

Javanese Arabic Poetry in the Traditional Book "Alala" as an Effort to Prevent Moral Degradation in Students in the Modern Education Era

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Abstract

Morals or Adab is very important for us students of knowledge. We have moved on from the rampant cases of moral degradation that occur by students against teachers, so it is easy for us to find them on social media. This Classroom Action Research Study (PTK) aims to instill character and moral education in students and permeate the meaning and content of "alala" verses about the manners and morals of a student to the teacher. This research method uses a quantitative approach with PTK. This study involved 35 students of class X who were positioned as research objects. This research is carried out through the reading of the verse "Alala" which is carried out routinely every morning in class, after the reading takes place, students are directed to understand, appreciate, and absorb the meaning and content of the values contained in the poem. The results of this study inform that the reading and interpretation of the poem "Alala" regularly, the results were obtained that there was an increase in the aspects of manners and manners of students. Following up on the findings in this study, it is necessary to develop a wider range of research such as adding research subjects both in terms of number and level of education.

Keywords

Alala Poetry, Character Education, Class Action Research (PTK), Manners, Student Morals



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INTRODUCTION

From the many cases of moral degradation that occur by students against teachers, especially in public schools, we can easily find them on social media, from the many cases that occur it seems that the morals and manners of students at this time have experienced a drastic decline, such as what happened in Gresik Regency, East Java, where a student opposed the teacher, as well as many similar cases where a student did not have respect for the teacher so that he dared to oppose, fighting, even bullying a teacher, one of the main problems in our education system is the weak collective awareness of the importance of character formation. This should not be done by a student to a teacher, because teachers deserve to be respected and very noble in their degree because they have given knowledge, therefore it is appropriate for us to respect teachers as we respect our parents at home. (Syarif, 2025).

Manners are very important in life both in personal, family and social life. With manners, a true Muslim becomes noble before Allah and His Messenger and fellow humans. Adab is an effort to guide,

guide, direct, habituate and practice manners to a person to behave well and be disciplined. Unfortunately, many students today think that manners and morals are not important, especially in public schools, even though manners and morals are very important things for a student of knowledge. Various analyses have been carried out that the morale of current students is very low. The urgency of this research lies in the importance of efforts to develop students' character, especially in terms of manners and manners, in the midst of declining student ethics in the school environment and society. Education is not only oriented to academic achievement, but must also instill moral values and noble morals. Al-Alatanil Ilma's poem contains a message about the importance of knowledge, respect for teachers, seriousness in learning, and prioritizing manners before knowledge. Therefore, this research is important to prove that reading and understanding the meaning of the poem can be an effective means in shaping more polite and moral student behavior. (In & Bidayatul, 2023)

The purpose of this research is to find out and describe the influence of reading and understanding the meaning of Al-Alatanil Ilma's poems on changes in students' attitudes, especially in improving manners and awareness of the importance of adab. In addition, this study aims to explain the extent to which the poem can be used as a medium for character learning that is able to instill the values of respect for teachers, discipline, and ethics in students' daily lives.

METHODS

This research is Classroom Action Research (PTK) and also Quantitative, which was carried out from February 28, 2025 to March 20, 2025. This research was carried out through reading, interpretation, and providing an in-depth understanding of the meaning contained in Arabic poetry Ala Tanalul 'Ilma to students. The poem was chosen because it contains messages of education, ethics, discipline, seriousness in seeking knowledge, and the formation of noble morals that are relevant to the development of students' character in the school environment.

In its implementation, the researcher reads the verse regularly to students, then explains the meaning of each stanza, the content of moral values, and its relevance in daily life. Through this process, students are directed not only to understand the text in language, but also to be able to appreciate the messages contained in it and apply them in real behavior. This activity aims to instill positive values, increase moral awareness, form a disciplined attitude, respect teachers and fellow friends, and prevent deviant behavior that reflects moral degradation among students. Thus, the reading and understanding of Arabic poetry in the style of Tanalul 'Ilma is expected to be one of the effective character education media in creating a more conducive, civilized, and noble-value-oriented school environment.

The subject of this study involves 35 students of class X, with a data collection technique, namely by observing students we attribute the success of this research, namely looking at the behavior of students after this research is carried out, namely with 3 groups:

- The number of cases of student violation before the Act.
- Moral behavior of students.
- The learning atmosphere after the action is carried out.

