

## Depiction Of Moral Values In Indonesian English Junior High School Textbooks

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### Abstract

*Most language textbooks are analyzed by emphasizing cultural/multicultural content, gender stereotypes/representation, neoliberalism, and pedagogical representation. The role of language textbooks on moral and cultural values at various levels has been examined. However, moral values at the junior high school level are scarce. This study examined the moral values in junior high school English textbooks entitled "English for Nusantara" for grades 7 and 8 published by the Indonesian Education Standard, Curriculum, and Assessment Agency of the Ministry of Education Culture, Research and Higher Education within the independent curriculum. This research used a qualitative content analysis research design. This study adopted the Moral Foundations Theory Framework (MTF) Graham presented a set of moral principles such as care/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation. The result showed that both the textbooks for grades 7 and 8 were similar representing more dominant moral values than bad values, with percentages of 95% and 59%, respectively. The other finding suggested that the textbooks did not integrate authority, loyalty, and fairness. The study implies incorporating stories that highlight moral values should be required to internalize ethical values and encourage students to do good things.*

**Keywords:** EFL textbooks, moral values, moral foundation, Indonesian junior high school, independent curriculum.

### INTRODUCTION

Textbooks are ethically oriented learning tools that help students develop their moral values (Johansson et al., 2011; Tse & Limin, 2017). They are seen as a means to strengthen or transmit moral values (Widodo, 2018). Additionally, they serve as pedagogical resources for teachers to cultivate a sense of morality and behavioral sensitivity in their students (Jie & Desheng, 2004). Widodo (2018) argued textbooks include stories about role models and their moral behavior (like tolerance), and textbooks can carry moral values. To teach children subject-specific knowledge while also building their moral identity (Tse & Limin, 2017). Morality concerns the life we lead and norms about how to treat others. By creating a sense of shared expectations, norms create social cohesiveness that supports and shapes identity at the societal and individual levels. Social norms are essential to the well-functioning and efficient functioning of social communities. Encountering social problems such as bullying, interethnic intolerance, and cultural stereotypes can help students become moral agents. This involves respect for other cultures, religions, and intercultural tolerance.

In previous studies, moral values and cultural values in language textbooks have been

examined at various levels (Canh, 2018; Feng, 2019; Tse & Limin, 2017; Widodo, 2018; Xiong, 2012; Xiong & Yuan, 2018). Canh (2018) concluded the critical analysis of moral values in an English language textbook for grades 10 to 12 in Vietnam. Feng (2019) investigated social values shown in Hong Kong EFL textbooks for Primary 1 to Secondary 4-6, with explanations of their genetic evolution. Tse and Limin (2017) considered Chinese primary school moral education textbooks. They examined the changing way in which regulatory role models are presented. Widodo (2018) argued evaluation of the ELT textbook for senior high schools in Indonesia. Xiong (2012) interpreted the culture and values in China's English language textbooks for grades 8 and 9. Xiong and Yuan (2018) concluded EFL textbooks for 7 to 9 graders in China are based on neoliberal discourse. In addition, Puspitasari et al. (2021) examined several studies on the moral values that are prominent in primary school, which is supported by previous studies conducted by Elmiana (2019), Tse and Limin (2017), Setyono and Widodo (2019), Widodo (2018), Widodo and Elyas (2020), and Xiong and Yuan (2018). They revealed that most language textbooks are analyzed by emphasizing cultural/multicultural

content, gender stereotypes/representation, neoliberalism, and pedagogical representation.

From the research above, it is clear that moral values at the junior high school level are scarce. Therefore, this study explored to what extent the two English textbooks were published by the Indonesian Education Standard, Curriculum, and Assessment Agency of the Ministry of Education Culture, Research, and Higher Education within the independent curriculum presented moral values. To address this gap, this study focused on identifying moral values that are integrated into the textbooks. It is important to analyze the moral values in the textbooks used by teachers and students.

