

**FREE ASSOCIATION AND THE MORALS CRISIS OF TEENS: THE URGENCY OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AS A PREVENTIVE SOLUTION**Muhammad Yusuf<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Aulia Zaqi<sup>2</sup>, Kanda Maulana<sup>3</sup> and Muhamad Yahya<sup>4</sup><sup>1</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus, Batusangkar, Indonesia<sup>2</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus, Batusangkar, Indonesia<sup>3</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus, Batusangkar, Indonesia<sup>4</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus, Batusangkar, Indonesia**Corresponding Author:**

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**Abstract**

The phenomenon of promiscuity among adolescents is a serious problem that has resulted in a moral crisis and moral degradation. This article aims to analyze the forms of promiscuity, its causes, and examine the urgency of Islamic Religious Education as a preventative solution to address it. This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method, sourced from books, scientific articles, and relevant research findings. The results indicate that promiscuity is influenced by internal factors such as weak self-control and religious understanding, as well as external factors such as the social environment, digital media, and lack of family supervision. The resulting impacts are not only social but also detrimental to the spiritual and psychological aspects of adolescents. In this regard, Islamic Religious Education plays a strategic role through the internalization of moral values, strengthening faith, and character formation based on Islamic teachings. The implementation of contextual, integrative, and sustainable Islamic Religious Education has proven to be a preventive measure in protecting adolescents from deviant behavior. Therefore, synergy between families, schools, and communities is needed to optimize the function of Islamic Religious Education as a moral bulwark for the younger generation.

**Keywords:** Adolescents, Character Education, Free Association, Islamic Values, Moral Crisis



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## INTRODUCTION

The current phenomenon of promiscuity among adolescents demonstrates a striking paradox between technological advancement and moral decline. On the one hand, digital developments provide widespread access to information and education, but on the other, they open up space for increasingly difficult-to-control deviant behavior, such as promiscuity, social media abuse, and adolescent moral identity crises (Hidayat, 2021). This reality becomes contradictory when modern society prioritizes the value of individual freedom, while religious and cultural norms demand behavioral restrictions to maintain morality (Rahman & Aziz, 2022). This situation demonstrates that the advancement of civilization is not always directly proportional to the moral quality of the younger generation and can even lead to complex value disorientation (Sari et al., 2023).

Experts in education and sociology have widely highlighted this phenomenon as a multidimensional crisis. According to Azyumardi Azra, the weakening of values education in families and schools is a primary cause of adolescent moral decadence in the era of globalization (Azra, 2021). Meanwhile, Zakiah Daradjat emphasized that the lack of internalization of religious values from an early age causes adolescents to lose self-control in the face of environmental influences (Daradjat, 2020). Furthermore, contemporary perspectives suggest that unfiltered exposure to digital media accelerates the normalization of deviant behavior among adolescents (Putri & Lestari, 2022). Thus, the phenomenon of promiscuity cannot be understood in a single instance, but rather as the result of the interaction of various social, psychological, and religious factors (Kurniawan, 2023).

Several previous studies have examined promiscuity from various perspectives. A study by Hasanah found that low religious literacy correlates with high rates of deviant behavior among adolescents. Other research by Nugroho and Prasetyo demonstrated that the social environment and social media significantly influence adolescent promiscuity. Meanwhile, international research by Smith and Anderson confirmed that cultural globalization contributes to accelerating changes in social norms among the younger generation. However, most of this research still focuses on causal factors and impacts, without in-depth examination of preventive strategies based on Islamic Religious Education in an integrative and contextual manner (Yusuf et al., 2024). This gap highlights the need for a new approach that is not only descriptive but also provides solutions within an Islamic educational framework (Fauzi, 2022).

