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The Effect of the School Environment on Student Morality

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Abstract. This study aims to determine the Effect of the School Environment on the morale of fifth-grade students at SDN 1 Porehu, North Kolaka Regency. Employing a quantitative *ex post facto* design, the research involved a saturated sample of all 26 fifth-grade students. Data were gathered through expert-validated questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics, product-moment correlation, and the coefficient of determination. The findings indicated that both the school environment (61.54%) and student moral character (65.38%) were categorized as good. The correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between the two variables ($r = 0.649$, $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.42$) indicates that the school environment accounts for 42% of the variance in students' moral character, with the remaining 58% attributed to other factors. These results underscore the substantial role of the school environment in shaping student morality.

Keywords: School Environment; Student Moral Character; Primary Education.

1. Introduction

Human beings, as the creation of Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala, have gained a special position among other creatures. In the Qur'an, it is stated that humans are appointed as caliphs on earth with the responsibility of maintaining welfare and avoiding damage (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2020). This position is not only an honor but also a trust that must be carried out with complete moral and spiritual awareness. Therefore, moral education occupies a central position in Islamic teachings. Moral education is not only aimed at forming individuals who are obedient in worship, but also at forming individuals who can maintain harmonious relationships with fellow humans and their environment. These values are clearly enshrined in Surah Luqman, verse 13, where Luqman advises his son not to associate with Allah (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2020). The message emphasizes that moral education must be rooted in monotheism and manifested in daily behavior based on compassion, honesty, and responsibility.

However, the reality faced by the young generation today shows that there is a moral crisis. This phenomenon can be observed through student behavior at school and in community life. Social media, television, and print news often highlight cases of moral violations committed by school-age children (Sindy Oktavia Kartikasari, 2025). (Ulum, 2022) The decline in students' morality was reflected in the lack of respect for parents, teachers, and peers. Not a few students were also found who were used to using abusive language, fighting, and ignoring the norms of manners. This moral crisis cannot be seen as a simple phenomenon, because it has the potential to weaken the next generation of the nation.

The environment has a very decisive role in the formation of students' moral character. The three main influential environments are family, school, and community (Armini, 2024). The family is the first educational environment that should instill fundamental moral values (Sari, 2023).

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However, in the development of children, schools take on an important role as an institution that not only provides academic teaching but also instills ethical values. (Lubis, 2022) emphasizing that school must be a vehicle for the formation of a complete personality, including instilling an attitude of respect, discipline, and responsibility. In addition, according to (Sukirman, 2020), the elementary school period is a crucial phase in the search for self-identity, so that children are more vulnerable to environmental influences, both positive and negative.

The facts in the field reinforce the urgency of this research. Based on initial observations made by researchers at SDN 1 Porehu on December 8, 2023, it was found that around 15% of grade V students showed behavior that did not reflect noble morals. Some of them often interrupt friends during the learning process, use abusive language, arrive late for school, and get into fights. This behavior mainly arises due to the influence of peers and the surrounding environment. These findings show that schools have a great responsibility in instilling moral education while guiding students so that they do not easily fall into negative behavior.

Several previous studies have highlighted the importance of moral education and the role of the school environment. (Juarman et al., 2020) Emphasizing that character education in Islam must refer to the Qur'an and Hadith as the main guidelines in shaping morals. Another study conducted by (Ramadhani et al., 2024) Confirms that schools play a role not only in the academic aspect but also in shaping the social and moral ethics of students. Meanwhile, the (Hafidhi et al., 2024) This trend indicates a decline in students' respectful attitudes towards parents and teachers, which is one of the indicators of a moral crisis in schools. However, most of these studies are still limited to conceptual or general studies, so they have not explored in depth the direct relationship between the condition of the school environment and the formation of student morale, especially at the elementary school level.

