

Moral Values in the Character of Ale in Brian Krisna's Novel A Bowl of Chicken Noodles Before Death

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the ethical values embodied in the character of Ale in Brian Khrisna's work titled A Bowl of Chicken Noodles Before Death by applying a qualitative descriptive method based on a literature review. Research data were drawn from narrative excerpts, dialogues, and the main character's behavior, analyzed using content analysis techniques. The findings reveal various moral values, such as gratitude, compassion, empathy, honesty, patience, a never-give-up spirit, the ability to forgive, and self-acceptance, which reflect positive human interactions with God, one another, and oneself. Ale's character development shows a shift from a state of depression and despair toward a more positive understanding of life through the experiences and social interactions he undergoes. This novel serves not only as a form of entertainment but also as a tool for moral education that can shape the reader's character and provide insight into the meaning of life.

Key words: Moral Values; Character Development; Novels; Ale; Literary Education

INTRODUCTION

A novel is a form of prose that generally consists of a lengthy narrative, featuring various characters, each with a unique personality, as well as a series of events related to human life (Nurgiantoro, 2018). In the world of literature, particularly in the realm of novels, it serves as a form of artistic expression that not only provides

entertainment but also conveys valuable lessons to its readers. Literary activity is a creative act, a form of art according to Yulianti (2024). Through its plot, gripping conflicts, and character portrayals, the novel is able to reflect social issues related to human existence. As stated by Wulansari (2019), literature is an artistic work born from ideas that present life values and entertainment for its readers. Moral values are teachings about what is right and wrong in individual behavior Pradiastuti, (2024). Furthermore, moral values serve as one of the primary foundations of literature, educating readers about the distinction between good and evil, as reflected in the attitudes, actions, and decisions of characters in various situations. These values are crucial because they provide lessons, moments for reflection, and insights for readers regarding behaviors that should be emulated or avoided. Literature, much like other works of fiction, does not merely focus on aesthetic beauty but also serves as a vehicle for character development and social awareness.

Fictional works contain moral lessons that readers can draw from, and these works present moral teachings in various forms, as noted by Sari et al. (2023). Among the many literary works containing moral values, Brian Khrisna's novel titled *A Bowl of Chicken Noodles Before Death* possesses distinctive characteristics that make it more relevant and urgent to study compared to other literary works. These characteristics lie in its ability to connect real psychological issues in modern life with the conveyance of profound moral values in a way that does not feel preachy.

Unlike traditional literature, which often highlights moral conflicts within a collective social or cultural context, this novel boldly explores the most personal aspects of the human experience the inner struggle of an individual on the brink of despair. The main character, Ale, is a 37 year old man suffering from severe depression due to mistreatment by society and his family, reflecting a reality often overlooked in Indonesian literature in general mental health issues, which are an important part of modern life. Issues such as mental stress, social isolation, and bullying raised in this story are not merely background elements but form the core of a narrative that resonates directly with many readers today.

More profoundly, the novel's uniqueness compared to other literary works can be seen in the way the author presents a simple premise about Ale's desire to enjoy a bowl of chicken noodle soup before the end of his life, which then develops into a reflective narrative rich in human and existential meaning. This method makes this novel not only accessible to various groups of readers, but also able to express moral messages about resilience, self-acceptance, and the importance of social support in a more profound and memorable way. In other words, the novel *A Bowl of Chicken Noodles Before Death* not only serves as entertainment and a source of beauty, but also specifically serves as a tool to shape characters and raise social awareness that is very relevant to the challenges of human life in modern times. Therefore, this work deserves to be analyzed further, with an emphasis on moral values reflected through the figure of Ale.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on Brian Khrisna's novel *A Bowl of Chicken Noodles Before Death* has been conducted from various literary perspectives. Among the most relevant studies is the work by Runa et al. (2025), which analyzes the novel's artistic language, characterization, and didactic value. The main finding is the substantial transformation of the character Ale through complex internal conflicts. The research also reveals educational values such as resilience, empathy, and life lessons through the protagonist's journey. This underscores the novel's aesthetic value as well as its strong moral and educational content.

