moral reasoning is built through arguments of broad and systematic social consequences. However, despite their lower frequency, the Perspective-Taking (PT) and Moral Decision-Making (MD) indicators still appear in the form of reflective questions and action-based tasks, such as:

²² Abd. Rahman and Hery Nugroho, *Pendidikan Agama Islam dan Budi Pekerti Untuk SMA/SMK Kelas XI*, 1st ed. (Jakarta: Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, 2021).

²³ Rahman and Nugroho.

"Now, after knowing the existing data, what must you do to prevent drug abuse for yourselves, your families, and your school environment?"²⁴

Nevertheless, the extreme scarcity of the Moral Dilemma (DM) indicator indicates that the material is rarely packaged in the form of open-ended moral dilemma situations that demand value negotiation or principled argumentation. Overall, the distribution of indicators reveals a strong normative-consequential pattern in Phase F PAI social ethics material, with a primary emphasis on compliance with norms and the consideration of the social impact of actions.

3.3. Synthesis of Findings within the Perspective of Piaget's and Kohlberg's Moral Reasoning Theories

Research findings indicate that the construction of moral reasoning in Phase F PAI social ethics material is dominated by the Understanding of Social Rules (SR) indicator (48.03%) and the Consideration of the Social Impact of Actions (SI) indicator (35.04%), while the Reflection on Moral Dilemmas (DM) indicator is nearly nonexistent (0.79%). This pattern implies that the moral orientation in the instructional materials emphasizes compliance with norms and awareness of social consequences rather than the development of critical reflection toward value conflicts.

From Jean Piaget's perspective, adolescents are in a transitional phase from heteronomous morality toward autonomous morality, where rules are no longer understood as absolute but as results of social agreements that can be considered based on intention, context, and interpersonal relations.²⁵ The dominance of the social impact indicator in these findings suggests that Phase F PAI materials have accommodated certain aspects of autonomous morality, particularly in linking actions with broader social consequences. Nevertheless, the extremely limited emergence of the moral dilemma indicator indicates that the process of value negotiation has not been optimally facilitated. Students are indeed directed to understand the consequences of an action, yet they are not yet placed in problematic situations that demand a deeper reconstruction of their moral thinking. Consequently, the progression toward autonomous morality tends to stall at the early stage—namely, relational understanding without the exploration of complex value conflicts.

When analyzed through Lawrence Kohlberg's framework, this distribution of indicators reflects the dominance of the conventional level, specifically an orientation toward social order and the maintenance of interpersonal relationships. The emphasis on Social Rules (SR) and Social Impact (SI) shows that morality is constructed as compliance with prevailing norms and an effort to maintain social harmony. This aligns with the function of religious education, which is indeed directed toward establishing ethical stability and social order. However, the limitation of the Moral Dilemma (DM) indicator suggests that the material does not yet adequately encourage development toward the post-conventional stage—the ability to evaluate norms based on universal principles that can be tested through rational argumentation.²⁶

²⁴ Rahman and Nugroho.

²⁵ Aslan Aslan and Hudson Sidabutar, "Application of Piaget's Theory in Early Childhood Education Curriculum Development," *International Journal of Teaching and Learning* 3, no. 1 (2025), <https://injournal.org/index.php/12/article/view/369>.

²⁶ Nurul Arifiyanti, "Evaluating Kohlberg's Theory in the Context of Indonesian Preschool Moral Learning," *Gifted: Journal of Early Childhood Education* 2, no. 2 (2024): 48–58, <https://doi.org/10.37985/gifted.v2i2.17>.

Furthermore, the structure of the material, which tends to position norms as final and non-problematic, reinforces this tendency. Norms are presented as standards to be internalized rather than as value constructions that can be openly discussed or negotiated. As a result, the space for students to develop moral reasoning based on critical reflection and ethical argumentation becomes limited. In this context, a tension arises between the material's success in building a strong normative foundation and its limitations in driving cognitive transformation toward advanced moral reasoning.

In conclusion, this synthesis demonstrates that Phase F PAI social ethics material is in a relatively strong position for forming normative and consequential awareness but still requires enrichment in reflective-dialogic aspects. The integration of moral dilemma situations, value conflicts, and open spaces for argumentation is essential so that learning results not only in conscious compliance but also in the capacity for critical, reflective, and autonomous moral thinking.

