



# Ethics-Based Teacher Recruitment: A Philosophical Reflection on the Non-Smoking Policy at MIS Nurul Amal

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## Abstract

This study examines the ethics-based teacher recruitment policy at MIS Nurul Amal, particularly the non-smoking requirement for male teachers, as an institutional embodiment of moral values in Islamic education. Employing a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings reveal that the policy fosters not only a healthy and religious school climate but also a culture of moral exemplarity embedded in teachers' daily conduct. The analysis incorporates the Islamic concept of *uswah hasanah* and Sartrean existential ethics concerning individual moral responsibility. The study proposes a conceptual model of character formation through ethical recruitment, offering a replicable framework for other values-based educational institutions.

*Penelitian ini mengkaji kebijakan rekrutmen guru berbasis nilai etis di MIS Nurul Amal, khususnya syarat tidak merokok bagi guru laki-laki, sebagai bentuk aktualisasi nilai moral dalam praktik kelembagaan pendidikan Islam. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif studi kasus, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kebijakan ini tidak hanya menciptakan lingkungan sekolah yang sehat dan religius, tetapi juga memperkuat budaya keteladanan yang terinternalisasi dalam perilaku guru sehari-hari. Temuan dianalisis dengan perspektif uswah hasanah dalam filsafat pendidikan Islam serta etika eksistensialisme Sartre tentang tanggung jawab moral individu. Studi ini menawarkan model konseptual pembentukan karakter berbasis rekrutmen etis yang dapat direplikasi dalam konteks lembaga pendidikan berbasis nilai.*

## A. INTRODUCTION

In the realm of Islamic education, teachers play a strategic role not only as conveyors of knowledge (*'alim*) but also as moral exemplars (*uswah hasanah*) in character and behavior. The moral example set by teachers forms a crucial foundation in shaping students' character, especially amid the challenges of modernity that often erode ethical and spiritual values. Social behaviors such as smoking while often considered a personal matter carry significant symbolic impact within educational settings. When a teacher smokes in public or at school, students may interpret it as a



form of permissiveness toward a lifestyle that contradicts principles of healthy living and Islamic values.

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of teacher role modeling in the character formation of students (e.g., Mulyasa, 2019; Asrori, 2020), and indicate a strong correlation between teachers' personal conduct and students' moral development. However, these studies tend to be general in nature and have not specifically addressed how educational institutions implement teacher recruitment policies grounded in specific moral values, such as non-smoking. Furthermore, the existing literature lacks a comprehensive analysis of the integration between institutional policy, professional teacher ethics, and educational philosophy particularly concerning non-academic behaviors with symbolic moral implications.

This study seeks to fill that gap by examining a unique institutional policy implemented at MIS Nurul Amal, where non-smoking is a specific recruitment requirement for male teachers. Within this context, the study occupies a significant position in the discourse of educational philosophy, as it bridges institutional ethics, Islamic educational philosophy, and Western existentialist thought that emphasizes individual moral responsibility. The choice of MIS Nurul Amal as the research site is noteworthy because the institution has successfully incorporated moral values into its teacher selection practices, producing educators who reflect Islamic principles both academically and ethically.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the institutional approach undertaken by MIS Nurul Amal in selecting male teachers based on ethical behavior (non-smoking), and to examine its implications for moral role modeling in Islamic education. Employing a qualitative case study approach, the study gathers data through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The findings are then interpreted through two theoretical lenses: the concept of *uswah hasanah* in Islamic thought and Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialist philosophy on individual moral responsibility.

Academically, this study contributes to a renewed understanding of the importance of value-based teacher recruitment policies in Islamic educational institutions. It also broadens the scope of educational philosophy studies by demonstrating that educational reform involves not only curriculum and pedagogy, but also the personal and ethical dimensions of teachers as agents of transformation. By focusing on the case of MIS Nurul Amal, this study offers a concrete example of how

character education is not only taught but embodied through visionary institutional policies.

## **B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a case study design to explore the ethics-based teacher recruitment policy at MIS Nurul Amal. The case study method was chosen to enable an in-depth understanding of the institution's unique strategy for integrating moral values particularly the non-smoking requirement into its recruitment process (Yin, 2018). Informants were selected through purposive sampling, targeting key stakeholders who had relevant knowledge and experience concerning the policy (Patton, 2015). These included school leaders, recruitment committee members, and selected male teachers who fulfilled the non-smoking criterion.