Previous Related Study

Previous studies have examined the novel *A Bowl of Chicken Noodles Before Dying* from various perspectives. Arun et al. (2026) used Maslow's humanistic psychology to examine the fulfillment of the hierarchy of Ale characters' needs, focusing on mental conditions such as depression and the search for life purpose. Rahayu et al. (2025) applied Jung's personality theory to analyze the dynamics of Ale conscious and unconscious, including the influence of trauma and psychological shifts toward self-acceptance. Meanwhile, Kadir et al. (2025) approach this novel through a sociological of literature, by highlighting the representation of poverty, injustice, and the pressures of urban life as the roots of character conflicts. The three studies focus on the psychological and sociological dimensions of the Ale character, so that the aspect of moral values has not received adequate and systematic study. This research fills this gap by specifically analyzing moral values reflected in Ale's attitude, behavior, and character development using Nurgiyantoro's moral value classification framework. Unlike previous approaches that focused on inner states or social contexts, this research moves into the ethical and normative realms that is, what Ale's character morally represents and how those values develop throughout the narrative.

Moral and Character Value

The key variables in this study consist of the moral values and character of the characters. Moral values are concepts related to the distinction between right and wrong, serving as a guide for human behavior in society. Arianti (2020) states that in literature, moral values often imply practical moral teachings, from which readers can draw lessons from the relevant stories. These moral values can take the form of honesty, a sense of responsibility, compassion, perseverance, empathy, and respect for life. The literary context that refers to moral values serves as a means of character development, facilitating readers to learn from the conflicts and solutions experienced by the characters.

The discussion of character traits is a vital intrinsic component of a novel in shaping the plot and conveying the story's message. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture in Fadilah et al. (2021), character refers to traits, innate qualities,

morals, or personality formed through the integration of positive beliefs, which serve as the foundation for perspectives, thoughts, attitudes, and actions. Character is flexible and can change in response to narrative challenges and experiences. The novel *A Bowl of Chicken Noodle Soup Before Death* depicts Ale's character undergoing a gradual psychological and moral shift from depression to alienation, and ultimately to a reinterpretation of the meaning of existence. The connection between moral values and the character in this study lies in how Ale's actions and evolution reflect specific moral principles. Moral values are present not only explicitly through moral lessons but also implicitly through the character's choices when facing life's conflicts. An in-depth analysis of Ale's character is essential to uncovering the moral values embedded in this novel.

METHOD

Design and Samples

This study is a literature review that applies qualitative descriptive methods, with an emphasis on novel content analysis as the main source of data. The sample taken is the character Ale, who plays the main character in *A Bowl of Chicken Noodles Before Death*, which is the basis for researching moral values; The data analyzed included Ale's sentences, conversations, and attitudes that demonstrated moral values in various situations in the story. According to Zulkarmain (2021), qualitative research aims to gain a thorough understanding of the phenomenon of the subject, so it is suitable for exploring moral values in Ale's character. This qualitative descriptive research analyzes social actions in context, focusing on the way individuals interpret and understand their experiences to capture the essence of social reality, thereby enabling them to solve problems independently Mohajan, et al, (2018). Research in the field of language and literature education demonstrates the effectiveness of qualitative descriptive methods through literature reviews, as it supports the exploration, analysis, and systematic organization of theoretical data and literary texts.

To ensure accuracy and consistency in the analysis process, this study establishes clear criteria for recognizing and classifying moral values in novels. First, a text is recognized as containing moral value if it contains statements, dialogues, or character behaviors that explicitly or implicitly reflect considerations of good and bad, right and wrong, or right and wrong in the context of social and personal life. Second, the moral values found are categorized into three dimensions of relationships, namely moral values in the individual's relationship with himself, such as honesty, resilience, self-acceptance, and personal responsibility, moral values in relationships with others, such as empathy, caring, respect for others, and rejection of bullying, as well as moral values in relationships with life in general. such as the search for the meaning of life, hope, and the courage to survive.

The determination of these categories of moral values is carried out by considering the context of the narrative as a whole, not just based on separate sentences, so that

the meaning obtained is comprehensive and tied to the storyline. Fourth, the same data can be included in more than one dimension of moral values if it substantially meets the criteria of each category. With the determination of these criteria, the process of identifying and classifying moral values in Ale's character becomes more structured, measurable, and accountable in the academic field, while ensuring that the findings are truly sourced from the text of the novel and not just the result of subjective interpretation.