Conceptually, promiscuity can be understood as social behavior that exceeds religious and cultural norms, potentially damaging an individual's moral structure. Empirically, various data show an increase in juvenile delinquency cases related to promiscuity in various regions of Indonesia. From a philosophical perspective, this phenomenon reflects a crisis of meaning in life due to the dominance of materialism and hedonism in modern life (Husaini, 2021). Meanwhile, theoretically, social control theory and social learning theory explain that deviant behavior arises from weak internal control and strong external environmental influences (Bandura, 2020; Hirschi, 2021). These four perspectives show that promiscuity is a complex phenomenon that requires a multidisciplinary approach, particularly through the integration of Islamic Religious Education (Nasution, 2022).

Recent literature reviews demonstrate that Islamic Religious Education plays a strategic role in shaping the character and morality of adolescents. Research by Abdullah et al. confirms that internalizing Islamic values effectively suppresses deviant behavior. A study by Karim shows that a character-based learning approach in Islamic Religious Education significantly increases students' moral awareness. Furthermore, research by Alim and Rahmawati highlights the importance of integrating technology into Islamic Religious Education learning to address the challenges of the digital era. Another study by Hassan et al. emphasizes that a holistic approach to Islamic education can create a balance between cognitive, affective, and spiritual aspects. However, there is limited research specifically examining the implementation of Islamic Religious Education as a preventive strategy against promiscuity, using a contextual and applicable approach in today's adolescent environment (Zulkarnain, 2023).

Based on this description, the research gap lies in the lack of optimal studies integrating the concept of Islamic Religious Education with preventive strategies against promiscuity in a systematic and contextual manner. This research offers a novel integrative approach that combines the internalization of Islamic values, character building, and adaptation to the challenges of the digital era within a unified conceptual framework (Rahim, 2024). Thus, this research not only fills a gap in previous studies but also provides a new perspective on the development of Islamic education relevant to current conditions (Maulana, 2022).

Theoretically, this research enriches the body of knowledge in Islamic Religious Education, particularly in the study of morality and adolescent character education. Practically, this research is expected to serve as a reference for educators, parents, and policymakers in designing strategies to prevent promiscuity based on Islamic values (Sutrisno, 2023). Furthermore, this research also contributes to building collective public awareness of the importance of moral education amidst the increasingly complex currents of globalization (Wibowo, 2021).

The purpose of this research is to analyze the phenomenon of promiscuity among adolescents and examine the urgency of Islamic Religious Education as a preventative solution to address it. This research also aims to formulate an effective and contextual strategy for implementing Islamic Religious Education in shaping adolescent morals. It is hoped that this research will make a tangible contribution to the development of a young generation with noble morals, strong character, and the ability to face the challenges of the times without losing Islamic values (Hakim, 2024).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature review, aiming to deeply examine the phenomenon of promiscuity and the urgency of Islamic Religious Education as a preventative solution. A qualitative approach was chosen because it can explore meanings, values, and conceptual understandings that cannot be measured quantitatively (Kasingku & Sanger, 2023). Furthermore, the literature review method allows researchers to systematically and comprehensively review various scientific sources related to the issue under study (Astuti et al., 2024). Thus, this research is not only descriptive but also analytical in understanding the phenomenon of promiscuity from the perspective of Islamic Religious Education (Lubis et al., 2025).

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from the latest scientific articles relevant to the research topic, particularly those published within the last five years, from both indexed national and international journals. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from books, proceedings, and official documents related to promiscuity and Islamic education (Aulaz & Rangkuti, 2024). Data sources were selected selectively, considering credibility, relevance, and currency of the information to ensure the validity of the study (Karmila & Syamzaimar, 2025). With this approach, the data

obtained is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon being studied (Astuti et al., 2024).

Data collection techniques were carried out through documentation and literature review, namely by identifying, classifying, and analyzing various references relevant to the research focus. This process involved searching academic databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and national journal portals to obtain credible and up-to-date sources (Lubis et al., 2025). Furthermore, researchers systematically recorded key concepts related to promiscuity and Islamic Religious Education as a basis for analysis (Kasingku & Sanger, 2023). This technique enabled researchers to construct a logical, scientifically based framework (Astuti et al., 2024).

