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Guidance for Moral Development of Primary School Students: An Analysis of Research Findings in Indonesia Using PRISMA

Shujaullah Khwajazada[1], Abdussalam [2]

[1] Naveen Jindal Young Global Research Fellowship, OP Jindal Global University, India; shujaullah.khwajazada_fs@jgu.edu.in* (coresponden)

[2] Naveen Jindal Young Global Research Fellowship, OP Jindal Global University, India; abdussalam_fs@jgu.edu.in

ABSTRACT

The lack of systematic studies mapping trends, characteristics, and synthesized findings related to moral education in Indonesian primary schools. This study aims to analyze publication trends, map structural characteristics, and summarize strategic findings on the moral formation of primary school students. The study uses a mixed-methods approach through bibliometric analysis via VOSviewer and Systematic Literature Review (SLR) using the PRISMA framework on Scopus journal articles for the 2022–2026 period. The results explain: publications increased significantly from 5 documents (2022) to 17 documents (2026), dominated by the Social Sciences field from leading LPTKs. Moral formation is carried out multidimensionally through the integration of ecological values, local culture, socio-cultural modules, as well as technologies such as AI and digital platforms. Adaptive physical activity, game-based gymnastics, differentiated instruction, and Project-Based Learning are proven to strengthen discipline, nationalism, and social cohesion. Furthermore, a supporting ecosystem encompassing parental parenting, ProGAS nutrition, classroom air quality, and adaptation to local cultural dynamics serves as a decisive pillar for the successful internalization of students' moral values. Conclusion: Students' moral formation requires holistic synergy among local wisdom-based curricula, technological innovations, and the reinforcement of the family ecosystem.

Keyword: Moral Development; Primary School Students; Character Education

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INTRODUCTION

Moral development plays an essential role in shaping the character of primary school students, as it serves as the foundation for ethical behavior and core value formation (Lee, 2024; Merica, 2023). Through moral education, students are guided to distinguish between right and wrong and to build a system of values that facilitates their social adaptation within society (Kour et al., 2025). This character education focuses on instilling virtues such as respect, honesty, and responsibility, which are crucial for cultivating socially responsible citizens (Kotzee & Baehr, 2024). Beyond formal curricula, the school environment and its culture of interaction often exert a more profound impact than direct instruction alone (Kartini & Winahyu, 2019). In this process, teachers serve as primary moral role models whose behaviors are directly emulated by students (Osguthorpe, 2021). Consequently, effective character building requires well-planned and structured school programs, including extracurricular activities (Sahid et al., 2021).

Amid rapid social, technological, and cultural transformations, students in contemporary educational settings face increasingly complex moral challenges (Lynam & Mc Guckin, 2025; Probucka, 2019). They frequently encounter moral dilemmas and a decline in ethical commitment, manifested in misconduct such as academic dishonesty and irresponsibility (Ristiana et al., 2025; Fazli et al., 2018). Furthermore, intense academic pressure often induces moral distress, while the rapid expansion of digital learning presents novel ethical challenges within virtual spaces (Kamali et al., 2024; Brandon & Farkas, 2026). Globalization and cultural diversity also require students to harmonize conflicting values and social norms (Giri, 2024). Simultaneously, students are expected to demonstrate critical morality when confronting complex global social issues (wicked problems), such as climate change (Schmitz et al., 2026; Bombaerts et al., 2024). Therefore, strengthening character education, fostering a conducive learning climate, and providing guidance for ethical reflection are imperative to prepare students' moral and professional readiness (Smith et al., 2025; Usoltseva & Benin, 2021).

Effective guidance is vital to help students navigate these moral challenges while supporting their holistic academic and social development (Zamil, 2024). Such guidance programs play a fundamental role in nurturing ethical attributes, enabling students to act as moral agents when facing societal issues (Basarkod et al., 2026; Teng, 2021; Lapsley, 2025). The implementation of strategies such as active learning through case studies, problem-solving learning, and moral argumentation has been proven to enhance students' critical engagement with contemporary moral issues (Muraleedharan et al., 2024; Lassoued et al., 2025; Birch, 2025). Additionally, structured reflection and active counselor leadership equip students to navigate ethical dilemmas and address moral distress in professional contexts (Landa-Galindez et al., 2025; Tello et al., 2025; Teng, 2021). Ultimately, appropriate guidance not only strengthens moral competence and empowers students in decision-making, but also prevents the emergence of ideological issues during critical developmental periods (Glanzer et al., 2025; Ribeiro et al., 2025; Teng, 2021).