The source of this research was obtained from observation and tracing scientific journal articles.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Various studies have been carried out, especially about the verse 'Alala', some previous studies have been carried out such as: to find out the value of character education contained in the literary study (poetry of the book of Alala) by Syeikh Az-Zarnuji And there are many similar studies also studying

the book (Kitab & Karya, 2025). of '*Alala*' However, what distinguishes this research from previous studies is, if the previous research was conducted in religious-based schools such as Madrasah ibtidaiyah (MI) or in Islamic boarding schools that we know have sufficient religious basics, but this research was conducted at Senior High School (SMAN) 02 Tualang, Siak Regency, Riau Province, which is a public school, We both know that according to data released by the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI)

In 2017, according to a survey by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), as many as 84 percent of children in Indonesia experienced violence at school. The number of cases of violence in schools in Indonesia is higher than Vietnam (79 percent), Nepal (79 percent), Cambodia (73 percent), and Pakistan (43 percent) and Indonesia ranks first and it occurs in public schools. Therefore, the background of this research was carried out in public schools with the aim of reducing the number. (Back, 2003)

For the creation of the 4th SDGS, namely quality education,



Figure 1. Quality Education Goal number 4
(source; Indonesia's SDGs, 2016).

There is a need for students' awareness of this manners, and morals. This research has a great effect on students' manners and morals, especially in public schools. Based on the results of research that has been carried out on *Alala* reading activities, it was found that some students who initially showed poor moral behavior experienced significant changes in a more positive direction. Before understanding the content and values contained in *Alala*, some students tend to show attitudes that do not reflect commendable behavior. However, after they learned, understood, and lived the meaning contained in it, there was an increase in aspects of attitudes, ethics, and daily behavior. These changes can be seen from the attitude of students who become more polite, more respectful of teachers and friends, more disciplined, and have a higher awareness of maintaining good behavior. Thus, reading and understanding *Alala* can have a positive influence on the moral formation of students, and to improve previous research that carried out research in religion-based schools, in this study we did it in general-based schools, which aims to reduce the rate of moral degradation in students.

The findings of this classroom action research indicate that the routine recitation and contextual interpretation of the traditional Arabic-Javanese poem *Alala* contributed positively to the improvement of students' moral behaviour, particularly in terms of respect toward teachers, classroom discipline, politeness, and learning attitudes. The observed behavioural changes suggest that character formation is more effective when moral values are not merely delivered through theoretical instruction but are internalized through repetitive cultural and religious practices. In this study, students were not only exposed to the text of the poem but were also encouraged to understand, reflect upon, and implement the ethical messages embedded in its verses. Consequently, moral values became part of students' daily behavioural patterns rather than remaining abstract concepts.

From the perspective of character education theory, the findings support the argument proposed by Lickona (2021) that effective character formation requires the integration of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Students who repeatedly engage with moral narratives and ethical teachings are more likely to develop emotional attachment to those values, which subsequently influences their behaviour. The *Alala* poem functions as a medium that bridges cognitive understanding and moral practice because its content emphasizes respect for knowledge, reverence for teachers, patience in learning, and personal discipline. These values correspond closely with the dimensions of character education emphasized in contemporary educational discourse, particularly in fostering responsible and ethical citizenship (Berkowitz & Bier, 2023).

The improvement in students' attitudes observed in this study can also be explained through Bandura's Social Learning Theory. According to Bandura, behavioural change occurs through observation, imitation, reinforcement, and continuous exposure to desirable models of conduct. The daily recitation of *Alala* created a repetitive learning environment where students consistently encountered moral messages that reinforced positive behaviour. As these messages were repeatedly discussed and contextualized within school life, students gradually internalized them as social norms. This process explains why behavioural changes emerged not only in students' interactions with teachers but also in peer relationships and classroom participation. Recent studies have confirmed that repeated exposure to ethical narratives significantly influences adolescents' moral reasoning and prosocial behaviour (Rahman & Abdullah, 2024).

The findings are consistent with previous research conducted by Hariadi, Fitriyah, and Fitriani (2025), which demonstrated that the *Alala* text contains substantial character education values, including discipline, humility, perseverance, and respect for educators. Their study primarily focused on textual analysis of the literary content, whereas the present research extends those findings by examining the practical implementation of the poem within a school setting. Therefore, while previous studies established the existence of character values within the text, this research provides empirical evidence that those values can influence students' behaviour when systematically integrated into educational activities. This distinction represents an important contribution to the literature because it shifts the discussion from theoretical potential to observable educational outcomes.

Similarly, the results align with the findings of Rusydi (2021), who argued that strengthening character education through religious and cultural learning materials can significantly improve students' moral awareness. However, an important difference emerges regarding the educational context. Most previous studies were conducted in Islamic schools, madrasahs, or pesantren environments where religious values are already deeply embedded in institutional culture. In contrast, the current study was undertaken in a public senior high school. The effectiveness of the intervention in a secular educational environment suggests that the moral influence of *Alala* is not solely dependent on a religious institutional framework but may also function as a universal ethical learning resource. This finding broadens the applicability of traditional Islamic literary heritage within contemporary character education programs.

