

EDUCATION AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE SOUL AND SOCIAL ETHICS

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Abstract

This study addresses the ethical crisis among students in the digital age by highlighting the failure of education in effectively bridging internal morality (Soul/Empathy) and external social action (Social Ethics). Using a Qualitative Literature Study (Content Analysis) on 30 academic documents, this study constructs a new theoretical framework. The core findings are the Adab-Centered Instrumental Model, validated through the Dialectical Synthesis of Adab (Moral Compass) and John Dewey's Experiential Learning (Action Method). This synthesis results in a Transformative Pedagogy that shapes Cyber-Morality, equipping learners with the moral resilience needed to participate responsibly in a digital and democratic society. This model makes a significant contribution to character education policy by transforming passive moral potential into active social virtue.

Keywords: Manners, Soul, Social Ethics, John Dewey, Cyber-Morality

A. Introduction

Education is an essential foundation for the development of civilization and the formation of quality human resources. However, the social dynamics triggered by technological advances and globalization have brought complex challenges, including the increasing trend of moral crises, the issue of juvenile delinquency, as well as the problem of violence and digital ethics among students (Yusuf, 2025; Sagala et al., 2024; Amalia Maisaroh & Untari, 2024). This phenomenon confirms that education cannot only focus on the transfer of cognitive knowledge, but must be integrated to strengthen ethical values and character (Annur et al., 2021).

In this context, the urgency of character education has become a major concern in national education policy. Ethics provides concrete guidance for individuals in promoting moral awareness and shaping responsible behavior in social interactions (Afandi et al., 2024; Saliun & Shafar, 2025). Holistic character formation requires a special focus on social competence, especially empathy and social awareness (Zuchdi, 2003; Mufidah et al., 2024). Empathy, as the ability to understand the perspective of others, is the main quality in improving social relationships (Zuchdi, 2003). Similarly, social awareness is essential for balancing individual responsibility and social commitment to the group (Hasna & Aliyah, 2024).

Although the significance of character education, empathy, and social awareness has been recognized, the gap in the literature shows the need for more specific and instrumental studies. Existing studies often fail to provide a clear model of mechanisms for effectively bridging internal moral potential (Soul) to consistent social action (Social Ethics). The limited philosophical analysis that synthesizes the concept of Adab as a moral bridge (Hamka et al., 2024) with Western praxis methods (John Dewey) further widens the methodological gap in the application of applicable ethics. This research aims to fill these gaps by formulating and constructing a new and integrated theoretical framework.

B. Literature Review

1. Conceptual Foundations: Character, Ethics, and Moral Education

Education in the modern era faces major problems stemming from moral and ethical crises (Sagala et al., 2024; Yusuf, 2025). Character Education (PK), which seeks to build moral and spiritual integrity (Amalia Maisaroh & Untari, 2024), is the main focus. Conceptually, Ethics is a branch of science that examines values, Morality is a real practice, and Morality is an ingrained behavior that appears consistently (Afandi et al., 2024). Adab (attitudes based on religious values) serve as a key element that guides individuals (El-Yunusi et al., 2023). Without instrumental mechanisms, the moral potential of the soul will fail to be projected as a real action in Social Ethics (Hasna & Aliyah, 2024).

2. Empathy and Social Awareness as Character Competencies (Social Ethics)

Empathy is a crucial aspect in the development of the Psyche, defined as the ability to understand, feel, and see from the perspective of others (Zuchdi, 2003). Empathy serves as the main requirement of internal morality. Social Awareness is the next stage, which shifts attention to shared responsibility and results from a balance between personal responsibility and commitment to the group (Suparwanto et al., 2025; Hasna & Aliyah, 2024). Synthesis: Empathy is an internal lens (feel), while Social Awareness is a clue (act) (Nasution & Aqilla, 2024). Adab Education should be a mechanism that ensures that Empathy is transformed into Social Awareness that encourages real and structured action.

3. The Challenges of Character Education in the Digital Era

The digital moral crisis is characterized by Cyberbullying, misuse of social media (Yusuf, 2025), and Group Responsibility Violations (often absent from online learning) (Hasna & Aliyah, 2024). The fundamental challenge of PK is to formulate a Pedagogical Bridge (Adab) that is philosophically solid and practically resilient to instill Social Ethics in the midst of complexity and digital anonymous space.

4. Philosophical Synthesis: Manners as a Bridge and Dialogue with John Dewey

The Philosophy of Adab serves as a Moral Compass that provides Deep Moral Roots and Internal Discipline (Mahmud et al., 2024), connecting Science with Charity (Hamka et al., 2024). John Dewey offers the ideal Action Method through Experiential Learning, with the principles of Reflective Praxis and an orientation to Social Justice (Anri, 2024). Synthesis: Adab provides a Moral Compass, while Dewey's Experiential Learning provides Practical and Applicative Methods (Ships) to test Adab in real experience (Anri, 2024).

C. Hypothesis Development

Based on the literature gap analysis and conceptual synthesis that has been presented, this study proposes three main hypotheses (theoretical propositions) that will be constructed and justified through Critical Content Analysis:

1. Proposition 1

It is accepted that the Three-Dimensional Conceptual Model of Adab-Centric (Soul-Adab-Social Ethics) can be theoretically constructed as an effective instrumental mechanism. This proposition argues that Adab Education is a mandatory mediating variable to overcome internal moral stagnation, transforming passive Empathy into an active and consistent Social Ethics.