Moral development guidance in Indonesian primary schools plays a pivotal role in shaping ethical reasoning, prosocial behavior, and overall character in a holistic manner. The use of local cultural narratives effectively fosters charismatic leadership and empathy from an early age among primary school students (Poh et al., 2025). The integration of moral values can be operationalized through multimodal language learning projects to reinforce student character (Puspitasari et al., 2025). Children's moral development is also significantly influenced by synergistic interactions among family, school, and community environments (Tadjuddin et al., 2019). The consistent implementation

of character education programs in primary schools systematically addresses the phenomenon of moral decline among youth (Aningsih et al., 2022). Effective character strengthening combines national policies with local wisdom, such as the Lonto Leok culture (Mahanani et al., 2022). Furthermore, the development of a reflective-transformative learning model based on the Pancasila Student Profile solidifies students' moral formation (Siswanto et al., 2024). Prospective teachers' perceptions of morality also determine the success of classroom moral guidance (Teml et al., 2013), while principals' transformational leadership strategies strengthen the regional character education ecosystem (Effendi et al., 2020).

Research findings indicate that moral education practices in primary schools require a comprehensive curricular integration between moral education and character building (Lee, 2024). This curricular reform is designed to align educational standards with the challenges of child character development (Tang & Wang, 2021). The use of real-life-oriented textbooks using a mimetic approach has proven effective in enhancing the relevance of moral learning (Tang, 2022). Everyday life-based curricular changes further reinforce students' understanding of practical ethics in primary schools (Jie, 2022). Beyond the classroom, direct student engagement in community social activities directly triggers an increase in positive moral attitudes (Maulyda et al., 2024). The implementation of humanistic educational management rooted in local wisdom, such as Kesangtimuran, serves as a key strategy for strengthening character (Rais et al., 2022). Integrating both classical and modern care ethics renders moral learning more accessible and actionable (Aloni, 2022). Lastly, evidence-based practices through social-emotional learning effectively enhance crisis prevention capacity within school environments (Watanabe, 2025).

Although numerous global studies emphasize the importance of curriculum integration, mimetic approaches, and social-emotional practices in moral education, a comprehensive exploration of how these trends, characteristics, and synthesized findings are specifically integrated within the Indonesian primary school context remains limited. Most prior studies tend to focus on partial aspects without offering a systematically structured literature mapping. The novelty of this study lies in its systematic synthesis and comprehensive bibliometric mapping, which combine analyses of publication trends, research characteristics, and thematic dimensions of primary school students' moral development specifically in the Indonesian context. Departing from earlier research that is generally descriptive, this study provides a structured taxonomy of pedagogical approaches, contextual factors, and local wisdom that constitute the theoretical and practical foundations of children's character education as a whole.

This study offers theoretical contributions in the form of a conceptual literature map of primary school moral education in Indonesia, thereby enriching pedagogical scholarship. Practically, this research provides strategic guidance for policymakers, curriculum developers, and educators in designing relevant, evidence-based moral learning strategies integrated with cultural values and local wisdom. This study aims to analyze trends and developments in scientific publications regarding moral education in Indonesian primary schools (RQ1). Furthermore, it maps the structural characteristics of research and methodological frameworks employed in the relevant literature (RQ2). Finally, this study summarizes and synthesizes the main findings regarding strategic approaches to students' moral formation in primary schools (RQ3).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a library research design utilizing a mixed-methods approach that integrates both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The quantitative approach is operationalized

through bibliometric analysis to map network visualizations, publication trends, and topic cluster structures. Meanwhile, the qualitative approach is applied through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) with a thematic framework to thoroughly synthesize core concepts, strategies, and substantive findings regarding guidance for moral development among primary school students in Indonesia. The data source in this study consists of secondary data obtained from the Scopus database. The data analyzed include scientific journal articles restricted to publications over a five-year period (ranging from 2022 to 2026). Data collection was conducted through a systematic documentation study technique by applying a search query based on Boolean operators (AND, OR) within the Scopus database using the search string: TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Guidance for Moral Development" OR "Primary School Students"). The document selection process followed the four main stages of the PRISMA 2020 framework (Identification, Screening, Eligibility, and Inclusion). The metadata of qualifying articles were subsequently exported into CSV/RIS formats for further analysis. The PRISMA analysis flow is illustrated in the following figure:

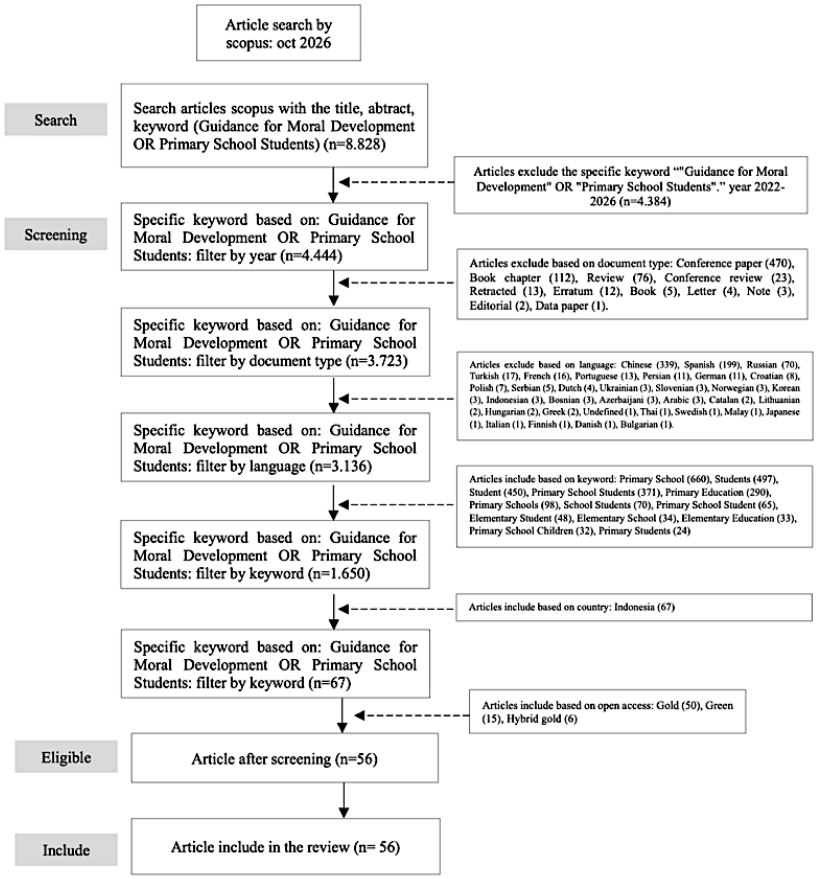


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram

This literature-based research does not involve human participants or conventional research subjects. Instead, the study sample comprises unit documents of scientific articles selected through the rigorous PRISMA screening process. From the initial search results retrieved from Scopus, documents were filtered based on explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria including restrictions to the publication period of 2022–2026, English language, contextual relevance to Indonesia, and full-text availability until the final set of articles included for analysis was obtained.

Data processing began with a pre-data analysis phase involving data cleaning and validation of the bibliographic metadata exported from the Scopus database. The researchers verified the

completeness of document components, such as titles, author names, abstracts, keywords, and citation data. Data analysis was subsequently executed along two complementary analytical pathways: quantitative bibliometric analysis and qualitative thematic SLR analysis. First, the Bibliometric Analysis was conducted using VOSviewer software. This stage mapped network structures through three meticulously examined visualizations: Network Visualization to inspect clustering and conceptual structures, Overlay Visualization to identify temporal trends in research evolution from 2022 to 2026, and Density Visualization to map research density and uncover underexplored research gaps. Second, the Qualitative SLR Analysis operationalized thematic analysis techniques. The researchers thoroughly examined the full text of selected articles, performing initial coding, data categorization, and cross-literature comparisons of findings. Code categories were synthesized to address three Research Questions (RQ1 regarding publication trends, RQ2 regarding the mapping of research characteristics, and RQ3 regarding substantive findings in moral education). Following this, the post-data analysis phase focused on interpretation, verification, and the formulation of comprehensive conclusions. The researchers critically compared the visual network outputs from VOSviewer with the thematic synthesis of the SLR to build a coherent scholarly argument. Subsequently, a structured taxonomy regarding primary school moral education in Indonesia was established.

The validity and credibility of the findings in this study were safeguarded through three primary mechanisms. First, Source Triangulation was achieved by comparing, correlating, and testing the consistency of findings across scientific articles from various reputable journals. Second, Criteria Consistency was maintained by strictly and consistently applying inclusion and exclusion criteria throughout the PRISMA selection process to minimize selection bias. Third, an Audit Trail was maintained by systematically documenting all search query logs, document screening flows, data extraction matrices, and VOSviewer algorithm settings, ensuring that the entire analytical process remains transparent, traceable, and reproducible.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

(RQ1) Analyze trends and developments in scientific publications regarding moral education in Indonesian primary schools.

In scientific publication trends between 2022 and 2026, research on primary school education in Indonesia demonstrated a significant quantitative increase, surging from 5 documents in 2022 to 17 documents in 2026. Early research in 2022 focused heavily on language competence, intercultural sensitivity, and personal hygiene habits (Magany et al., 2022; Sugianto et al., 2022). Moving into 2023, the research focus expanded toward the quality of thematic teaching materials and the development of learning models for motor skills and scientific inquiry (Herwinarso et al., 2023; Mardiyana et al., 2023; Sriwahyuniati et al., 2023). Subsequently, from 2024 to 2026, studies were further enriched by curriculum innovations, the introduction of agricultural insights, thematic music education, and the integration of moral, social, and spiritual commitment values through project-based and local culture approaches (Fadlillah et al., 2024; Mustafa et al., 2024; Nurhayati et al., 2025; Siregar et al., 2026; Wadiyo et al., 2024). Overall, these dynamics indicate that primary school education in Indonesia is being examined holistically through the strengthening of local wisdom, technology, and student well-being.

