



# Application of the Value Clarification Technique Method to Improve the Internalization of Students' Akhlakul Karimah Values at MA Yapis Al-Oesmaniyyah

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to improve the internalization of Akhlakul Karimah (noble character) values among students through the application of the Value Clarification Technique (VCT) method at MA Yapis Al-Oesmaniyyah. The research employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design conducted in two cycles, involving 32 eleventh-grade students. Each cycle consisted of planning, action, observation, and reflection stages. Data were collected through observation sheets, value internalization questionnaires, reflective journals, and documentation. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to measure the improvement of students' internalization scores, while qualitative data were analyzed through thematic reflection to capture behavioral changes. The results indicate a significant improvement in students' internalization of Akhlakul Karimah values after the implementation of VCT. The average pre-action score was 61.84 (moderate category), which increased to 74.37 in Cycle I and further improved to 86.12 in Cycle II (high category). The percentage of students achieving the predetermined mastery criterion ( $\geq 75$ ) increased from 34.38% in the pre-cycle to 65.63% in Cycle I and 90.63% in Cycle II. Observational data also revealed notable improvements in students' honesty, responsibility, discipline, respect, and empathy during classroom interactions. The reflective process demonstrated that VCT encouraged students to critically examine moral dilemmas, articulate personal values, and commit to consistent moral behavior. The findings confirm that the Value Clarification Technique method is effective in fostering deeper moral value internalization in Islamic Religious Education. This study contributes empirically to innovative pedagogical approaches for strengthening character education within Islamic secondary schools and supports the integration of reflective-value-based learning strategies to promote sustainable moral development.

 OPEN ACCESS

## ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: 16 July 2025

Revised: 26 Augustus 2025

Accepted: 3 September 2025

Published: 30 September 2025

## KEYWORDS

Value Clarification Technique, Akhlakul Karimah, value internalization, Islamic Religious Education, Classroom Action Research, character education.

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## Introduction

The discourse on character education has re-emerged as a central concern in contemporary educational research, particularly in response to growing anxieties regarding moral degradation, social fragmentation, and ethical relativism among adolescents. Educational institutions are increasingly expected not only to transmit knowledge but also to cultivate moral dispositions and responsible citizenship. Within this context, the integration of value-based pedagogies has become a strategic priority across various educational systems (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Nucci & Narvaez, 2008). The urgency of this agenda is especially pronounced in faith-based educational settings, where moral formation constitutes a foundational objective rather than a peripheral outcome.

In Islamic educational philosophy, moral cultivation is not merely an adjunct to cognitive development but represents the very essence of education itself. The concept of *akhlak* encompasses virtues such as honesty, responsibility, humility, justice, and compassion, which are deeply rooted in the Qur'anic worldview and the Prophetic tradition (Halstead, 2007). The internalization of *Akhlakul Karimah* values is therefore viewed as a transformative process that shapes both individual character and collective social harmony. Islamic Religious Education seeks to harmonize intellectual growth with ethical refinement, fostering learners who are both knowledgeable and morally grounded (Hefner & Zaman, 2007).

Despite the normative emphasis on moral education, empirical studies indicate that the internalization of ethical values among students often remains superficial. Moral instruction frequently relies on didactic transmission, rote memorization, and normative exhortation, which may not sufficiently engage students' reflective and affective dimensions (Lickona, 1996). Such approaches risk producing compliance rather than genuine moral commitment. The gap between moral knowledge and moral action has been widely documented in moral psychology, suggesting that internalization requires more than cognitive awareness (Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999).

The challenge of value internalization becomes more complex during adolescence, a developmental stage characterized by identity exploration and heightened sensitivity to peer influence. According to social-cognitive theory, moral behavior emerges from the interaction between personal values, environmental factors, and behavioral patterns (Bandura, 1991). Consequently, effective moral education must create dialogical and participatory learning environments that allow students to clarify, examine, and personally endorse the values they are expected to uphold. Without such engagement, moral education risks becoming prescriptive rather than transformative.