The research gap arises due to the difference in focus between theory and empirical reality. Theoretically, schools are seen as a strategic forum in the formation of student morale (Zhao et al., 2024). However, empirically, there are still many students who exhibit deviant behavior, despite being in a school environment that is expected to instill moral values. Previous research has highlighted the importance of character education. However, few have examined how factors in the school environment—such as school culture, teacher-student interaction, and peer influence—directly shape children's moral behavior. This is where the urgency of this research lies, which is to bridge the gap between the theory of character education and the real conditions in elementary schools.

Based on these gaps, this research is focused on analyzing the influence of the school environment on student morality. This study seeks to answer three main questions. First, how does the condition of the school environment affect the moral behavior of students? Second, what factors in the most dominant school environment affect student morality? Third, what strategies can schools apply to overcome deviant behavior and strengthen student character formation? These questions are designed to delve deeper into the role of the school environment as a determining factor in moral formation.

The objectives of this study are to: (1) evaluate the influence of the school environment on students' moral behavior; (2) identify the dominant factors in the school environment that shape student morality; and (3) formulate strategies that schools can implement to instill moral values effectively. From a theoretical perspective, this research is expected to enrich the literature on character education within the school environment. From a practical standpoint, this study offers recommendations for elementary schools to foster a culture that prioritizes moral values, thereby cultivating a generation with noble character, good manners, and responsibility.

Thus, this research not only highlights the moral crisis of the younger generation but also offers practical school-based solutions. The school environment is seen as an inseparable factor in the formation of student morals. Schools that present a conducive atmosphere, have teachers who function as role models, and foster positive social interaction are expected to be key in forming students who are not only intellectually intelligent but also noble in character.

2. Method

This study employs a quantitative approach with an ex post facto design. This research method is conducted after the difference in free variables occurs naturally, without any direct manipulation by the researcher. This design was chosen because the research focuses on the relationship between the school environment as an independent variable and student morale as a dependent variable, where the condition of the two variables has been formed naturally in the field. According to (Br Harahap, 2024)The ex post facto approach allows researchers to examine causal relationships based on events that have occurred, making it an appropriate choice for this study.

The research was carried out at SD Negeri 1 Porehu, North Kolaka Regency, from January 31, 2025, to February 27, 2025. The study population included all students of class V, which amounted to 26 people. Because the population is relatively small, this study uses a saturated sampling technique, meaning that all members of the population are used as research samples. Thus, the results of the study are expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the moral condition of students in relation to the school environment.

Data collection was carried out using a questionnaire instrument based on the Likert scale, which consisted of several statements related to students' perceptions of the condition of the school environment and moral attitudes shown in daily life. This scale was chosen because it can measure the level of respondents' tendency to a statement in more detail and quantifiably. The instrument is first tested for validity and reliability to ensure its feasibility as a research measuring tool.

The collected data is then analyzed through several stages. The preliminary analysis includes a prerequisite test, including a normality test and a linearity test to ensure the data meet the basic assumptions of the correlational analysis. (Kusumastuti et al., 2021). Furthermore, a descriptive analysis was carried out to describe the condition of the research variables in general. Inferential analysis is used to test research hypotheses, which include Pearson's Product-Moment correlation test. (Akbar et al., 2023) To examine the relationship between the school environment and student morale, and to determine the contribution of school environment variables to student morale using the determination coefficient (R^2) test.

3. Result

To examine the effect of the school environment on the moral character of fifth-grade students at SDN 1 Porehu, North Kolaka Regency, the researcher distributed questionnaires consisting of 18 items measuring the school environment and 30 items measuring students' moral character. A total of 26 students participated as respondents. The questionnaires employed a Likert scale, with responses scored as follows: Always = 4, Often = 3, Sometimes = 2, and Never = 1.

a. Description of the School Environment (X)

Based on the questionnaire consisting of 18 items completed by 26 students, the school environment variable (X) showed a maximum score of 72, a minimum of 18, a highest of 72, a lowest of 53, a mean of 65.04, a median of 66, a mode of 61, and a standard deviation of 4.238.