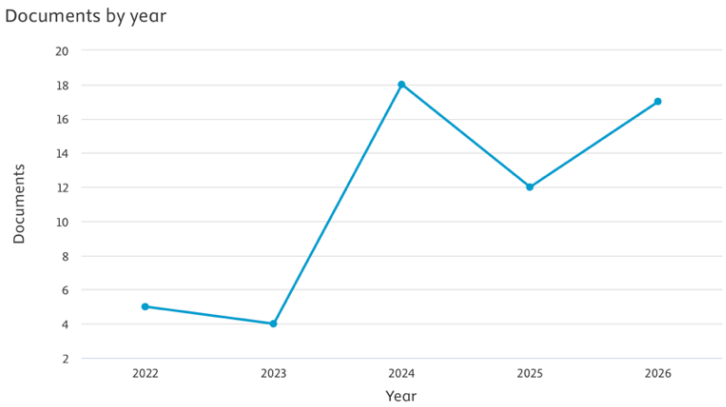


Figure 2. Research Outcome Trends for 2022–2026

(RQ2) Maps the structural characteristics of research and methodological frameworks employed in the relevant literature.

Mapping the structural characteristics and methodological frameworks of primary education literature in Indonesia reveals widespread publications across multidisciplinary journals such as Retos, Edelweiss Applied Science and Technology, and Journal of Education and Learning. Methodologically, research is dominated by three main approaches.Qualitative approaches based on content analysis and literature reviews are extensively applied to evaluate global diversity values and language quality in textbooks, as well as curriculum analysis (Mardiyana et al., 2023; Mustafa et al.,2024; Sadiah et al., 2024). Meanwhile, experimental quantitative approaches are used to measure the effectiveness of physical activity breaks and game-based learning on students' fitness and motor skills (Satria et al., 2024; Yudanto et al.,2024). Finally, Research and Development (R&D) and psychometric frameworks focus on developing innovative learning models and validating physical literacy instruments (Ariyanti et al., 2024; Permana et al., 2024).

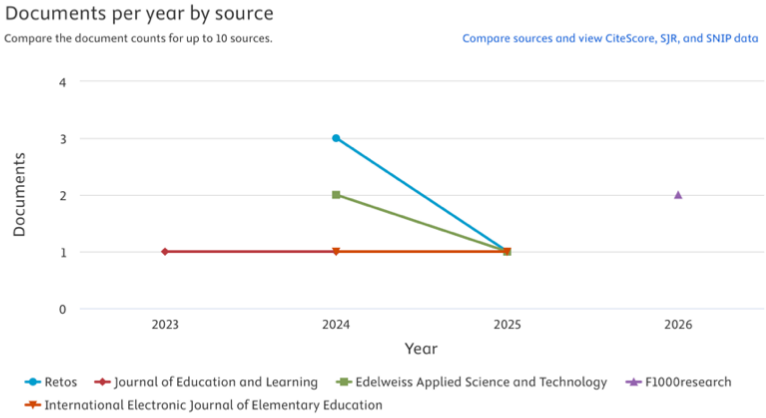


Figure 3. Document by Sources

Mapping institutional affiliations indicates that primary education research in Indonesia is dominated by prominent Teacher Training and Education Institutes (LPTKs) and universities, such as Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (9 documents), Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (8 documents), Universitas Negeri Malang (5 documents), and Universitas Negeri Surabaya (4 documents), which actively collaborate with international institutions such as the Freudenthal Institute and Utrecht University. The research focus centers on context-based realistic mathematics learning innovations

and digital media (Arifin et al., 2026; Pramudiani et al., 2022; Pramudiani & Dolk, 2025), local wisdom-based module development for disaster mitigation and early literacy (Alwi et al., 2024; Lestari et al., 2025), and socio-cultural interventions including anti-bullying mitigation and strengthening higher-order thinking skills (Anwas et al., 2026; Mat et al., 2025; Saputra et al., 2026). These dynamics demonstrate the strong leadership of national educational institutions in driving adaptive and inclusive pedagogical modernization.

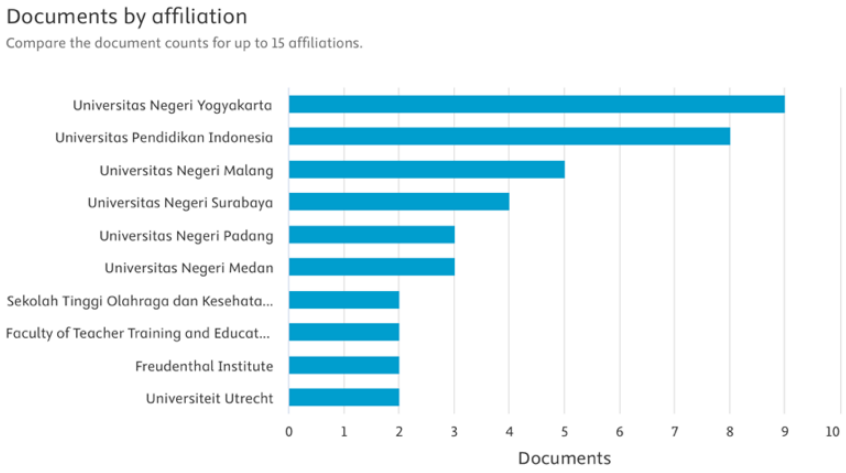


Figure 4. Document by Affiliation

Visualization of the institutional affiliation network using VOSviewer identifies patterns of inter-institutional collaboration among major academic entities in Indonesian primary education publications. This map highlights the essential roles of several leading institutions that form distributed clusters, including Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, and Universitas Negeri Medan, alongside supporting structural units such as departments of primary education. The involvement of these institutions reflects active contributions to reinforcing pedagogical research, digital-based mathematics learning innovations, early literacy, and inclusive education module development (Alwi et al., 2024; Arifin et al., 2026; Pramudiani & Dolk, 2025). Overall, this mapping shows that national research productivity is significantly sustained by the synergy among state LPTKs in advancing the quality of primary education research.