4. Discussion

This study aims to identify the normative-consequential structure and the limitations of moral dilemmas in the Phase F Islamic Education (PAI) social ethics curriculum using a moral development perspective. In the context of religious education, students' moral development focuses not only on the internalization of norms but also on their reflective abilities in addressing the complexity of values. Moral development theory emphasizes that adolescents are in a transitional stage toward more mature, abstract, and reflective thinking.²⁷ Therefore, instructional materials should not only present norms but also facilitate the exploration of moral dilemmas and ethical reasoning. Thus, an analysis of the material's structure is crucial to understanding the extent to which instruction supports this moral development.

The analysis revealed a significant dominance of the normative orientation, with social rules accounting for nearly half of the units examined in the Phase F textbook. The findings indicate that moral values are predominantly presented as established standards tied to religious identity and the maintenance of social harmony. Remarkably, empirical data show that reflective moral dilemmas are almost nonexistent, accounting for less than 1% of the total coded discourse. This distribution points to a pedagogical design that prioritizes the internalization of social consequences over the active resolution of ethical conflicts. Consequently, the material emphasizes behavioral compliance and external social impacts rather than the cultivation of internal, principled moral reasoning.

This finding is interesting because, until now, criticism of Islamic Education (PAI) has often focused on teachers' teaching methods, which are considered too prescriptive.²⁸ This study, however, shows that this tendency is already embedded in the structure of the teaching materials. In other words, even before entering the classroom, this norm-based orientation is already established in the text. Although teachers can reinforce it, they are not its sole source.

Nevertheless, labeling this material as merely dogmatic is also not entirely accurate. The significant percentage of indicators regarding social impact suggests that morality is not merely presented as a normative obligation but also as an action with tangible social consequences. In the discussion of drugs, for example, the arguments presented are not

²⁷ Ahmad Abdul Rochim and Amal Khayati, "Role of Islamic Education Teachers in Shaping Students' Religious Character in the Digital Era: A Case Study of SDN 1 Kondangsari, Cirebon," *HEUTAGOGIA: Journal of Islamic Education* 3, no. 2 (2023): 259–69, <https://doi.org/10.14421/hjie.2023.32-10>.

²⁸ Ismail et al., "Analisis Kritik Terhadap Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran PAI Di Sekolah."

limited to religious prohibitions but also encompass comprehensive social effects. Here, a form of social rationalization opens up space for thinking about cause and effect.

At present, this study sheds light on the critique by Ubaidillah et al. regarding the need for a more dialogical and critical approach to Islamic Education (PAI).²⁹ Elements of social rationality do exist, but their function is primarily to reinforce norms rather than merely to provide an opportunity to discuss value conflicts. Social consequences are used as justification, not as a topic for discussion. What is striking, however, is the near absence of reflections on moral dilemmas—that is, situations where two equally meaningful values clash—which are scarcely found in the analyzed text units. This is significant because, in moral development theory—whether according to Piaget³⁰ or Kohlberg³¹, progress through stages does not occur under stable and linear conditions, but rather through conflict and the tension of perspectives.

Within Piaget's framework, adolescents have entered a phase in which rules are no longer viewed as absolute. They begin to understand the intentions, context, and social connections underlying actions.³² The predominance of social impact indicators suggests that the Phase F PAI curriculum has addressed these relational aspects. However, without real-world value conflicts, the process of moral negotiation remains limited. Adolescents are indeed encouraged to consider consequences, but they are not placed in situations that require them to change their way of thinking. This aligns with the findings of Mardiyah et al., who state that adolescents' moral development requires more complex argumentative practice. Without this, reasoning tends to stop at a level of compliance refined by an awareness of consequences.³³

From Kohlberg's perspective, the dominance of rules and social order indicates a reinforcement of the conventional stage. Morality is understood as an effort to maintain interpersonal relationships and uphold the prevailing social system.³⁴ This orientation is entirely appropriate in the context of religious education, which fosters ethical stability in society. Indeed, Sari states that character education is quite effective in shaping orderly social behavior.³⁵ The issue lies not in that effectiveness, but in the limited scope for moving beyond it. The post-conventional stage in Kohlberg's theory requires individuals to evaluate norms based on principles that can be logically debated.³⁶

In the analyzed material, norms are presented as absolute rather than as elements open to questioning through transparent moral debate. This is where that intriguing tension arises. On the one hand, the Phase F PAI materials successfully establish a strong normative foundation and awareness of social consequences. On the other hand, this structure does not yet fully provide space for the development of deeper reflective reasoning. This is not merely a matter of teaching methods, but the design of the materials themselves.