Table 1. Results of the School Environment Questionnaire at SDN 1 Porehu

Interval	Frequency	Category	Percentage
53–64	10	Fair	38.46%
65–72	16	Good	61.54%
Total	26		100%

The data indicate that 38.46% of students rated the school environment as fair, while 61.54% rated it good. Two students achieved the maximum score (72). Overall, the school environment is categorized as good. School environment items were grouped into six indicators: teachers, learning methods, students, school building, classrooms, and schoolyard. Each item was rated on a 1-4 scale and then converted to a percentage.

Table 2. Recapitulation Results

Indicator	Items	Percentage
Teachers	1–3	91.35%
Learning Methods	4–6	89.42%
Students	7–10	91.83%
School Building	11–13	90.71%
Classrooms	14–16	86.54%
Schoolyard	17–18	92.31%

All indicators scored above 85%, indicating an excellent performance. The schoolyard (92.31%), students (91.83%), and teachers (91.35%) scored highest. This shows that SDN 1 Porehu provides a highly supportive environment for students' character development, with both social (teachers, students, learning methods) and physical aspects (building, classrooms, schoolyard) functioning optimally.

Description of Students' Morality (Y)

Based on the questionnaire completed by 26 students, the morality variable had a maximum score of 120, a minimum score of 30, a highest score of 119, a lowest score of 97, a mean of 107.58, a median of 108.50, a mode of 110, and a standard deviation of 4.957.

Table 3. Results of Students' Morality Questionnaire at SDN 1 Porehu

Interval	Frequency	Category	Percentage
97–106	9	Fair	34.62%
107–111	17	Good	65.38%
Total	26		100%

The data show that 34.62% of students rated morality as fair, while 65.38% rated it good. Overall, the morality of students at SDN 1 Porehu falls into the good category.

To assess intrapersonal morality, four indicators were examined: honesty, work ethic, independence, and work motivation. Each indicator had three items, except work motivation, which had one item. Scores were converted into a 1-4 scale, then into percentages.

Table 4. Recapitulation of Intrapersonal Morality Indicators

Indicator	Items	%	Category
Honesty	1–3	87.82	Very Good
Hard Work	4–6	91.35	Very Good
Independence	7–9	93.91	Very Good
Work Motivation	10	98.08	Very Good

All indicators scored above 85%, categorized as very good. Work motivation had the highest score (98.08%), followed by independence (93.91%), hard work (91.35%), and honesty (87.82%). These results indicate that students demonstrate strong intrapersonal values such as responsibility, perseverance, independence, and honesty. The findings suggest that the cultivation of moral values through school activities has been effective, and students' intrapersonal morality in Grade V has developed optimally.

b. Observation Results

Observations indicate that the school environment generally supports the learning process. Teachers actively teach and guide students, classrooms are well-organized, and most students comply with school rules. This aligns with the questionnaire results, where 61.54% rated the school environment as good.

In terms of students' morality, most showed positive attitudes such as respecting teachers, cooperating in groups, and maintaining classroom cleanliness. These findings are consistent with the questionnaire results, where 65.38% rated students' morality as good.

c. Prerequisite Analysis Tests

Normality Test

School Environment Variable (X)

Table 5. Normality Test of the School Environment Variable (X)

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
School Environment	.128	26	.200*	.944	26	.169

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

Based on Table 3.5, the school environment variable has a significance value greater than α = 0.05 (0.169 ≥ 0.05). Thus, the independent variable X (School Environment) is usually distributed.

Students' Morality Variable (Y)

Table 6. Normality Test of the Students' Morality Variable (Y)

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Students' Morality	.168	26	.057	.895	26	.212

Based on Table 3.6, the students' morality variable has a significance value greater than α = 0.05 (0.212 ≥ 0.05). Thus, the dependent variable Y (Students' Morality) is usually distributed.

d. Linearity Test

Table 7. Linearity Test Results

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Students' Morality * School Environment	Between Groups	(Combined)	258.379	11	23.489	0.924	0.545
		Linearity	185.290	1	185.290	7.287	0.017
		Deviation from Linearity	73.090	10	7.309	0.287	0.973
	Within Groups		355.967	14	25.426		
	Total		614.346	25			