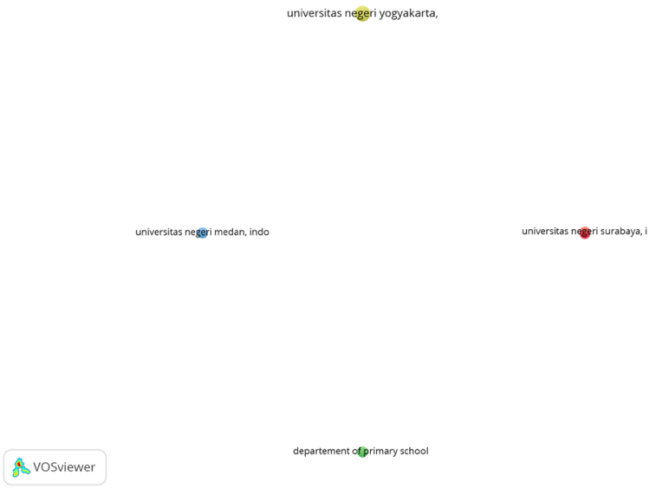


Figure 5. Analisa Afilliasi by VOS viewer

Mapping scientific publications on primary education in Indonesia (2022–2026) shows the dominance of Social Sciences at 35.1% (40 documents) and Medicine at 12.3% (14 documents), followed by Arts and Humanities (8.8%), Health Professions (7.9%), and Psychology (6.1%). Thematically, the integration of these disciplines is reflected in the moral and spiritual character building of students through Islamic religious education and local cultural practices (Afandi & Zurqoni, 2026; Siregar et al., 2026). The field of inclusive education and literacy leverages artificial intelligence-based technology (AI game-based) for students with specific learning disorders, as well as gender-based narrative writing studies (Minsih et al., 2026; Wulan Anggraeni et al., 2026). Meanwhile, the intersectionality of health and psychology is measured through analyses of mathematics anxiety, validation of constructivist learning environments, oral health, and the influence of indoor air quality on children's sleep quality (Arifin et al., 2026; Rauf et al., 2026; Rini et al., 2026; Theresia et al., 2026).

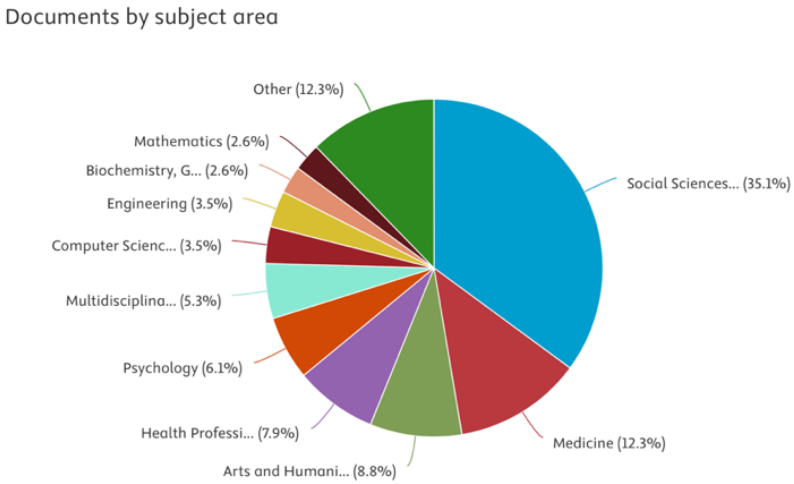


Figure 6. Document by Subject Area

The co-occurrence network visualization of keywords from VOSviewer reveals five main clusters illustrating the thematic dynamics of primary education research in Indonesia. The red cluster focuses on demographics and experimental methodologies involving human interaction, perception, and instrument reliability (controlled study, reliability, attitude). The green cluster emphasizes inclusivity and the utilization of advanced technology (inclusive education, qualitative research, artificial intelligence, literacy) (Minsih et al., 2026; Wulan Anggraeni et al., 2026). The blue cluster centers on learning contexts, students, and personal health aspects (learning, indonesia, child, personal hygiene). The yellow cluster highlights the development of specific pedagogical abilities such as mathematics education, physical literacy, and critical thinking (Arifin et al., 2026; Permana et al., 2024; Sadiah et al., 2024). Finally, the purple cluster connects the role of educators (teacher) with student dynamics. Overall, this mapping indicates a strong integration among technology, inclusivity, health, and domain literacy development in elementary school research.