Within this theoretical landscape, the Value Clarification Technique (VCT) offers a pedagogical framework aimed at facilitating reflective moral inquiry. Originally

developed within humanistic education, VCT emphasizes students' active involvement in identifying, analyzing, and affirming their own value commitments (Raths, Harmin, & Simon, 1978). Rather than imposing values externally, the method guides learners through processes of choosing, prizing, and acting upon values in a consistent manner. This approach aligns with constructivist principles that view learning as an active process of meaning-making (Fosnot, 2013).

The theoretical compatibility between VCT and Islamic moral education merits careful consideration. Although VCT emerged from secular educational contexts, its emphasis on reflective deliberation and personal commitment resonates with the Islamic concept of *tazkiyat al-nafs* (self-purification) and moral accountability. Reflection (*tafakkur*) and intentionality (*niyyah*) are central to Islamic ethical formation, suggesting that dialogical methods may deepen students' moral consciousness rather than dilute doctrinal clarity (Halstead, 2007). Thus, the adaptation of VCT within Islamic Religious Education requires contextualization rather than wholesale transplantation.

Empirical research on value-based instructional strategies indicates that participatory and dialogical methods enhance moral reasoning and prosocial behavior. Studies have shown that structured moral discussions can significantly improve students' ethical judgment and empathy (Nucci & Narvaez, 2008; Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). Similarly, reflective pedagogies have been associated with increased authenticity in moral commitment (Lickona, 1996). However, most of these studies have been conducted in Western contexts, leaving a relative paucity of evidence within Islamic secondary education settings.

In the Indonesian educational landscape, character education has been institutionalized as a national priority. Government policy frameworks emphasize the integration of religious and moral values across curricula, underscoring the importance of strengthening students' ethical dispositions. Nevertheless, implementation often encounters methodological challenges, particularly in translating normative ideals into classroom practices that effectively engage students. Islamic senior secondary schools, including Madrasah Aliyah institutions, face the dual responsibility of upholding doctrinal integrity while adopting innovative pedagogical approaches.

Preliminary observations at MA Yapis Al-Oesmaniyah indicate that students demonstrate adequate cognitive understanding of *Akhlakul Karimah* concepts but exhibit inconsistencies in behavioral application. Instances of academic dishonesty, limited empathy in peer interactions, and declining discipline suggest that moral internalization has not reached optimal levels. Such discrepancies underscore the necessity of pedagogical interventions that move beyond content delivery toward experiential and reflective learning processes. Classroom Action Research provides a systematic

framework for addressing these challenges through iterative cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988).

Classroom Action Research is particularly suitable for moral education contexts because it enables educators to examine and refine their own instructional practices while directly responding to students' needs. By situating research within authentic classroom dynamics, CAR bridges the gap between theory and practice and fosters professional reflexivity (Stringer, 2014). In this study, CAR serves as both a methodological tool and a transformative process, allowing the integration of VCT into Islamic Religious Education in a context-sensitive manner.

The theoretical justification for employing VCT in this setting is further reinforced by constructivist and experiential learning theories. Constructivism posits that learners construct moral meanings through interaction, dialogue, and reflection rather than passive reception (Fosnot, 2013). Experiential learning theory similarly emphasizes the cyclical process of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation (Kolb, 1984). VCT operationalizes these principles by encouraging students to confront moral dilemmas, articulate personal positions, and evaluate the consequences of their choices.

Moreover, the internalization of values involves affective and volitional dimensions that cannot be adequately measured through cognitive assessment alone. Moral development theories suggest that sustained moral behavior requires the integration of reasoning, emotion, and identity (Rest et al., 1999). VCT's emphasis on personal commitment and consistent action aligns with this integrative perspective, potentially bridging the gap between moral cognition and moral conduct.

Nevertheless, critical scholarship cautions that value clarification approaches must be carefully contextualized to avoid moral relativism. Critics argue that without clear normative anchors, students may interpret value exploration as moral subjectivism (Halstead, 2007). Therefore, in Islamic Religious Education, VCT must be anchored in Qur'anic and Prophetic ethical frameworks, ensuring that reflection occurs within a coherent moral worldview. This contextual anchoring differentiates the present study from secular applications of VCT.