Based on Table 3.7, the F-value for deviation from linearity is 0.287 with a significance level of 0.973. Since the significance value is greater than α = 0.05 (0.973 ≥ 0.05), it can be concluded that the school environment variable and students' morality variable have a linear relationship.

e. Hypothesis Testing

Based on the results of the normality and linearity tests, the questionnaire data were normally distributed and linear, indicating that the study could proceed. The hypothesis testing employed in this research was the Product-Moment correlation test, which was used to examine the relationship between the independent variable (X) and the dependent variable (Y) with interval or ratio data. The following are the results of the Product-Moment correlation analysis using SPSS version 25:

Table 8. Product-Moment Correlation Test Results

		School Environment	Students' Morality
School Environment	Pearson Correlation	1	.649**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.004
	N	26	26
Students' Morality	Pearson Correlation	.649**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.004	

N	26	26

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on Table 3.8, there is a positive influence between the school environment and the morality of fifth-grade students at UPT SDN 1 Porehu. The obtained Product-Moment correlation coefficient is r = 0.649. To test the hypothesis, this value was compared to the r-table value. With a sample size of 26 respondents, the r-table value at the 5% significance level is 0.374. Since r = 0.649 is greater than r-table = 0.374 (0.649 ≥ 0.374), the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. This indicates a positive and significant relationship between the school environment and the morality of fifth-grade students at SDN 1 Porehu.

To determine the strength of the relationship between the independent variable (X) and the dependent variable (Y), the correlation coefficient was interpreted using the following guidelines:

Table 9. Interpretation Guidelines for Correlation Coefficient

Correlation Interval	Relationship Strength
0.00 – 0.199	Very Low
0.20 – 0.399	Low
0.40 – 0.599	Moderate
0.60 – 0.799	Strong
0.80 – 1.000	Very Strong

Based on Table 3.9, the obtained value of r = 0.649 falls within the range of 0.60 to 0.799, indicating a strong relationship between the independent variable (School Environment) and the dependent variable (Students' Morality) of fifth-grade students at SDN 1 Porehu. To measure the extent of contribution made by the independent variable (School Environment) to the dependent variable (Students' Morality), the coefficient of determination was calculated using the following formula:

$$KP = r^2 \, x \, 100\,\%$$
$$= (0.649)^2 \, x \, 100\,\%$$
$$= 0{,}42 \, x \, 100\,\%$$
$$= 42\%$$

Based on this calculation, the school environment contributes 42% to influencing the morality of fifth-grade students at SDN 1 Porehu. The remaining 58% is influenced by other factors, both internal and external to the students, including social environment, family, and peers outside the school, which may also affect students' morality.

4. Discussion

Description of the School Environment (X)

The results of the study showed that the school environment at SDN 1 Porehu was included in the good category with a percentage of 61.54%. The highest score a student gets is 72, while the lowest score is 53. In general, this data confirms that the condition of the school environment, both from physical and social aspects, has been able to create an atmosphere that supports the moral development of students. However, the distribution of scores also shows a variation in perceptions among students, especially on items related to discipline enforcement, sharing habits, and concern for school facilities.

Further interpretation of the questionnaire results revealed that the school's social aspects, including the teacher's role as a model, the practice of praying together before learning, and encouragement to support one another among students, scored relatively high. This shows that teachers not only carry out instructional roles, but also function as moral figures that students emulate. According to (Haris & Anshori, 2024) School is not just a place for knowledge transfer, but a space for social interaction that shapes children's personalities through real examples given by teachers, peers, and the surrounding environment. The results of this study are consistent with this

view because the role of teachers and students at SDN 1 Porehu has been proven to contribute significantly to building a learning atmosphere with moral nuances.