Data were collected using three primary techniques: in-depth semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and document analysis. The interview protocol was designed to capture participants' perceptions, motivations, and reflections on the ethical dimensions of the recruitment policy (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Observational data provided insight into how the policy was reflected in the school's daily practices and teacher behavior (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Institutional documents such as recruitment guidelines, vision statements, and teacher handbooks were also analyzed to triangulate findings and ensure contextual relevance (Bowen, 2009).

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the data, following steps of data reduction, coding, category development, and interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Themes were generated inductively to identify underlying values, philosophical rationales, and implications of the policy. The analysis process included constant comparison and interpretative reflection to strengthen analytical depth and credibility (Charmaz, 2006). Research validity was enhanced through triangulation, member checking, and reflective memo writing to ensure trustworthiness and authenticity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

## **C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

The principal emphasized that the policy stemmed from a conscious commitment to creating a healthy and religious educational environment while promoting moral role modeling for students. The requirement for male teachers to be non-smokers was established as a value-based standard during the recruitment process, aiming to prevent behaviors that contradict the school's educational mission. Out of a total of 34 teachers, 9 are male, and all of them explicitly affirmed that they do not smoke. This decision is not merely a matter of administrative compliance, but rather reflects a personal commitment to maintaining integrity as educators. Observational data reveal that the school culture places strong emphasis on the teachers' positive conduct, including dress code, speech, and lifestyle choices. Male teachers are actively involved in character development initiatives and serve as role models in both religious and social activities within the school community. Interviews with students and parents further confirmed that teachers at MIS Nurul Amal are widely regarded as individuals of good character and are seen as positive role models. The absence of smoking behavior within the school environment is perceived as reinforcing a healthy lifestyle and upholding core Islamic values.

The implementation of a non-smoking policy for male teachers at MIS Nurul Amal appears to have cultivated more than just regulatory compliance it has shaped a distinct moral climate within the institution. Teachers internalize the expectation not as an external imposition but as part of their identity as educators in an Islamic setting. This internalization is evident in their lifestyle choices and daily interactions, which reflect consistency between personal values and institutional ideals. In many ways, the school's recruitment policy functions as an ethical filter, ensuring that those who enter the profession do so not only with pedagogical competence but also with moral alignment to the school's vision. This seamless integration between individual virtue and institutional culture contributes to a sense of coherence in the educational environment an aspect often absent in technocratic models of education.

Moreover, the policy has become a silent yet powerful tool of moral communication to students and the wider community. Parents who were interviewed described feeling reassured by the presence of teachers who live out the values they teach, especially in an era when youth are exposed to conflicting behavioral messages. Students, in turn, do not simply receive instruction in moral values; they observe those

values practiced consistently by authority figures in their daily environment. The absence of smoking in both formal and informal settings strengthens the school's credibility in promoting health, discipline, and Islamic ethics. The data suggest that ethics-based recruitment, when consistently enforced and lived out, has the potential to nurture not just academic achievement, but also a morally charged institutional identity.

**Tabel 1.** Ethics-Based Teacher Recruitment at MIS Nurul Amal

Themes	Descriptions
Institutional Policy Orientation	The recruitment policy is rooted in a value-based framework where male teachers must be non-smokers. This reflects the school's mission to promote moral integrity and a healthy environment.
Teacher Personal Commitment	All nine male teachers explicitly stated they do not smoke, not merely due to administrative obligation, but as a personal ethical stance aligned with their identity as educators.
Visible School Culture	Observations revealed a strong emphasis on teacher behavior, including dress, speech, and lifestyle, which collectively foster a coherent and morally consistent school culture.
Community and Student Perception	Interviews with students and parents highlighted a strong appreciation for teachers' good character and the positive impact of a smoke-free environment on student well-being and moral development.

Presents the key findings derived from qualitative data collection at MIS Nurul Amal, focusing on the institution's ethics-based teacher recruitment policy. Each theme

reflects a distinct yet interconnected aspect of how the non-smoking requirement for male teachers is not merely a formal rule, but a value-driven practice that influences the school's moral climate. The data reveal how institutional commitment, teacher integrity, visible moral culture, and community perception converge to reinforce a holistic educational environment. This table serves to summarize the narrative insights into a structured format, enabling clearer understanding of the ethical implications and cultural outcomes of the policy in practice

## Discussion

### 1. Moral Exemplarity as the Foundation of Educational Culture

The findings of this study indicate that the teacher recruitment policy at MIS Nurul Amal particularly the requirement for male teachers to be non-smokers is deeply intertwined with the school's commitment to cultivating a morally grounded educational environment. Exemplarity is not merely a personal expectation imposed on individual teachers; it is consciously developed as a living school culture. Teachers are expected to refrain from smoking, dress modestly, speak courteously, and actively participate in religious activities practices which symbolize the values upheld by the institution. This collective commitment has fostered a school climate that is safe, religious, and character-driven. As Suyanto and Jihad (2013) argue, school culture is essentially a system of values that guides behavior within educational institutions. At MIS Nurul Amal, when exemplarity becomes central to school culture, character education transcends discourse and becomes an everyday lived reality.