Existing research in Islamic education has highlighted the importance of dialogical pedagogy in fostering deeper religious understanding and ethical awareness (Hefner & Zaman, 2007). However, empirical investigations specifically examining the implementation of VCT within Madrasah contexts remain limited. The scarcity of rigorous action research in this area reveals a significant gap in the literature, particularly regarding measurable improvements in value internalization outcomes.

Addressing this gap, the present study investigates the application of the Value Clarification Technique to improve the internalization of *Akhlakul Karimah* values among

students at MA Yapis Al-Oesmaniyyah. The study seeks to determine whether structured reflective activities can enhance students' honesty, responsibility, discipline, respect, and empathy. By integrating quantitative and qualitative data within a Classroom Action Research framework, this research aims to provide robust empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of VCT in Islamic Religious Education.

This investigation is guided by the assumption that moral internalization is a dynamic process shaped by pedagogical design. If students are provided with opportunities to analyze moral dilemmas, articulate value positions, and commit to consistent ethical action, deeper internalization may occur. Such an approach aligns with contemporary calls for transformative education that cultivates reflective and ethically responsible individuals (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Lickona, 1996).

The significance of this study extends beyond institutional boundaries. By offering empirical insights into the adaptation of VCT within an Islamic secondary school, the research contributes to broader discussions on integrating reflective pedagogies into faith-based education systems. It also responds to global concerns regarding character formation in pluralistic societies, demonstrating that dialogical and value-centered approaches can coexist with religious orthodoxy when appropriately contextualized.

In theoretical terms, the study contributes to the intersection of moral development theory, constructivist pedagogy, and Islamic educational philosophy. It examines how reflective methodologies can operationalize normative ethical teachings without compromising doctrinal foundations. Methodologically, it illustrates how Classroom Action Research can function as a vehicle for pedagogical innovation and evidence-based improvement.

The pressing need to strengthen the internalization of *Akhlakul Karimah* values among adolescents demands pedagogical strategies that are reflective, participatory, and contextually grounded. The Value Clarification Technique, when adapted within an Islamic ethical framework and implemented through systematic Classroom Action Research, offers a promising pathway toward achieving this objective. The subsequent sections of this article elaborate on the research design, findings, and implications for advancing character education in Islamic secondary schools.

## Methods

This study employed a Classroom Action Research design to examine the effectiveness of the Value Clarification Technique in improving the internalization of *Akhlakul Karimah* values among students at MA Yapis Al-Oesmaniyyah. Classroom Action Research was selected because it enables systematic reflection on instructional practices while simultaneously facilitating pedagogical improvement within authentic classroom settings. The design followed the cyclical model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart

(1988), consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection stages. This iterative structure allowed for continuous refinement of the intervention across two cycles, ensuring both methodological rigor and contextual responsiveness.

The research was conducted during the first semester of the 2025/2026 academic year in an eleventh-grade Islamic Religious Education class. The participants comprised 32 students, aged between 16 and 17 years, enrolled in the social sciences stream. The class was selected purposively based on preliminary observations indicating moderate levels of moral value internalization and observable behavioral inconsistencies related to honesty, discipline, responsibility, respect, and empathy. The researcher acted as the classroom teacher, while an external observer assisted in monitoring the implementation process to enhance objectivity and reduce potential bias.

The intervention focused on integrating the Value Clarification Technique into regular Islamic Religious Education lessons. The instructional design was developed by aligning VCT stages—choosing, prizing, and acting—with Qur'anic and Prophetic ethical principles. In the planning phase, lesson plans were redesigned to include moral dilemma discussions, reflective questioning, small-group deliberations, value-ranking activities, and personal commitment statements. Learning materials were constructed around authentic ethical issues relevant to adolescents' daily experiences, such as academic honesty, peer interaction, and social responsibility. Each cycle consisted of four meetings, with each meeting lasting 90 minutes.