In addition to the social aspect, the study's results also highlight a significant contribution from the physical aspect of the school environment. The condition of the school park received the highest score (92.31%), followed by the condition of students (91.83%) and teachers (91.35%). This data suggests that the presence of well-maintained green spaces, decent school buildings, and well-organized classrooms contributes to creating a comfortable learning environment. Lubis' research (2022) confirms that a good physical condition of a school has a positive influence on student behavior because a comfortable and clean environment encourages them to behave in a disciplined, orderly, and respectful manner in shared facilities. These findings show that physical and social factors complement each other in shaping student morality.

When compared to previous research, these results align with (Verhoeven et al., 2019) Findings suggest that the elementary school period is a critical period for forming children's identity. Consequently, a conducive school environment significantly influences the direction of their moral development. Another study by (Anisah, 2023) Also strengthens the idea that moral education is not only determined by learning materials, but also by the culture and habits built in schools. Thus, this study adds empirical evidence that a good school environment at the elementary school level can make a real contribution to the formation of student morality.

The practical implication of this study's results is that schools must maintain a balance between physical and social aspects to build an effective educational environment. Teachers need to maintain their role as moral role models through daily behavior, positive habits, and exemplary interactions. Schools also need to ensure the maintenance of facilities and infrastructure, such as classrooms, parks, and school buildings, to continue to support learning comfort. For students, a conducive school environment is expected to foster positive habits, including discipline, concern for others, and respect for the surrounding environment.

From a theoretical perspective, this research makes an important contribution to the development of character education studies (Pritchard, 1988). The results of the study prove that the school environment plays a dual role: as a formal learning space as well as a space for moral socialization that shapes children's behavior. This expands the understanding that character education does not only depend on curriculum or teaching materials, but also on the school culture that is internalized in daily interactions. Thus, this study supports the theory that moral education is the result of integration between internal factors of students and external factors in the form of the social-physical environment of the school.

Description of Students' Morality (Y)

The results of the descriptive analysis showed that the morality of students at SDN 1 Porehu was relatively good, with an average percentage of 65.38%. The highest score is nearly at the maximum, while the lowest score remains in the relatively high category. These findings indicate that the majority of students have internalized moral values that are reflected in their daily behavior. The variation in the score in the questionnaire shows that although several aspects still need to be improved, in general, students have shown a positive attitude both in intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects.

Further interpretation of the students' answers reveals differences in tendencies on certain items. Relatively low-scoring aspects, such as preparing school supplies independently, arriving early for picket duties, or actively participating in community service every Friday, indicate that students' responsibility and independence still need to be strengthened. Conversely, high scores on statements regarding honesty, confession of mistakes, and the ability to maintain good relationships with peers indicate that core moral values such as honesty, responsibility, and tolerance have been well established.

The intrapersonal morale indicator even reached the outstanding category, with work motivation obtaining the highest score (98.08%). This indicates that students have a high level of enthusiasm for completing school assignments. The indicators of independence (93.91%), hard work (91.35%), and honesty (87.82%) also show consistency in the formation of strong character. Thus, it

can be understood that the habituation of moral values in the daily learning process at school can create a solid foundation for the development of students' character.

These results are consistent with research (Khaidir & Suud, 2020), which emphasizes that education must instill positive values so that students can resist negative influences from outside the school environment. Similarly, (Guna et al., 2024) Emphasized that the formation of noble morals in students is not only the responsibility of religious teachers but requires the involvement of all parties, including school principals, classroom teachers, parents, and even the surrounding community. This collective approach is also seen at SDN 1 Porehu, where the habituation of moral values is carried out thoroughly through cooperation between teachers, students, and the school environment.

The practical implication of these findings is the need for schools to strengthen strategies for habituating moral values through more structured routine activities, such as picket schedules, community service programs, and extracurricular activities that foster a sense of responsibility. Teachers need to continue to set a real example, because the success of moral education does not only depend on teaching materials, but on the consistency of teachers' behavior as role models. In addition, parents and the community need to support school programs so that the moral values instilled are sustainable outside the school environment.