## METHODOLOGY

This research used a qualitative method. Qualitative methods also showed a different approach to the study of literature than quantitative methods. Despite the similarity of processes, qualitative methods use text and image data, take unusual steps in analyzing data, or are drawn from a variety of designs (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Content analysis design used by the researcher. Content Analysis was a research technique to obtain replicable and reliable understandings of text or other meaningful topics through the context of their use (Krippendorf, 2013 cited in Renette et al., 2021). This study adopted the Moral Foundations Theory Framework Graham et al., (2013). MTF presented a set of moral principles that are intrinsic (care/harm, fairness/ cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation). This research focused on analyzing moral values by looking at the morals that exist in activity text, instructions, and images (comic strips) that were integrated into English textbooks entitled "English for Nusantara" for grades 7 and 8 within an independent Curriculum published by the "Educational Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment Agency, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology in the year 2022. This study examined moral values in English textbooks in Indonesia in local textbooks and whether they support moral values and were appropriate for students. The first one was "English for Nusantara" for grade 7 (Damayanti et al., 2022) was written by

Indonesian writers and released in 2022 by the Indonesian Ministry of Education. It consists of Chapter 1 (About Me), Chapter 2 (Culinary and Me) Chapter 3, (Home Sweet Home) Chapter 4, (My School Activities), and Chapter 5 (This is my school). The contents lots of teacher and student instruction, lots of dialogue, audio, and worksheets. Similar to "English for Nusantara" for grade 8 (Damayanti et al., 2022), was written by Indonesian writers and released in 2022 by the Indonesian Ministry of Education in grade 8. It had 5 chapters including Chapter 1, (Celebrating Independence Day), Chapter 2 (Kindness Begins with Me), Chapter 3 (Love our World), Chapter 4 (No Littering), and Chapter 5 (Embrace Yourself). Table 2 provides more details on the textbooks. The data collection procedure was carried out from September 2023 to November 2023. Researchers collected moral value content that appeared in the text, activity instructions, and image tasks in the books. First, the researcher searched the textbook on the website <https://buku.kemdikbud.go.id/> and then downloaded the e-book "English for Nusantara" textbooks for Grades 7 and 8 within the Independent Curriculum. Secondly, the researcher referred to the research question to be solved and the research objective to analyze the textbooks. Third, the researcher categorized the chapters in the textbook. Fourth, the chapters in the textbook are divided into several categories and sub-categories of moral value (care/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, sanctity/degradation) content in the book. Fifth, the researcher collected text (descriptive and narrative), activity instructions, images (comic strips), and tasks. Finally, the researcher classified them all in appropriate categories and subcategories. Gay et al. (2012) cited in Agustina and Kencana (2023) developed several strategies to increase trust involving experts to check the credibility of the data. This research ensured the reliability of the data being analyzed by showing and ensuring that the data being analyzed is credible to experts in the field of research. This research used an Atlas ti application. Firstly, the data were categorized and created in the code group theory, the code group, and the code for subcategories. The Moral Foundation's theory of moral systems

such as (care/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, sanctity/degradation). The first category care had subcategories (safe, peace, empathy, sympathy, protection, caring). The second category harm had subcategories (suffer, violent, hurt,). The third category fairness had subcategories (fair, equal, justice, tolerant). The fourth category cheating had subcategories (unfair, unequal, biased, discriminated). The fifth category loyalty had subcategories (nation, homeland, families, fellow). The sixth category betrayal had subcategories (traitor, disloyal, deceive). The seventh category authority had subcategories (respect, obedience). The eighth category subversion had subcategories (fear). The ninth category sanctity had subcategories (temperance, piety, cleanliness). The tenth category degradation had a subcategory (disgust). Secondly, text, images, and text are inputted into each group code. Then export the data to Excel. Last, a table of frequency and percentage of occurrence are to be calculated at an advanced stage.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results discovered that two English for Nusantara textbooks for grade 7 and grade 8 were similar. Those textbooks represented more dominant good moral values than bad values. The occurrence of good moral values in the English for Nusantara textbook for grade 7 was 76 (95%). Similarly, in English for Nusantara textbook for grade 8 was dominated by good moral values 73(59%). It was in line with previous studies undertaken by Feng (2019), Sukma et.al (2021), Wang (2022), and Xiong (2012). It supported studies by Feng (2019) that the textbooks portray a higher proportion of positive values than negative ones. In the context of Moral Stage Theory (MST), the school years primarily align with the stage of conventional morality. Similarly, Sukma et.al (2021) indicated that textbooks incorporated a diverse range of moral values through various genres in text and visual formats. Equally, Wang (2022) showed that moral values were frequently conducted through written representation. Similarly, Xiong (2012) interpreted textbooks as more dominant cultural and moral discourses that were

occasionally contested and resisted by competing discourses. The finding was in contrast to studies undertaken by Canh (2018) and Widodo (2018). Canh (2018) studied three textbooks and the results showed that they had very limited moral values, most of which were embedded in the reading texts. On the other hand, Widodo (2018) evaluated analysis of textbooks was not focused on learning activities because authors only include lexical items or vocabulary that describe values. There was no explicit value-integrated English language teaching.