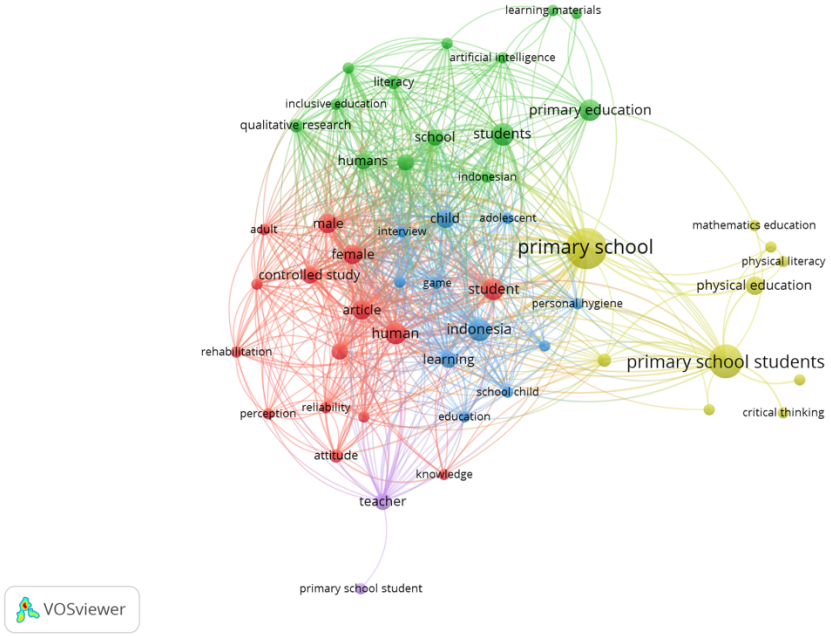


Figure 7. Co-Occurrence Network by Keyword

Mapping funding sponsors indicates significant financial support from the national government and higher education institutions, such as the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (4 documents), Universitas Negeri Malang (4 documents), the Indonesia Endowment Fund for Education / LPDP (3 documents), the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education (2 documents), and the LPPM Universitas Riau (2 documents). This funding support drives technology-driven mathematics learning innovations, such as the use of Android applications to measure speed and web-based interactive digital simulations to support creative reasoning and address mathematics anxiety (Abidin et al., 2024; Arifin et al., 2026). Additionally, funded research encourages the development of science inquiry modules, Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) learning modules, gender-based inclusive narrative writing, and interdisciplinary studies on child health (Arifin et al., 2026; Herwinarso et al., 2023; Mat et al., 2025; Theresia et al., 2026; Wulan Anggraeni et al., 2026).

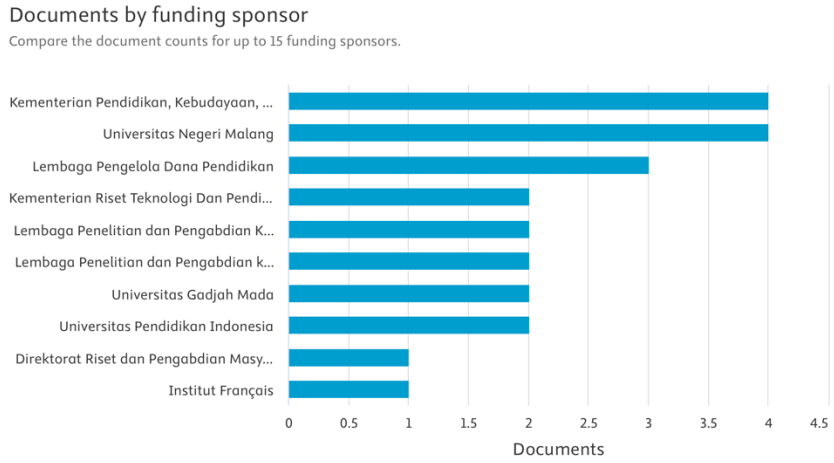


Figure 8. Document by Sponsor

The co-authorship network visualization from VOSviewer illustrates research partnership patterns among scholars in Indonesian primary education publications. This map tracks interconnected relationships across publication years, featuring contributions from Nurhayati (2025), Dafit (2026), Wulan Anggraeni (2026), Anwas (2026), to Wadiyo (2024). The network indicates academic synergy in exploring various strategic topics, ranging from strengthening social cohesion through traditional games, digital and inclusive literacy, to thematic learning innovations in arts and culture (Anwas et al., 2026; Nurhayati et al., 2025; Wadiyo et al., 2024; Wulan Anggraeni et al., 2026). Overall, this mapping reflects an evolving collaborative network dynamic that enriches the body of national primary education research.



Figure 9. Co-Authorship Network by Author

(RQ3) Summarizes and synthesizes the main findings regarding strategic approaches to students' moral formation in primary schools.