The data analysis technique used was content analysis with a descriptive-analytical approach. This analysis was conducted through several stages: data reduction, data presentation, and systematic conclusion drawing (Aulaz & Rangkuti, 2024). The collected data were then analyzed to identify patterns, relationships, and meanings related to the phenomenon of promiscuity and the role of Islamic Religious Education in addressing it (Karmila & Syamzaimar, 2025). This method is expected to provide in-depth understanding and relevant solutions to the problems studied (Astuti et al., 2024).

To ensure data validity, this study employed source triangulation techniques, comparing various references from different sources to obtain valid and reliable data. Furthermore, the researchers conducted a critical evaluation of each source used to ensure its suitability to the research context (Kasingku & Sanger, 2023). Therefore, the results of this study are expected to have a high level of validity and be academically accountable (Lubis et al., 2025).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Findings

Research results indicate that the phenomenon of promiscuity among adolescents is an increasingly complex problem influenced by various multidimensional factors, both internal and external (Karmila & Syamzaimar, 2025). Internally, weak religious understanding, low self-control, and identity crises are dominant factors driving adolescents to engage in deviant behavior (Putri et al., 2025). Meanwhile, externally, the influence of the social environment, technological advances, and lack of family supervision are the main triggers for the increase in promiscuity (Astuti et al., 2024). Thus, promiscuity cannot be separated from modern social dynamics, which tend to be permissive towards deviant behavior (Karmila & Syamzaimar, 2025).

Further findings indicate that forms of promiscuity occurring among adolescents include unrestricted interaction between the opposite sex, premarital sexual behavior, alcohol consumption, and digital media abuse (Putri et al., 2025). In fact, several studies have revealed that such behavior has become commonplace in some adolescent communities due to the normalization of global culture (Darnoto & Dewi, 2020; relevance reinforced by recent studies). This condition indicates a significant shift in moral values, where religious norms are no longer the primary basis for behavior (Rahmawati & Nurhasanah, 2025). Therefore, this phenomenon is a strong indicator of a moral crisis among the younger generation (Putri et al., 2025).

Furthermore, this study also found that Islamic Religious Education plays a very significant role in preventing promiscuity among adolescents (Putri et al., 2025). This is evidenced by the negative correlation between the level of understanding of Islamic values and the tendency for deviant behavior, where the higher a person's religious understanding, the lower the tendency to engage in promiscuity (Mesada Journal, 2025). Islamic Religious Education contributes through strengthening faith, fostering habits of worship, and internalizing moral values in daily life (Astuti et al., 2024). Thus, Islamic Religious Education

serves not only as a transfer of knowledge but also as a builder of character and moral control in adolescents (Karmila & Syamzaimar, 2025).

Other findings indicate that the effective implementation of Islamic Religious Education must involve synergy between family, school, and community (Astuti et al., 2024). The family environment plays a crucial role as the initial foundation for moral formation, while schools play a role in reinforcing values through formal learning processes (Putri et al., 2025). Furthermore, society serves as a social space that determines the sustainability of these values in real life (Rahmawati & Nurhasanah, 2025). Therefore, a holistic approach is key to effectively preventing promiscuity (Mesada Journal, 2025).

### **Discussion and Discussion**

The findings of this study reinforce the view that promiscuity is a social phenomenon inextricably linked to changes in the value structure of modern society (Karmila & Syamzaimar, 2025). In this context, technological advances and globalization have had ambivalent impacts, providing easy access to information while also opening opportunities for the influx of values that conflict with religious teachings (Astuti et al., 2024). This aligns with the theory of social change, which states that modernization is often accompanied by shifts in norms and values within society (Putri et al., 2025). Thus, promiscuity can be understood as a consequence of global value disruption (Rahmawati & Nurhasanah, 2025).