Table 1. Moral Values in English for Nusantara Textbook (Grade 7)

Good Moral Value	Frequency	Percentage	Bad Value	Frequency	Percentage
Care	18	24%	Degradation	4	5%
Fairness	6	8%	Harm	0	0%
Loyalty	13	17%	Cheating	0	0%
Authority	9	12%	Betrayal	0	0%
Sanctity	26	34%	Subversion	0	0%
Total	76	95%	Total	4	5%

Table 2. Moral Values in English for Nusantara Textbook (Grade 8)

Good moral value	Frequency	percentage	Bad value	Frequency	percentage
Care	14	19%	Degradation	12	16%
Fairness	3	4%	Harm	18	25%
Loyalty	2	3%	Cheating	0	0%
Authority	1	1%	Betrayal	0	0%
Sanctity	23	32%	Subversion	0	0%
Total	73	59%	Total	30	41%

Specifically, the representation of moral value in English for Nusantara textbook for grade 7 demonstrated sanctity (34%), care (24%), and loyalty (17%) as the most dominant which were illustrated in pictures and bubble chat in comic strips. These include cleanliness, like keeping the house clean; piety, such as saying prayers before meals by one's religion; care, like greeting friends warmly; protection, such as a father protecting his daughter while she plays in the park; and loyalty, like being a good friend to others. Closely similar, English for Nusantara textbook for grade 8 found sanctity (32%) and care (19%) more dominant than other categories. The sanctity refers to maintaining cleanliness,

such as by not littering and keeping the environment clean. Moreover, care was shown by providing emotional support, and protectiveness can be demonstrated by actions like firefighters rescuing people from floods. These subcategories were depicted in bubble chat and pictures in comic strips. Nearly similar, Piang et.al (2017) found that good moral values in textbooks were dominant such as responsible, respectful, helping, hardworking, and caring which appeared across almost all of the seven themes covered in the syllabus. One of them responsible citizens acts responsibly in his/her community by, for example, giving blood, recycling, volunteering, and staying out of debt 'in textbooks. In a similar vein, Sulistiyo et.al (2020) exhibited dominant values encapsulated in the textbooks including politeness and caring values represented in the written texts, and images, for example, showed respect and politeness to service attendants in EFL textbooks.

However, Imelwaty et.al (2022) investigated Indonesia's primary textbooks on ethics' most dominant values such as friendship, equality of status, and intimacy in relationships. The thematic textbooks feature stories in which the main characters exhibit moral values and respect for differences in textbooks. Nevertheless, Kusramadhani (2022) presented that the most apparent moral values identified in the English textbook were social awareness, curiosity, and responsibility. Social awareness was a valuable attitude that promotes helping others in need, as conveyed through an implicit moral message in the conversation text. As an example, when a friend was struggling to learn, it was important for us to offer our assistance as friends in textbooks grade 7.

Furthermore, Setiawan and Fahriany (2017) revealed the value of kindness was primarily emphasized in the stories, while fairness was the least explicitly mentioned virtue in the narrative texts. It was consistent with the views and preferences expressed by both teachers and students in high school textbooks. In contrast, in English for Nusantara textbook for grade 7, the fairness category was identified, in a relatively small number (8%). It was illustrated in pictures and bubble chat in comic strips. For example, tolerance such as respect for

differences between tribes, religions, races, and cultures. Similarly, the English for Nusantara textbook for grade 8 only found the fairness category in a small number of cases, which represented only (4%) of the total in picture and bubble chat in comic strips. For example, there was equality such as treating people equally.

In addition, bad values were found in English for Nusantara textbook for grade 7 only a few numbers of degradation (5%). For example, it was interpreted as women throwing garbage into sewers and men burning garbage. Also, in English for Nusantara textbook for grade 8 only a little degradation was determined (16%), and harm (25%), for example, the river was contaminated by garbage. Another example, people throwing garbage into the river. Unfortunately, few good values were discovered in the fairness category (8%) in the book English for Nusantara textbook for grade 7. Nearly similar, a few good moral values were discovered authority category (1%), loyalty category (3%), and fairness (4%) in English for Nusantara textbook for grade 8. Equivalently, identified a lack of moral value for fairness, it should be a priority to focus more attention on stories about justice and righteousness. In the context of our domestic and international lives, that value was certainly in demand (Setiawan & Fahriany, 2017). On the contrary, Previous studies did not address bad values; they focused on good moral values (Feng, 2019; Sukma et al., 2021; Wang, 2022; Xiong & Yuan, 2018). Based on the results above, the highest representation of good moral values was pictured (comic strips). It can be concluded that these textbooks efforts to convey good moral values through depictions so that they are easy to understand. In particular, students in grades 7 and 8 have an age range of 13-15 years.