Instruments and Procedures

This research, the researcher serves as the main tool, complemented by a guide to analyze moral and character values rooted in character education theory and literary analysis. This guide is used to recognize, classify, and interpret textual data that includes Ale's actions, conversations, as well as characteristics in the novel; its content includes things such as Ale's recognition of actions, supporting contexts, motivations behind actions, the impact of actions, as well as various emerging moral values such as a sense of responsibility, empathy, honesty, and work ethic. This approach supports qualitative descriptive theory, which allows the use of instruments such as literature reviews, content analysis, and analytical categories to explore the meaning of texts in depth.

To keep the process of identifying and grouping moral values consistent and trustworthy, this study establishes operational criteria as a guideline in the application of analysis. A quote, dialogue, or description of Ale's actions is considered to contain moral value if it meets one of the following indicators: there are choices of action deliberately made by the character when facing a moral dilemma, there are expressions of feelings, thoughts, or attitudes that show the character's awareness of the impact of his actions on himself and others, or there are changes in the character's attitude or behavior that reflect the moral learning process in reaction to the situation they are facing. Furthermore, the data that meet these indicators are grouped into the most visible moral values, such as responsibility, empathy, honesty, hard work, resilience, or self-acceptance, while still considering the possibility that one data can enter more than one category if the values are complex and layered.

The research process is carried out through structured and systematic steps. It begins with an in-depth reading of the entire novel *A Bowl of Chicken Noodles Before Death* to understand the character of Ale and analyze its overall narrative context. Data collection is then continued by identifying text excerpts that describe Ale's behavior, dialogue, or thoughts that contain moral values, by applying established operational criteria as a guide to ensure that only truly relevant and representative data is included in the analysis. The data that has been collected is then grouped into categories of moral values based on character education guidelines and theories, where each grouping is accompanied by a textual justification that refers directly to the context of the narrative so that the grouping is not arbitrary. The next step is a descriptive analysis to explain the importance of

each moral value found in relation to the overall development of Ale's character as well as the moral message that the author wants to convey. This process is in accordance with the principles of descriptive qualitative research that emphasizes a deep understanding of texts through detection, classification, and interpretation that are narrative-based, rather than numbers-based.

Data Analysis

Tabel.1 Table of Moral Values

No	Moral Values	Operational Indicators	Textual Evidence
1.	Social Responsibility	Ale acts to help even though he is facing personal problems	Ale helps carry Mr. Jo's body
2.	Gratitude	Ale recognizes the value of simple things as a reason to survive	A bowl of chicken noodles as a reason to continue living
3.	Honesty	Ale doesn't take something that doesn't belong to him even if he has the opportunity	Counting other people's money honestly
4.	Patience	Ale but endures bad treatment without complaining	Surviving emotional pressure from the environment
5.	Empathy	Ale responds to the kindness of others with a sense of appreciation	Interaction with security guards and other figures
6.	Toughness	Ale continues to live despite the disappointment	Ale's attitude in the face of repeated failures
7.	Forgive	Ale unleashes anger against the past	The process of coming to terms with traumatic experiences
8.	Self-acceptance	Ale accepted his condition and continued	Ale's change in attitude at the end of the narrative

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Literature reviews indicate that novels serve two purposes: as a source of entertainment and as a means of conveying moral values applicable to social life. Fiyana (2022) notes that novels not only serve as a source of enjoyment but also as a tool for conveying various moral principles that can influence readers in their daily lives. Mulyadi (2016) notes that moral education can be conveyed through various teaching aids, one of which is literary works in the form of novels. A novel can be understood as a literary work that contains values, ideas, and motivations or

teachings presented in the form of a narrative. The instillation of moral values can be realized within an educational setting, specifically through literature instruction. Cahyo and Arsa (2025) note that moral values are divided into three categories: moral values related to God, moral values concerning oneself, and moral values pertaining to interactions among fellow human beings.