2. Proposition 2

It is accepted that the ideal pedagogical foundation for operationalizing the Adab Bridge is the Pedagogical-Philosophical Synthesis between Adab (as a Moral Compass and Purpose) and John Dewey's Experiential Learning (as a Method of Action and Praxis). This synthesis is important to produce a Transformative Pedagogy that guarantees that the resulting Social Ethics is rooted (Adab) and tested (Dewey).

3. Proposition 3

It is accepted that the "Cyber-Morality" framework can be formulated and justified theoretically based on the principles of Adab and the Synthesis of Adab-Dewey as a formidable output of Social Ethics in the Digital Era, providing principled solutions to the challenges of anonymity, cyberbullying, and value fragmentation.

D. Research Method

This research uses a Qualitative research type with a Literature Study approach (Library Research). This approach was chosen because the main objective of the research is to analyze, synthesize, and construct a new theoretical framework—namely the Adab-Centric Instrumental Conceptual Model—as an answer to the conceptual gap in the literature (Sugiyono, 2012).

The theories used are Critical Content Analysis and Conceptual Synthesis. Data analysis techniques involve Data Reduction (Coding) steps based on conceptual themes (Soul, Manners, Social Ethics), Data Presentation (Mapping), and Conceptual Synthesis (Core Analysis). This stage ensured the formulation of the Three-Dimensional Flow Model and the theoretical definition of "Cyber-Morality" as the original contribution of the research.

This research strategy focuses on a systematic and structured search of secondary data in the form of academic documents (journals, articles, proceedings, theses, and books) related to the variables of Psychic/Internal, Education/Bridge, and Social/External Ethics. A total of 30 (thirty) academic documents function as the main database (corpus data). The data collection technique is carried out through the Documentation method, involving Keyword Identification and Critical Selection of documents that have theoretical depth.

The implementation of the research involves a process in which the researcher dialectically analyzes the meeting points and differences between the concepts of Adab and Dewey's Experiential Learning. Next, the researcher constructed a Three-Dimensional Flow Model and formulated a theoretical definition of "Cyber-Morality" (Novelty 3), all of which were based on the synthesis and theoretical justification of the documents examined.

E. Discussion

1. Key Conceptual Model Construction: Adab as an Instrumental Bridge

This Adab-Centric Key Conceptual Model shows transformative relationships: Soul (Moral Root) - Adab (Driving Bridge) - Social Ethics (Real Results). Conceptual Justification of Adab as a Mechanism of Transformation (Researcher's Key Argument): Adab is a mandatory process that prevents internal moral stagnation; Without Manners, Empathy will only stop at the level of feelings, not actions (Hamka et al., 2024). Adab provides an internal discipline that forces Empathy to transform into a consistent and sustainable Social Consciousness (Yusuf, 2025).

2. Dialektik Analysis: Adab Synthesis of Experiential Learning John Dewey

Pedagogical Synthesis: Adab Guides Dewey's Praxis (Researcher's Key Argument): The philosophy of Adab serves as a Moral Compass (Purpose) that provides Moral Roots and Internal Discipline (Mahmud et al., 2024). On the other hand, Dewey's Experiential Learning (Action Method) provides Practical and Applicative Methods (Ships) that ensure that Adab values are tested and applied through real experiences in society (Anri, 2024). This merger results in a Transformative Pedagogy that ensures that students' Empathy (Soul) is directed, trained, and applied in accordance with the demands of virtue.

3. Theoretical Construction of Cyber-Morality

This research constructs "Cyber-Morality" as a 21st-century specific Social Ethics output. The need for Resilient Ethics in the Digital Age demands that Social Ethics must have adequate resilience to fight cyber anonymity (Saliun & Shafar, 2025). Formulation of Cyber-Morality Principles: Cyber-Morality is a consistent manifestation of Adab (Bridge) applied in digital interactions. Its principles include Digital Responsibility and Digital Empathy (Yusuf, 2025; Fauzi et al., 2023). Implications of the Adab-Dewey Synthesis: Dewey's Experiential Learning Method can be modified into a digital project that forces learners to test and reflect on their behavior in cyberspace, guided by the principles of Cyber-Morality (Anri, 2024).

F. Conclusion

This qualitative literature study succeeded in formulating and constructing a theoretical framework regarding the role of education as a transformative bridge between the Soul and Social Ethics in the midst of the challenges of the Digital Era. The main findings confirm Proposition 1, in which the Adab-Centric Instrumental Conceptual Model was successfully formulated as the central

instrumental mechanism. This model theoretically proves that Adab Education is a mandatory process that prevents internal moral stagnation (Empathy only stops as feeling) and forces it into real action of Social Ethics (Hamka etka al., 2024). Furthermore, Proposition 2 is also justified, where the ideal pedagogical foundation lies in a unique Pedagogical-Philosophical Synthesis. Adab functions as a Moral Compass that provides internal roots and discipline (Purpose), while John Dewey's Experiential Learning method functions as an Action Method (Praxis) that provides a platform to test and apply Adab applicatively (Anri, 2024). Finally, Proposition 3 is supported by the success of research in formulating and defining the concept of "Cyber-Morality" as a resilient output of Social Ethics in the Digital Era, providing principled solutions to contemporary moral crises (Yusuf, 2025). Overall, these findings make a significant theoretical contribution to enriching the study of Character Education, with the main implication that character education must shift from mere value transmission to a Transformative Pedagogy that guides real experiences (Anri, 2024).

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