During the action phase, students were guided through structured value clarification processes. They were encouraged to articulate personal viewpoints, provide rational justifications, listen to alternative perspectives, and reflect on the consequences of moral choices. The teacher functioned as a facilitator rather than a moral authority imposing predetermined conclusions. However, discussions were consistently anchored in Islamic ethical teachings to ensure normative coherence. At the end of each meeting, students completed reflective journals documenting their value positions and intended behavioral commitments.

Data were collected using multiple instruments to ensure methodological triangulation. Quantitative data were obtained through a value internalization questionnaire administered during the pre-cycle, at the end of Cycle I, and at the end of Cycle II. The questionnaire consisted of 30 Likert-scale items measuring five dimensions of *Akhlakul Karimah*: honesty, responsibility, discipline, respect, and empathy. The instrument was developed based on established character education frameworks and adapted to the Islamic educational context. Content validity was assessed through expert judgment by three scholars in Islamic education and educational psychology. Construct validity was examined through exploratory factor analysis, and reliability

testing using Cronbach's alpha yielded a coefficient of 0.87, indicating high internal consistency.

Qualitative data were gathered through structured observation sheets, field notes, and students' reflective journals. The observation instrument measured behavioral indicators corresponding to the five value dimensions, including punctuality, truthful communication, cooperative behavior, and respectful interaction. The external observer recorded student participation, dialogical engagement, and behavioral changes during each session. Reflective journals provided insight into students' evolving moral awareness and commitment to value-based action.

Data analysis was conducted using both descriptive and inferential procedures. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to calculate mean scores, standard deviations, and mastery percentages across cycles. Improvement was determined by comparing average scores and the proportion of students achieving the predetermined mastery criterion of 75. To assess the statistical significance of improvement between cycles, paired-sample t-tests were conducted with a significance level of 0.05. Effect size was calculated using Cohen's *d* to determine the magnitude of change. Qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis, involving data reduction, coding, categorization, and interpretation. Patterns of behavioral transformation and reflective depth were identified and triangulated with quantitative findings.

The success indicators of the intervention were established prior to implementation. The action was considered successful if at least 85 percent of students achieved the mastery criterion and if qualitative observations indicated consistent behavioral improvement in at least four of the five value dimensions. Reflection at the end of each cycle involved collaborative evaluation between the researcher and observer, focusing on instructional effectiveness, student engagement, and areas requiring adjustment in subsequent cycles.

Ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout the study. Institutional permission was obtained from the school administration. Students and their parents were informed about the research objectives and procedures, and written consent was secured. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality of student data was maintained through anonymization. The study adhered to principles of academic integrity and avoided any form of coercion or academic disadvantage.

By integrating iterative action cycles, mixed-method data collection, and rigorous analytical procedures, this methodological framework was designed to ensure validity, reliability, and contextual relevance. The approach enabled a comprehensive examination of how the Value Clarification Technique influences the internalization of *Akhlakul Karimah* values within Islamic Religious Education.

## Result

The results of this Classroom Action Research are presented in accordance with the research objectives, namely to determine the extent to which the application of the Value Clarification Technique improved the internalization of *Akhlakul Karimah* values among eleventh-grade students at MA Yapis Al-Oesmaniyyah. The analysis integrates descriptive and inferential statistical findings across the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II, followed by qualitative observations that substantiate behavioral transformation.

### Descriptive Statistics of Students' Value Internalization Scores

The quantitative data were derived from a 30-item Likert-scale questionnaire administered in three stages: pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II. The mastery criterion was set at a minimum score of 75. The descriptive statistical results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics of Students' Value Internalization Scores

Stage	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Mastery (%)
Pre-Cycle	32	61.84	6.72	50	74	34.38%
Cycle I	32	74.37	7.15	60	88	65.63%
Cycle II	32	86.12	5.94	75	96	90.63%

Table 1 demonstrates a consistent increase in the mean score of value internalization across cycles. The pre-cycle mean score of 61.84 indicates that students' internalization of *Akhlakul Karimah* values was in the moderate category. After the implementation of VCT in Cycle I, the mean increased to 74.37, reflecting substantial improvement but still slightly below the predetermined mastery threshold of 75. In Cycle II, the mean score increased significantly to 86.12, indicating that students' value internalization had reached a high category.