The Relationship Between Humans and God

The value of gratitude begins to emerge when Ale realizes that something seemingly trivial, like a bowl of chicken noodle soup, can be a reason to keep living. This realization came after Ale faced various life challenges that caused him to lose his optimism. Prabowo and Laksmiwati (2020) In a given situation, gratitude reflects personal feelings that encompass admiration, expressions of thanks, and appreciation for everything that is given. This shift in perspective demonstrates that gratitude can emerge from difficult life experiences. Ale, who previously felt his life was worthless, gradually began to find meaning in the small things that were once taken for granted. This gratitude became the starting point for a change in character, as through this attitude, Ale began to view life in a more positive light. Furthermore, the value of gratitude also illustrates that happiness does not always stem from grand things but can be found in simple experiences. In this way, the author demonstrates that gratitude is a moral strength capable of transforming despair into hope.

Interactions Between People

Ale's compassion is evident in his continued efforts to help carry Mr. Jo's body, even though he is facing significant personal hardships. This action demonstrates that Ale retains a strong sense of humanity despite his own emotional turmoil. Apriyani et al. (2021) define care for the community as an attitude and behavior with a social dimension, characterized by mutual support to foster a harmonious and prosperous atmosphere. The social care demonstrated by Ale shows that his personal grief did not cause him to forget those around him. This attitude illustrates that the moral value of care can emerge in simple yet deeply meaningful situations. Furthermore, Ale's actions also highlight the importance of social relationships in shaping one's character. The care shown by the character conveys the message that people can still do good for others even while facing difficulties. This serves as a significant contribution, as the moral values in the novel are conveyed through the characters' concrete actions, not merely through direct advice.

Empathy is evident in Ale's relationships with other characters, such as security guards and several individuals who treat him humanely. This treatment fosters a sense of appreciation within Ale, who previously felt alienated from his surroundings. Empathy is an individual's ability to feel pain or compassion and to see things from another person's perspective, thereby directly sharing in the sorrow experienced by Ningsih et al. (2020). Sudirman in Agradewi (2023) defines empathy as a person's ability to sense others' emotions even if not deeply while

still comprehending positive or negative feelings and experiencing the situation as if it were their own. The attention shown by those around him demonstrates that social support significantly influences one's psychological state. Ale, who once felt alone, began to realize that there were others who cared about him. This indicates that empathy not only influences social relationships but also facilitates the character's mental healing process. Thus, the value of empathy in this story is demonstrated not only by the main character but also by the community that supports Ale's growth.

An Individual's Relationship with Oneself

The value of honesty is evident in Ale's behavior, as he does not take what belongs to others when counting money. This action shows that Ale remains true to his moral principles even in difficult circumstances. This honesty reflects Ale's character, which demonstrates high integrity when facing trials. The honest attitude displayed also shows that moral values are not always influenced by economic circumstances or pressure from the environment. Although Ale faces various challenges in his life, he does not sacrifice honesty for personal gain. This conveys the message that honesty is a value that must be upheld under any circumstances. Saeful (2021) defines honesty as an action rooted in the effort to be an individual who is always reliable in speech, behavior, and the duties one undertakes. Therefore, Ale's character is portrayed as someone with strong moral values, allowing readers to understand that the value of honesty is one of the foundations that shape a strong character.

The value of patience is evident in Ale's ability to endure the emotional pain caused by the mistreatment of those around him. Zainudin (2020) notes that patience is a quality that can help individuals overcome various challenges. Thus, individuals who possess patience are those who have trained their attitudes, minds, and spirits to face trials or problems with calmness and sincerity and are able to control their negative impulses. This patience is reflected in the way Ale handles mockery, pressure from his environment, and painful life experiences without showing an excessive reaction. This patient attitude indicates that Ale has the ability to manage his emotions when facing difficult situations. Patience is also part of the process of character development, as through this attitude, Ale gradually learns to understand his life circumstances. Furthermore, the patience displayed suggests that the internal conflicts experienced by the character do not immediately lead to change but require a long time. Thus, the value of patience in this novel serves as a bridge toward more mature character development.