Another notable aspect of the findings concerns the role of cultural relevance in moral learning. Educational psychology emphasizes that students tend to internalize values more effectively when instructional materials resonate with their cultural identity and lived experiences. The *Alala* poem, which has long been recognized within Indonesian Islamic educational traditions, carries historical and cultural legitimacy that enhances its persuasive power. Unlike conventional moral lectures that may be perceived as abstract or authoritarian, poetic expressions often engage students emotionally and

aesthetically. This emotional engagement likely explains why students demonstrated greater receptiveness to the moral lessons presented through the poem. Recent research in moral pedagogy has similarly found that narrative and literary approaches generate stronger moral reflection than purely didactic methods (Ismail et al., 2024).

The findings also offer an explanation for why moral degradation among students can be addressed through culturally embedded educational interventions. Contemporary moral decline is frequently associated with the increasing influence of digital media, declining social control, and the erosion of traditional value transmission mechanisms. As noted by Syarif (2025), many students today experience difficulties distinguishing between acceptable and inappropriate social behaviour because exposure to digital content often exceeds the influence of family and school guidance. The *Alala* intervention can therefore be interpreted as a form of cultural counterbalance that reintroduces ethical principles into students' daily routines. Through repeated engagement with messages concerning humility, discipline, and respect, students acquire alternative behavioural frameworks that compete with negative influences from social media and peer culture.

Despite these positive outcomes, the findings should be interpreted critically. The observed behavioural improvements may have been influenced not only by the content of the poem but also by the broader educational process accompanying its implementation. Teacher guidance, classroom discussions, reflective activities, and the consistent reinforcement of moral messages likely contributed to the positive results. This suggests that the effectiveness of *Alala* may depend less on the text itself and more on the pedagogical strategies used to facilitate student engagement with its meaning. Therefore, future studies should investigate whether similar outcomes can be achieved through other forms of moral literature or whether the unique characteristics of *Alala* provide distinctive advantages.

From a scientific perspective, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on culturally responsive character education by demonstrating that traditional literary texts remain relevant in addressing contemporary educational challenges. The findings challenge the assumption that modern character education must rely exclusively on new pedagogical innovations or digital technologies. Instead, they suggest that traditional cultural resources, when adapted appropriately, can serve as powerful instruments for moral development. This implication is particularly important for educational policymakers seeking sustainable approaches to character formation in an era marked by rapid social and technological change.

Overall, the results indicate that the routine recitation and reflective interpretation of the *Alala* poem constitute an effective strategy for strengthening students' moral character. The findings reinforce existing theories of character education, support previous empirical studies on moral learning through cultural texts, and provide new evidence regarding the applicability of traditional Islamic literary heritage within public-school settings. Consequently, the study highlights the continuing relevance of local wisdom and religious-cultural traditions as valuable resources for preventing moral degradation among students in modern educational environments.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that students have a good level of understanding of the meaning contained in ala-ala poetry as a form of oral literary works that are full of life values. This can be seen from the ability of students to interpret the content of the poem, explain the moral message conveyed, and relate it to the behavior that should be applied in daily life. Ala-ala poetry is not only understood as entertainment or cultural heritage, but also as an

educational medium that contains teachings about ethics, manners, responsibility, discipline, honesty, and respect for others. In addition, the results of the study show that the use of ala-ala poems in the educational environment is able to attract students' interest because the delivery is simple, easy to remember, and close to the culture of the local community. With the understanding of these verses, students become more aware of the importance of maintaining good behavior and staying away from negative actions that can damage themselves and their social environment. The values contained in ala-ala poetry can also strengthen students' cultural identity in the midst of increasingly modern times. Furthermore, ala-ala poetry has been proven to have a positive contribution in efforts to prevent moral degradation among students. Through messages of advice that are conveyed in a subtle and interesting manner, students more easily accept and understand the importance of maintaining morals, respecting teachers and parents, maintaining association, and being responsible for their obligations as students. Thus, ala-ala poetry can be used as an alternative medium for effective character learning to form a young generation who have noble character, culture, and strong moral awareness.

For future researchers, it is recommended to expand the reach of research subjects by involving a larger number of respondents and from various levels of education, schools, and different social backgrounds so that the research results become more representative. In addition, further research can be carried out in a wider area so that a more comprehensive picture of students' understanding of the meaning of ala-ala poetry can be obtained.

The next researcher is also expected to use more diverse research methods, such as in-depth interviews, direct observations, and experiments on the application of ala-ala poetry in the learning process, so that the data obtained is more complete and accurate. In addition, research can be developed by comparing the influence of ala-ala poetry with other cultural learning media in the formation of students' character.

Furthermore, it is also recommended to research the long-term impact of the use of ala-ala poems on students' behavior and morals, so that the benefits can be known more deeply. With wider and in-depth research, it is hoped that the ala-ala poems can be increasingly known and used as a means of character education and the preservation of local culture.

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