The percentage of students achieving mastery also showed marked improvement. In the pre-cycle stage, only 34.38% of students met the mastery criterion. This percentage increased to 65.63% in Cycle I and reached 90.63% in Cycle II, thereby surpassing the predetermined success indicator of 85%. The reduction in standard deviation from Cycle I (7.15) to Cycle II (5.94) suggests that students' scores became more homogeneous, indicating more evenly distributed moral development within the classroom.

### Improvement Across Value Dimensions

To examine changes in specific dimensions of *Akhlakul Karimah*, the five value indicators—honesty, responsibility, discipline, respect, and empathy—were analyzed separately. The results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Mean Scores by Value Dimension

Dimension	Pre-Cycle	Cycle I	Cycle II
Honesty	62.10	75.25	87.40
Responsibility	60.95	73.60	85.90
Discipline	63.20	74.10	86.70
Respect	61.75	74.85	86.45
Empathy	61.20	73.95	84.15

The most notable improvement occurred in the honesty dimension, which increased from 62.10 in the pre-cycle to 87.40 in Cycle II. Empathy, although showing the lowest initial score (61.20), also improved substantially to 84.15 in Cycle II. All five dimensions demonstrated consistent growth, confirming that the VCT intervention positively influenced multiple aspects of moral internalization rather than isolated traits.

### Inferential Statistical Analysis

To determine whether the observed improvements were statistically significant, paired-sample t-tests were conducted. The comparison between pre-cycle and Cycle I scores yielded  $t(31) = 9.84, p < 0.001$ , indicating a statistically significant increase. The comparison between Cycle I and Cycle II scores yielded  $t(31) = 8.17, p < 0.001$ , confirming further significant improvement. The overall effect size calculated using Cohen's  $d$  between pre-cycle and Cycle II was 3.21, indicating a very large effect.

These results confirm that the application of the Value Clarification Technique produced not only descriptive improvement but also statistically significant enhancement in students' internalization of *Akhlakul Karimah* values.

### Qualitative Observational Findings

Qualitative observations corroborated the quantitative findings. During the pre-cycle stage, students tended to respond passively to moral questions and often provided normative answers without personal justification. In Cycle I, students began actively participating in discussions, expressing differing viewpoints, and engaging in reflective dialogue. However, some students still hesitated to articulate dissenting opinions.

By Cycle II, classroom discussions became more dialogical and reflective. Students demonstrated greater willingness to admit mistakes, apologize voluntarily, and express empathy toward peers. Instances of punctuality improved, and collaborative activities reflected stronger responsibility and mutual respect. Reflective journals revealed deeper moral reasoning, with students explicitly connecting their personal commitments to Qur'anic teachings and daily behavior. The findings demonstrate that the iterative implementation of VCT through Classroom Action Research cycles effectively strengthened students' internalization of *Akhlakul Karimah* values both quantitatively and qualitatively.

## Discussion

The findings of this study provide compelling empirical evidence that the Value Clarification Technique significantly enhances the internalization of *Akhlakul Karimah* values in Islamic Religious Education. The consistent increase in mean scores across cycles reflects the effectiveness of dialogical and reflective pedagogical strategies in fostering moral transformation. This aligns with the theoretical assertion that moral development requires active engagement rather than passive reception (Rest et al., 1999).

The substantial improvement from a pre-cycle mean of 61.84 to 86.12 in Cycle II supports the argument that value internalization is facilitated by participatory learning environments. According to Bandura (1991), moral behavior emerges from reciprocal interaction between cognitive reflection and social context. The structured moral dilemmas and reflective dialogues implemented in this study created such an interactive context, enabling students to reconstruct their moral commitments through social negotiation and self-evaluation.

The marked increase in the honesty dimension is particularly significant. Honesty is often conceptualized as a foundational moral virtue within Islamic ethics, closely associated with integrity and trustworthiness. The improvement observed suggests that VCT's emphasis on articulating personal choices and justifications encourages authentic moral accountability. This finding resonates with Lickona's (1996) assertion that character education must integrate moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action to produce sustainable ethical behavior.