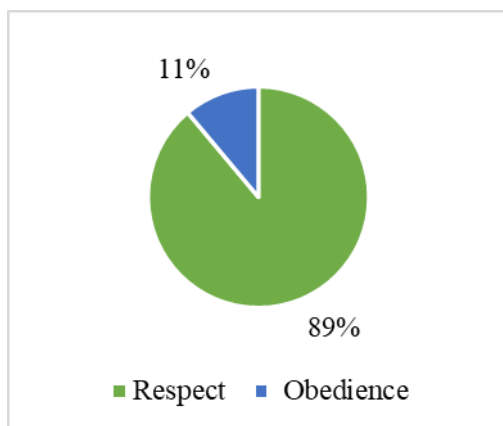


Figure 1. Authority subcategories in English for Nusantara for grade 7



Figure 2. Example of obedient and respect in English for Nusantara for grade 7

## CONCLUSION

This study examined the representation of moral values in English textbooks for grades 7 and 8. The results discovered that two English for Nusantara textbooks for grade 7 and grade 8 were similar. Those textbooks represented more dominant good moral values than bad values. The occurrence of good moral values in the English for Nusantara textbook for grade 7 was 76 (95%). Similarly, in English for Nusantara textbook for grade 8 was dominated by good moral values 73(59%). Based on the result, it can be inferred that the textbooks intended to make good moral values easy to see. Additional results examined specific representations of good moral values. Specifically, English for Nusantara textbook for grade 7 demonstrated sanctity (34%), care (24%), and loyalty (17%) as most dominant which were illustrated in pictures and

bubble chat in comic strips. These include cleanliness, like keeping the house clean; piety, such as saying prayers before meals by one's religion; care, like greeting friends warmly; protection, such as a father protecting his daughter while she plays in the park; and loyalty, like being a good friend to others. Closely similar, English for Nusantara textbook for grade 8 was invented sanctity (32%) and care (19%) more dominantly than other categories. It was sanctity refers to maintaining cleanliness, such as by not littering and keeping the environment clean. Moreover, care was shown by providing emotional support, and protectiveness can be demonstrated by actions like firefighters rescuing people from floods. These subcategories were depicted in bubble chat and pictures in comic strips. Unfortunately, few good values were discovered in the fairness category (8%) in the book English for Nusantara textbook for grade 7. Nearly similar, a few good moral values were discovered authority category (1%), loyalty category (3%), and fairness (4%) in English for Nusantara textbook for grade 8. Equivalently identified lack of moral value for fairness, it should be a priority to focus more attention on stories about justice and righteousness. In the context of our domestic and international lives, that value was certainly in demand (Setiawan & Fahriany, 2017). Therefore, the moral values in textbooks can have a significant impact on readers, especially books used in educational contexts. It greatly influences students' attitudes and behavior. It is important for students to not only understand these values but also apply them in everyday life. In addition, educators can guide students to engage with various texts and relate them to real-life situations, in line with societal expectations. As a consequence, it is expected that textbooks encourage and describe moral values such as honesty, justice, and empathy, readers may tend to internalize these values and apply them in their attitudes and behavior. It is important to evaluate and understand the implications of moral values in textbooks, especially in an educational context in which textbooks can play an important role in the establishment of students' moral values. Considering the results of the study, it would be better to prioritize including more moral values,

especially values that are currently lacking, such as authority, loyalty, and fairness. For example, adding stories or characters in textbooks that highlight moral values can be a source of inspiration for positive action, encouraging readers to do good things and act according to ethical values. Furthermore, this research has limitations specifically, the researcher only analyzed two English textbooks for grades 7 and grade 8. It is important to carry out further studies by examining the implementation of moral values from the perspective of students or teachers during lessons.

### RECOMMENDATION

Furthermore, this research has limitations specifically, the researcher only analyzed two English textbooks for grades 7 and grade 8. It is important to carry out further studies by examining the implementation of moral values from the perspective of students or teachers during lessons.

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