²⁹ Ubaidillah, Fathurrahman, and Setiawan, "Transforming Islamic Religious Education: Building Critical Thinking and Religious Tolerance."

³⁰ Saul McLeod, "Piaget's Theory of Moral Development," SimplyPsychology, 2024.

³¹ Saul McLeod, "Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development," SimplyPsychology, 2025.

³² Britannica Editors, "Jean Piaget," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2025.

³³ Mardiyah et al., "Implikasi Psikologi Perkembangan Moral Kohlberg Terhadap Pembentukan Karakter Religius Siswa."

³⁴ Marie Doorey, "Lawrence Kohlberg," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2026.

³⁵ Sari, "Implementasi Pembelajaran Akidah Akhlak Dalam Meningkatkan Perilaku Siswa."

³⁶ Fatimah Ibda, "Perkembangan Moral Dalam Pandangan Lawrence Kohlberg," *Intelektualita: Journal Od Education Sciences and Teacher Training* 12, no. 1 (2023): 69, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22373/ji.v12i1.19256>.

Therefore, the contribution of this study lies in the structural mapping of moral orientation within the curriculum. Critiques of the normativity of Islamic Education (PAI) to date have clearly demonstrated how such orientation is created and maintained within the instructional materials. Strengthening reflective and dialogic approaches certainly does not mean abandoning the normative foundation. Rather, the challenge lies in maintaining a balance between moral stability and the space for negotiating values. Without stability, reflection loses its grounding. Without reflection, morality risks being reduced to mere social compliance.

The implications of these findings suggest that the development of social ethics materials must integrate a stronger reflective-dialogic approach. Presenting moral dilemmas, value conflicts, and open spaces for argument can foster the development of higher-order moral reasoning. This is important so that learning not only results in compliance with norms but also in the ability to think critically and autonomously when making moral decisions. Furthermore, the results of this study provide a theoretical contribution to enriching content-analysis-based moral education research. Practically, these findings can serve as a foundation for curriculum developers and textbook authors to design materials that strike a better balance between normative and reflective aspects.

5. Conclusion

This study aims to identify the normative-consequential structure and the limitations of moral dilemmas in the social ethics material of Islamic Education Phase F based on the moral development perspectives of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg. The study's results indicate that the Learning Outcomes (LO) of PAI Phase F remain predominantly normative. At the same time, the reflective dimension has not been explicitly formulated in the learning objectives. An analysis of the textbooks reveals that understanding social rules and considering the social consequences of actions dominate the construction of moral reasoning. In contrast, reflection on moral dilemmas is almost absent. This pattern indicates that learning emphasizes compliance with norms and awareness of social consequences more than the development of reflective moral reasoning. Thus, the social ethics material in PAI Phase F tends to represent the conventional moral stage with limited scope for development toward more autonomous and post-conventional moral development. These findings have important implications for the development of moral education, particularly in Islamic religious education. Theoretically, this study reinforces the argument that content analysis of instructional materials can reveal the hidden moral epistemological structures within the curriculum (citation needed). In practice, the results of this study indicate the need to integrate a reflective-dialogic approach by presenting moral dilemmas, value conflicts, and open spaces for argumentation within learning materials. This approach is expected to encourage students to develop more critical, reflective, and autonomous moral thinking skills. Therefore, this study contributes to enriching the study of moral education while providing a direction for the development of teaching materials that better balance normative and reflective aspects. Nevertheless, this study has several limitations that should be noted. The analysis focused solely on curriculum documents and textbooks without directly involving classroom teaching practices or student responses. Furthermore, the unit of analysis was limited to specific chapters, thereby failing to represent the PAI curriculum fully. The content analysis approach also relies on the researcher's interpretation, although consistency in the coding process was sought. Therefore, the findings of this study should be interpreted within the context of document analysis. These limitations create opportunities for broader, more in-depth follow-up

research. Based on these findings and limitations, future research is recommended to integrate empirical methods, such as classroom observation, interviews, or learning experiments, to assess the implementation of the curriculum directly. Research could also develop intervention designs based on moral dilemmas to measure improvements in students' moral reasoning. Additionally, a comparative study of curricula or textbooks across various educational contexts can provide a broader perspective on moral construction in religious education. A mixed-methods approach is also recommended to strengthen the validity of the findings through data triangulation. Thus, research in this field is expected to continue evolving to produce more comprehensive and transformative models of moral education.

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