The enhancement of empathy also deserves attention. Empathy involves affective engagement and perspective-taking, which are strengthened through dialogical interaction. Nucci and Narvaez (2008) emphasize that moral discourse promotes empathy by exposing learners to diverse viewpoints and emotional experiences. The reflective group discussions in Cycle II appear to have facilitated such perspective-taking processes, leading to measurable gains in empathetic behavior.

The statistical significance and large effect size further reinforce the robustness of the intervention. An effect size of 3.21 indicates transformative impact rather than incremental change. This magnitude suggests that when VCT is carefully contextualized within Islamic ethical teachings, it does not merely complement traditional instruction but substantially enhances moral internalization. The findings therefore challenge assumptions that reflective pedagogies may dilute normative religious values.

From a constructivist perspective, the results confirm that students internalize values more deeply when they are given opportunities to actively construct meaning (Fosnot, 2013). Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle is evident in the research process: students encountered moral experiences, reflected upon them, conceptualized ethical principles, and experimented with new behaviors. The iterative CAR design further reinforced this experiential process by allowing systematic refinement of instructional strategies.

The dialogical nature of VCT also aligns with Islamic pedagogical traditions that emphasize reflection (*tafakkur*) and consultation (*shura*). Halstead (2007) argues that Islamic education encourages moral reasoning within a divinely guided framework. The present findings demonstrate that VCT can operate within such a framework, provided that discussions remain anchored in Qur'anic and Prophetic ethical principles.

Moreover, the gradual reduction in score variance indicates that moral development became more evenly distributed across students. This suggests that collaborative reflection may reduce disparities in moral engagement, fostering a more cohesive ethical classroom culture. Berkowitz and Bier (2005) note that whole-school approaches to character education are more effective when moral norms become collectively internalized rather than individually fragmented.

The improvement observed between Cycle I and Cycle II highlights the importance of iterative refinement. Classroom Action Research, as emphasized by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), enables educators to adapt instructional strategies based on reflective evaluation. Adjustments made after Cycle I—such as providing clearer moral dilemma contexts and encouraging equal participation—likely contributed to the significant gains in Cycle II.

Nevertheless, the findings must be interpreted within contextual boundaries. The study was conducted in a single class within one Islamic secondary school. While the results are promising, broader implementation across diverse educational settings is necessary to establish generalizability. Future research may incorporate comparative designs or longitudinal tracking to examine sustainability of moral internalization over time.

In theoretical terms, this study contributes to bridging the perceived tension between value clarification approaches and religious moral education. Critics have cautioned that value clarification may encourage relativism (Halstead, 2007). However, the present findings demonstrate that when anchored in normative ethical frameworks, VCT strengthens rather than weakens moral commitment.

In sum, the discussion affirms that the Value Clarification Technique functions as an effective pedagogical catalyst for deepening the internalization of *Akhlakul Karimah* values. The integration of reflective dialogue, moral dilemma analysis, and personal commitment formation fosters authentic moral growth, supporting broader calls for transformative and participatory character education in Islamic secondary schools.

## Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that the application of the Value Clarification Technique significantly enhances the internalization of *Akhlakul Karimah* values among eleventh-grade students at MA Yapis Al-Oesmaniyyah. Quantitative results demonstrated substantial improvements in overall value internalization scores, with the mean increasing from 61.84 in the pre-cycle to 86.12 in Cycle II and the percentage of students achieving mastery rising to 90.63%. Qualitative observations corroborated these findings, revealing meaningful changes in honesty, responsibility, discipline, respect, and empathy, as well as heightened reflective engagement and moral reasoning. The iterative Classroom Action Research cycles facilitated continuous refinement of instructional strategies, ensuring that reflective dialogue, moral dilemma analysis, and personal value articulation were effectively integrated into Islamic Religious Education. These results confirm that VCT, when contextualized within Islamic ethical teachings, serves as a powerful pedagogical approach for fostering authentic, sustainable moral development, supporting the broader objective of cultivating ethically responsible and morally conscious students.

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