This moral environment reflects core tenets of Islamic educational philosophy. The concept of *uswah hasanah* teachers as moral exemplars is vividly manifested in daily practices. Teachers are not simply conveyors of academic content but transmitters of moral values through consistent ethical behavior. The policy thus functions as a structural embodiment of Islamic pedagogical ideals. It echoes the thoughts of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Miskawaih, who emphasized that moral virtues must be instilled through example rather than instruction alone. The school's approach to recruitment is a deliberate effort to ensure that educators serve as ethical role models, aligning institutional practices with the broader goal of forming noble character (*akhlāq al-karīmah*), which is central to Islamic education.

Furthermore, the recruitment policy can be interpreted through the lens of existentialist ethics and professional integrity. Jean-Paul Sartre's notion of existential

responsibility is relevant here: human beings are defined by the choices they make. Teachers who consciously choose not to smoke and willingly accept this requirement are demonstrating authentic commitment to their identity as educators. They are not merely complying with formal regulations but actively embodying the moral expectations of their profession. In this context, smoking is not viewed as a legal infraction, but as behavior inconsistent with the ethical responsibilities of a teacher. The school's decision to exclude smoking from the professional environment is not discriminatory; rather, it reinforces the integrity of the profession. It reflects an institutional stance that values not only pedagogical competence but also the personal and moral integrity of educators who serve as models for the next generation.

## **2. Ethical Recruitment as a Transformative Educational Paradigm**

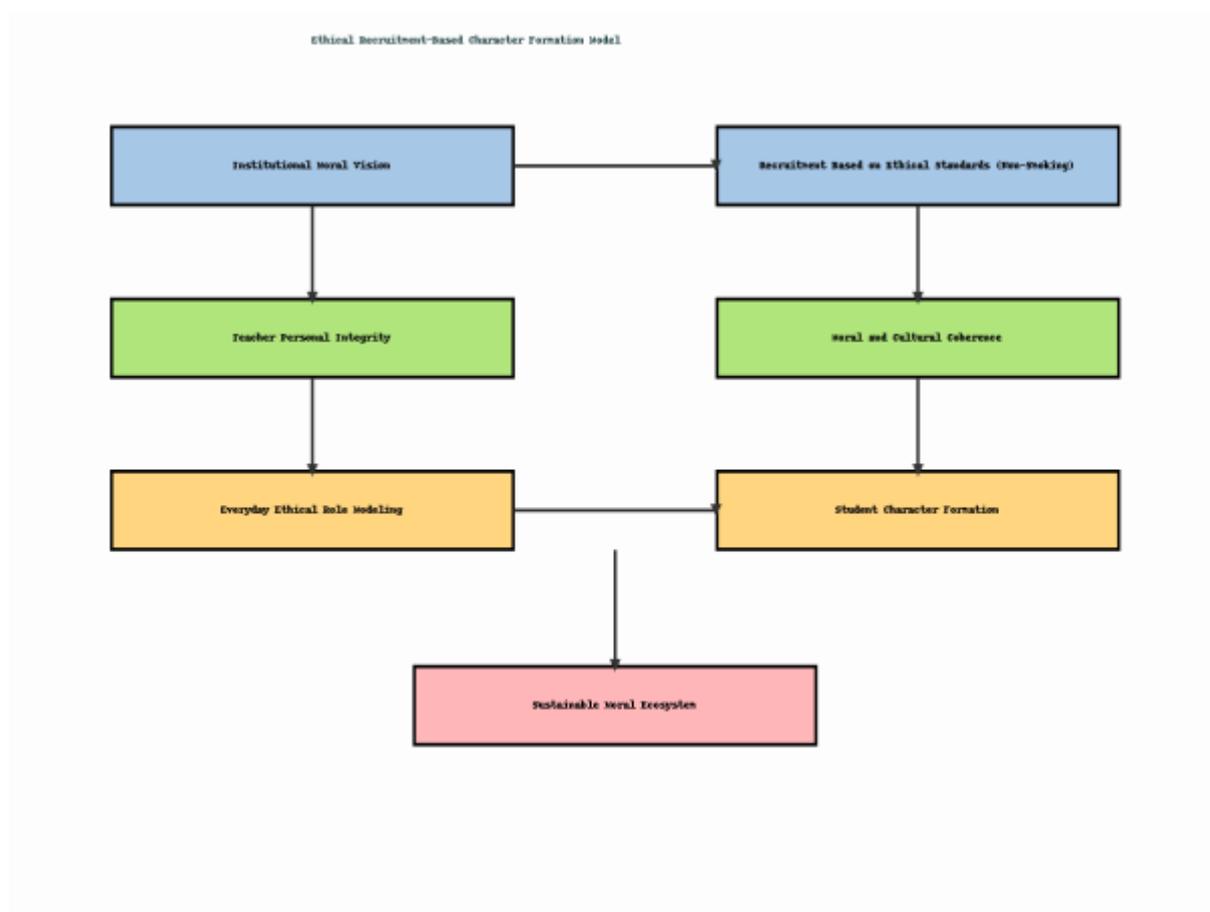
The analysis of MIS Nurul Amal's recruitment policy reveals a significant conceptual advancement in the integration of ethics into teacher selection a practice that has largely been overlooked in the dominant technocratic frameworks of educational policy. While previous literature on teacher recruitment tends to focus on competencies, certifications, and professional training (Creswell & Poth, 2018), this study presents a new model where moral behavior particularly the non-smoking lifestyle is positioned as a foundational criterion. This suggests a shift in how educational institutions can reimagine recruitment not only as administrative filtering but as a formative act in shaping institutional identity and pedagogical ethos.