Table 1. Literature Synthesis Table regarding strategic approaches to students' moral formation in primary schools

Author	Objective	Design Methodology	Results
Kumar et al. (2022)	To investigate the barriers and threats of mother tongue usage on English language learning at the primary school level in India.	Survey-based study	Shows that mother tongue interference significantly impacts students' vocabulary mastery and English sentence structures at the primary school level.
Magany et al. (2022)	To determine the relationship between parental parenting styles and mothers' personal hygiene on children's personal hygiene in North Jakarta.	Quantitative research with a descriptive-analytic approach.	There is a significant relationship between parental parenting styles, mothers' personal hygiene, and the level of children's personal hygiene in North Jakarta.
Sugianto et al. (2022)	To examine intercultural sensitivity and extraversion levels among EFL (English as a Foreign Language) primary school students in Indonesia.	Quantitative descriptive study using questionnaires.	Students exhibit moderate to high levels of intercultural sensitivity, along with a positive correlation with their extraversion levels in language learning.
Pardamean et al. (2022)	To develop AI-based learning style prediction in online learning for primary education.	Computational and machine learning methodology.	The developed AI model can accurately predict students' learning styles to support personalized online learning in primary schools.
Pramudiani et al. (2022)	To examine the role of the "missing part" in building fractions conceptual understanding among primary school students.	Descriptive qualitative research / didactical design research.	The missing part approach effectively helps students build a deeper conceptual understanding of fractions.
Mardiyana et al. (2023)	To analyze the language quality of thematic textbooks for primary school students.	Content analysis	The analyzed thematic textbooks have generally good language quality, although several aspects require improvement to align with students' cognitive development levels.
Sriwahyuniati et al. (2023)	To develop a game-based rhythmic gymnastics exercise model to develop gross motor skills in primary school students.	Research and Development (R&D)	The game-based rhythmic gymnastics exercise model proved to be effective and feasible for improving the gross motor skills of primary school students.

Herwinarso et al. (2023)	To develop an inquiry-based module with scientific equipment to facilitate the understanding of force concepts among primary school students.	Research and Development (R&D)	The inquiry-based module developed is effective in improving students' conceptual understanding of force concepts in basic physics.
Cahyani et al. (2023)	To improve writing skills and linguistic creativity through the plus-minus-interesting (PMI) technique at the primary school level.	Case study	The application of the PMI technique significantly increased student engagement, writing skills, and linguistic creativity.
Fadlillah et al. (2024)	To develop agriculture-oriented teaching materials to introduce the agricultural world to primary school students.	Research and Development (R&D)	Agriculture-oriented teaching materials are highly feasible and effective for instilling an early understanding of agriculture in students from an early age.
Mustafa et al. (2024)	To analyze the design and implementation of physical education curricula in primary schools through a literature study.	Literature study	Highlights the importance of adjusting the physical education curriculum to be more adaptive to the motor development and psychosocial needs of primary school children.
Wadiyo et al. (2024)	To create educational songs with thematic learning to bridge the musical gaps of primary school students.	Arts-based research / development	Thematic educational songs proved effective in helping deliver thematic learning materials in a fun and memorable way for students.
Alwi et al. (2024)	To use a socio-cultural approach through digital instructional modules to improve beginning reading skills in primary schools.	Development research or quasi-experiment	Socio-cultural-based digital teaching modules are effective in improving beginning reading skills among early-grade primary students.
Asnawi et al. (2024)	To assess the impact of differentiated national education on the nationalistic insight of primary school students.	Quantitative / descriptive qualitative research	Differentiated learning has a positive impact on strengthening students' nationalistic insight and character.
Nurhayati et al. (2025)	To measure the impact of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) using traditional/indigenous games on students' social cohesion skills.	Quantitative method / quasi-experiment	The use of traditional games in PjBL significantly improves social cohesion and cooperation among primary school students.
Pramesthi et al. (2025)	To evaluate the impact of Indonesia's National Healthy Meal Program (ProGAS) on children's nutrition and the learning environment.	Mixed-methods approach	The ProGAS program has a positive impact on children's nutritional status and supports improvements in school learning environments.
Gavilan Tatin et al. (2025)	To analyze environmental education in primary EFL textbooks in Chile and Indonesia.	Comparative text analysis	Textbooks in both countries integrate environmental issues, but there are variations in depth and contextual approaches.
Mat et al. (2025)	To conduct a need analysis for developing instructional modules to enhance higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) in primary school students.	Exploratory descriptive research	The analysis indicates an urgent need for specially designed HOTS-based learning modules to train students' critical thinking.
Kuncahyono et al. (2025)	To examine the influence of parental occupation and school status on primary school students' internet competence.	Correlational quantitative research	Parental occupational background and school status have a significant correlation with children's internet literacy and competence levels.
Arifin et al. (2026)	To develop and validate a mathematics anxiety questionnaire for primary school students.	Psychometric research / instrument development and validation	The developed mathematics anxiety questionnaire demonstrated high validity and reliability for measuring student anxiety.