From the theoretical side, the results of this study confirm that the moral formation of students is not only a product of formal teaching, but the result of integration between the intrapersonal dimension (motivation, independence, hard work, honesty) and the social dimension (tolerance, caring, healthy interaction with peers). These findings reinforce the view that moral education is holistic, encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning that is intertwined in everyday school culture. (Limbu, 2024). Therefore, this research contributes to the development of character education theory by emphasizing the importance of the role of a consistent school environment in instilling moral values.

The Influence of the School Environment on Students' Morality (X → Y)

The results of the correlation analysis showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between the school environment (X) and the morality of students (Y) at SDN 1 Porehu. The value of the correlation coefficient of $r_x\gamma = 0.649$ is higher than the r-table of 0.374 at a significance level of 5%. These findings confirm that the better the school environment that students feel, the better the morality that develops in them. The strength of relationships in the medium to strong category suggests that schools play a significant role in shaping student morale, even if not perfectly.

The determination coefficient (R^2) of 42% showed that almost half of the students' moral development was influenced by the quality of the school environment. In comparison, the remaining 58% was determined by other factors such as family parenting, peer influence, and media. This proportion indicates that schools make a significant contribution to character building, but they still require external support to enhance moral education as a whole.

The interpretation of these results is consistent with the analysis of previous indicators, where the school environment shows high achievements in aspects of teacher example, physical condition of the school, and positive social interaction. This directly supports the moral development of students in the aspects of honesty, independence, hard work, and learning motivation. Thus, it can be understood that habituating moral values through teacher examples, infrastructure support, and conducive school culture play an important role in shaping student behavior.

The findings of this study align with the results of the previous study (Intaniah, 2020) At SMP Negeri 1 Kelas Jauh, Kebun Lado Village, the school environment was found to contribute 42.9% to the formation of student morale. The percentage similarity between this study and Intaniah's research strengthens the belief that the school environment is a dominant factor that consistently affects the morality of students at various levels of education. In addition, this research aligns with Lubis's (2022) views, which emphasize the importance of schools as a space for moral socialization, beyond being an institution for knowledge transfer.

The practical implication of the results of this study is the need for schools to continue to strengthen the role of teachers as moral examples. Teachers are not only tasked with delivering

subject matter, but must also be able to model positive attitudes that students can imitate. The school also needs to maintain the consistency of moral habituation through routine activities such as joint prayer, community service, and discipline programs. In addition, cooperation with parents and the community needs to be increased to close the gap of negative influences that come from outside the school.

Theoretically, the results of this study confirm that moral education is a multidimensional process that involves the interaction between internal factors (the values that students bring) and external factors (the school environment, family, and society) (Farrelly, 1993). This study expands the understanding of character education theory by providing empirical evidence that elementary schools can be an adequate space for instilling moral values. However, complete success still requires synergy with other factors outside of school.

Thus, it can be understood that the school environment at SDN 1 Porehu has played a significant role in shaping student morale, as reflected in the correlation value of 0.649 and a contribution of 42%. This indicates that schools offering exemplary teachers, adequate facilities, healthy social interaction, and a culture of positive habituation can produce students who excel academically and possess strong character and good morals in daily life.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal that both the school environment and students' morality at SDN 1 Porehu are categorized as good, with scores of 61.54% and 65.38% respectively. The analysis further indicates that the school environment exerts a significant and positive influence on students' morality, as shown by the Product-Moment correlation coefficient of 0.649, which exceeds the r-table value of 0.374 at the 5% significance level. This demonstrates that a better quality of the school environment is associated with higher levels of morality among students. The coefficient of determination (R^2) also indicates that the school environment contributes 42% to students' moral development. In comparison, the remaining 58% is shaped by other factors such as family, peer groups, and the broader community.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that schools continue to strengthen moral education by enhancing both social and physical aspects of the learning environment. Teachers should consistently serve as role models, while schools maintain a conducive atmosphere through structured routines and adequate facilities. Collaboration with parents and the community is also essential to ensure continuity of moral education beyond school. The contribution of this research lies in providing empirical evidence of the significant role the school environment plays in shaping students' morality, thus enriching the theoretical discourse on character education and offering practical strategies for schools to foster holistic student development.

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