The integration of the Islamic educational concept of *uswah hasanah* with Jean-Paul Sartre's existential responsibility produces a unique theoretical synthesis that deepens the understanding of teacher morality. The study identifies that ethical choices, such as abstaining from smoking, are not merely private habits but public declarations of professional authenticity. In this light, the school's policy does not function as moral policing, but rather as an institutional affirmation of moral responsibility. This alignment between Islamic moral philosophy and existential ethics creates a novel interpretive framework for analyzing how educators embody values through conscious decision-making, giving rise to what may be termed "existential pedagogy in Islamic education."

Another dimension of novelty lies in how school culture is consciously shaped through recruitment. The findings challenge the assumption that school culture evolves solely through long-term socialization or curriculum enactment. Instead, MIS

Nurul Amal demonstrates that culture can be intentionally curated through preemptive ethical filtering at the point of entry into the institution. This approach contrasts with models that treat culture as an emergent by-product of institutional dynamics. Here, recruitment is both gatekeeping and moral design a strategic act to ensure coherence between institutional values and personal virtue. Such practice may inform new models of value-based hiring across religious and non-religious contexts.

Finally, this study contributes a rare empirical model of how character education can be structurally implemented beyond the classroom. By embedding morality in recruitment, MIS Nurul Amal has institutionalized character education at the level of personnel policy something rarely documented in educational research. While many programs promote character development through student-centered approaches, this study illustrates how ethical formation begins with selecting teachers who already embody those values. This structural embodiment of *akhlāq* through ethical hiring may serve as a prototype for Islamic educational institutions seeking to strengthen their moral foundations through systemic, rather than merely curricular, approaches.



**Picture 1.** Model *Ethical Recruitment-Based Character Formation*

The conceptual diagram presented illustrates the structured process by which ethical recruitment practices at MIS Nurul Amal contribute to holistic character formation. Beginning with the institution's moral vision, the model emphasizes the selection of teachers based on ethical criteria particularly the non-smoking requirement as a foundational act of value alignment. This ethical recruitment fosters teacher integrity, which supports a school-wide culture of moral coherence. Through daily role modeling by teachers, students are consistently exposed to lived values, leading to the formation of strong character traits. The entire process culminates in a sustainable moral ecosystem, wherein ethical behavior is both institutionalized and internalized, offering a replicable framework for value-based education systems.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that the ethics-based teacher recruitment policy at MIS Nurul Amal, particularly the requirement for male teachers to be non-smokers, represents a strategic embodiment of moral and educational philosophy. Far from being a mere administrative rule, the policy functions as a transformative mechanism that aligns personal virtue with institutional values, fostering a school culture grounded in integrity, discipline, and Islamic ethics. By integrating the Islamic concept of *uswah hasanah* and Sartrean existential responsibility, the findings demonstrate that teacher morality when institutionally supported can have a profound and sustainable impact on student character formation. The study offers a conceptual model that repositions recruitment as a site of ethical formation and cultural design, contributing both theoretically and practically to the discourse on value-oriented education. It is recommended that similar policies be explored and adapted in other educational contexts to reinforce character education not only through curriculum, but through institutional ethics and daily pedagogical practice.

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