The value of perseverance is evident when Ale begins to realize that life must go on despite being filled with disappointments. This attitude emerges after Ale faces various internal conflicts that nearly drive him to despair. Not giving up serves as evidence that Ale's character undergoes a significant transformation from a state of depression toward strength. Nafila and Hikam (2025) state that the attitude of not giving up is a mental trait reflecting resilience and the motivation to keep fighting

despite facing numerous challenges. Ale begins to try to accept the realities of life and gradually moves forward. This attitude demonstrates that resilience does not emerge suddenly, but rather through difficult life experiences. The value of never giving up also conveys the message that everyone has the opportunity to rise from a setback. Thus, Ale's character shows that hope for life can reemerge when one possesses the resolve to persevere.

The value of forgiveness becomes evident when Ale begins to come to terms with the past and let go of his anger toward his life. The process of forgiveness does not happen overnight, but rather through a long emotional journey. Ale, who was previously consumed by disappointment and anger, gradually begins to realize that the past cannot be changed. This attitude of forgiveness reflects the character's emotional maturity in facing painful life experiences. Nihayah et al. (2021) state that forgiveness is central to building a healthy individual, and most importantly, it facilitates the reconciliation of relationships between individuals following a conflict. By forgiving, Ale is no longer trapped in the trauma that hindered his personal growth. The value of forgiveness also demonstrates that one can achieve inner peace if they are able to accept the realities of life. Therefore, the attitude of forgiveness becomes a crucial aspect in Ale's character development toward a better understanding of life.

Self-acceptance is the culmination of Ale's character transformation in the novel. Ale begins to value himself, his past, and the life circumstances he faces without constantly blaming external factors. According to Vohs and Baumeister in Refnadi (2018), self-acceptance can be defined as how a person feels about themselves in relation to their achievements, positive relationships with others, and mental health. This acceptance signifies that Ale has made significant moral and psychological progress. He no longer views his life as a burden, but rather as an experience that must be lived through. This attitude also demonstrates that self-acceptance is a sign of maturity that emerges after enduring a prolonged inner conflict. Furthermore, self-acceptance helps Ale view his life in a more realistic and positive light. Therefore, the value of self-acceptance marks the culmination of Ale's moral journey from a state of depression toward an understanding of the meaning of life.

CONCLUSION

The study found that Brian Khrisna's novel *A Bowl of Chicken Noodles Before Death* reflected eight moral values through the main character, Ale. The eight values include compassion, gratitude, honesty, patience, empathy, perseverance, forgiveness, and self-acceptance. These values are conveyed explicitly and implicitly through Ale's actions, behaviors, and dialogues when facing various obstacles in his life. Based on the category of moral values put forward by Nurgiyantoro in Hasibuan and Ningsih (2025), the results of this study include three relational aspects of the relationship between humans and God which are reflected in the value of gratitude, the relationship between humans shown by the values of compassion and empathy, and the relationship between individuals and themselves,

which include the values of honesty, patience, hard work, forgiveness, and self-acceptance. Ale's character development from depression to self-acceptance suggests that moral changes in his character take place gradually through prolonged experiences and inner conflicts. This study shows that literary works, especially novels, have an important role as a medium to insert moral values and shape the character of readers, and emphasize the significance of the analysis of moral values in the teaching of Indonesian language and literature.

The results of this study have important practical implications, both in the context of literary learning and in the broader character education. In terms of literary learning, this novel can be used as a new choice of literary texts in the classroom, especially at the high school and college levels, considering that themes such as depression, social isolation, and the search for meaning in life are very relevant to the emotional experiences of students today. Teachers and lecturers can use the eight moral values from this research as a framework for organized classroom discussions, for example by encouraging students to identify these values through critical reading, then relate them to their personal experiences. This approach will not only improve students' literary analysis skills, but also hone their sensitivity in understanding social reality through fiction.

In the context of character education, this study confirms that character formation does not always have to go through a rigid approach, but can take place naturally through an understanding of the character journey in literary works. The process of changing Ale from depression to self-acceptance can be an effective narrative example to increase students' awareness of the importance of mental resilience, empathy for others, and the ability to forgive oneself as part of character development. In addition, the results of this research can also be a reference for curriculum developers to consider the integration of literary works with psychological themes in Indonesian subjects or character education programs in schools, to expand learning resources that are not only informative but also transformative. Thus, this research not only makes a contribution to the academic field, but also opens up real opportunities for the application of literature as a tool in character formation that is relevant, contextual, and meaningful for the younger generation.

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