From the perspective of Islamic Religious Education, these findings confirm that Islamic Religious Education holds a strategic position as a moral bulwark in addressing the moral crisis of adolescents (Mesada Journal, 2025). However, the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education depends heavily on the methods and approaches used in the learning process (Astuti et al., 2024). Normative and cognitive learning alone are insufficient to shape adolescent character; therefore, a more contextual, applicable, and integrative approach is needed (Putri et al., 2025). Therefore, transforming Islamic Religious Education learning is an urgent need to address the challenges of the times (Karmila & Syamzaimar, 2025).

Furthermore, the results of this study also indicate that the internalization of Islamic values must be carried out sustainably and not limited to the school environment (Rahmawati & Nurhasanah, 2025). This emphasizes the importance of the family as the primary agent in moral education, given that the family is the primary environment that shapes an individual's character (Astuti et al., 2024). Furthermore, society also has a responsibility to create a social environment conducive to adolescent moral development (Putri et al., 2025). Thus, preventing promiscuity requires a collaborative approach involving various parties (Mesada Journal, 2025).

Theoretically, these findings support the theory of social control, which states that individual behavior is influenced by internal and external controlling forces (Karmila & Syamzaimar, 2025). In this regard, Islamic Religious Education functions as an internal control mechanism through the formation of faith and morals, and as an external control through social norms instilled in the educational environment (Putri et al., 2025). Therefore, strengthening Islamic Religious Education is important not only in the context of formal education but also in broader social life (Astuti et al., 2024).

Thus, this study confirms that promiscuity is not only an individual problem but also a systemic issue that requires a comprehensive solution based on Islamic values (Mesada Journal, 2025). An integrative, contextual, and sustainable approach to Islamic Religious Education is the main key in forming a young generation with noble morals and capable of facing global challenges without losing their Islamic identity (Rahmawati & Nurhasanah, 2025).

## CONCLUSION

This research confirms that the phenomenon of promiscuity among adolescents is a complex, multidimensional issue that cannot be understood simply, as it involves the interaction of mutually influencing internal and external factors. Internally, weak self-control, an identity crisis, and a lack of understanding and appreciation of religious values are the main triggers that push adolescents into deviant behavior. Meanwhile, externally, the influence of a permissive social environment, lack of attention and supervision from families, and the massive and uncontrolled development of digital technology contribute to accelerating moral degradation. The impact of promiscuity is not limited to deviant social behavior alone, but also has far-reaching implications for moral decay, psychological disorders, and a weakening of the spiritual dimension of adolescents, potentially threatening the quality of the future generation as a whole.

In this context, Islamic Religious Education has proven to play a highly strategic role as a preventative solution in addressing these problems. Through the process of internalizing religious values, cultivating worship habits, and instilling noble morals, Islamic Religious Education can foster moral and spiritual awareness, which serves as a primary bulwark for adolescents against various negative influences. However, the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education will not be optimal if it is delivered solely in a normative and theoretical manner. A more contextual, integrative, and applicable approach is needed, one that connects Islamic teachings to the realities of today's youth, delivered through methods that are engaging and relevant to current developments. Furthermore, the successful implementation of Islamic Religious Education also depends heavily on strong synergy between the three main pillars of education: the family as the initial foundation for character formation, schools as formal institutions that reinforce values, and society as a social space that tests and internalizes these values in real life.

Therefore, strengthening Islamic Religious Education is an urgent and indispensable need to address the moral crisis of adolescents in the modern era. This effort aims not only to prevent deviant behavior but also to shape a generation with strong character, noble morals, and the ability to maintain a balance between technological advancements and spiritual values. By strengthening Islamic Religious Education systematically, sustainably, and adaptively to current developments, it is hoped that a generation of young people will emerge who are not only intellectually intelligent but also emotionally and spiritually mature, capable of facing various global challenges without losing their Islamic identity and values.

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