Rini et al. (2026)	To perform a Rasch validation of constructivist learning environments in primary school mathematics learning in Indonesia.	Rasch analysis approach	The constructivist learning environment instrument proved valid and reliable for evaluating primary school mathematics classrooms.
Rauf et al. (2026)	To examine indoor air quality and its impact on school children's sleep outcomes in Yogyakarta and Sleman.	Cross-sectional study	Poor indoor air quality significantly correlates with disruptions or decreases in sleep quality among school-aged children.
Siregar et al. (2026)	To analyze cultural constraints in forming students' spiritual commitment in religious-based primary schools.	Qualitative research	Local cultural factors and social environments exert unique influences and challenges on the internalization of students' spiritual values.
Dewi et al. (2026)	To assess the impact of the Engoo platform on oral reading skills and perceptions of primary school students.	Experimental / mixed-methods study	The use of the digital platform Engoo provides meaningful improvements in students' oral reading fluency alongside positive feedback from them.

The approach to the moral formation of primary school students begins with the integration of ecological values and local culture into agricultural teaching materials (Fadlillah et al., 2024) and environmental education in English textbooks (Gavilan Tatin et al., 2025). Inclusive language learning through socio-cultural-based digital modules enhances early reading skills (Alwi et al., 2024), while the plus-minus-interesting technique hones creativity and communication ethics (Cahyani et al., 2023). Moral messages are also conveyed through thematic educational songs (Wadiyo et al., 2024), balanced with textual language quality analyses to suit children's cognitive development (Mardiyana et al., 2023). Furthermore, managing mother tongue barriers is essential for smooth social interaction (Kumar et al., 2022), supported by the development of intercultural sensitivity to foster mutual respect (Sugianto et al., 2022).

Character strategies are reinforced by digital technology and critical reasoning. The Engoo digital platform fosters students' self-confidence during oral reading (Dewi et al., 2026). The utilization of artificial intelligence in predicting learning styles supports personalized character interventions (Pardamean et al., 2022), accompanied by the monitoring of students' internet competence based on family and school backgrounds (Kuncahyono et al., 2025). In mathematics, perseverance is built through higher-order thinking skills modules (Mat et al., 2025), conceptual fraction comprehension via the missing part approach (Pramudiani et al., 2022), and questionnaire utilization to manage math anxiety (Arifin et al., 2026). Constructivist learning environment evaluations based on Rasch analysis further ensure fair and conducive classrooms (Rini et al., 2026).

Physical activity and collaborative learning serve as crucial pillars for character formation. An adaptive physical education curriculum fosters discipline and psychosocial health (Mustafa et al., 2024), supported by game-based rhythmic gymnastics to sharpen motor skills and teamwork (Sriwahyuniati et al., 2023). The reinforcement of nationalism is achieved through differentiated learning that broadens nationalistic insight (Asnawi et al., 2024). Project-based learning incorporating traditional games has also been shown to strengthen social cohesion and mutual care among students (Nurhayati et al., 2025). Additionally, scientific inquiry-based physics learning utilizing scientific equipment trains students' integrity, honesty, and objective attitudes in problem-solving (Herwinarso et al., 2023).

The success of moral formation heavily relies on a supporting ecosystem. Parental parenting and maternal hygiene correlate directly with children's discipline habits (Magany et al., 2022), while

the ProGAS nutritional program creates a supportive learning environment (Pramesthi et al., 2025). Clean indoor air quality also preserves children's sleep health so they are ready to receive character education (Rauf et al., 2026). In the spiritual aspect, shaping students' religious commitment encounters local cultural dynamics that require a contextual approach (Siregar et al., 2026). Synergy among classroom instruction, physical environmental conditions, family parenting, and cultural sensitivity forms the core foundation of student character development.

CONCLUSION

The research findings indicate that the moral formation of primary school students in Indonesia is carried out in a multidimensional manner. The findings identify the integration of ecological values, local culture, and socio-cultural modules into language and science instruction. The utilization of technologies such as AI, digital platforms, and HOTS modules effectively drives critical reasoning and learning adaptation. Adaptive physical activities, game-based gymnastics, differentiated instruction, and project-based learning incorporating traditional games are proven to strengthen discipline, nationalism, and social cohesion. Furthermore, a supporting ecosystem encompassing parental parenting practices, ProGAS nutrition, classroom air quality, and adaptation to local cultural dynamics serves as a decisive pillar for the successful internalization of students' moral and spiritual values. Practically, these findings provide a strategic guide for policymakers, curriculum developers, and educators in designing evidence-based moral learning strategies that are harmoniously integrated with cultural values and local wisdom in primary schools.

This study has limitations in the scope of synthesis data, which focused exclusively on publications indexed in specific literature databases, thereby potentially overlooking local best practices or primary education policy documents that have not been published in reputable scientific journals. Future research is recommended to expand the analytical scope through longitudinal empirical approaches, test the effectiveness of moral learning taxonomy models directly in classroom settings, and evaluate the long-term impact of AI technology integration on children's moral development. Overall, the moral formation of primary school students in Indonesia requires holistic synergy among local wisdom-based curricula, the application of technological innovations, and the reinforcement of physical environmental and family ecosystems. The systematic mapping in this study successfully provides a solid theoretical and practical foundation to direct the transformation of children's character education toward a generation that is principled, critically intelligent, and deeply rooted in the nation's cultural values.

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