Forms of Moral Decadence in Students in Higher Education

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Abstract
Degradation of morals or moral decadence has attacked young generations, especially college students. Therefore, this paper aims to find out forms of moral decadence found in college students. This research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach, the data were collected through direct interviews with ten informants (college students) by using the purposive sampling technique. To strengthen interview data, the writer performed passive participation observation by coming directly to the observed location. All results of the interview were analyzed using Milles and Hauberman's pattern. The research found nine forms of moral decadence in college students. They are: i) negligent in worship, ii)sexual promiscuity, iii) involved in drug abuse, iv) hedonism, v) revealing awrah, vi) lack of ethics, vii) impolite speaking, viii) dishonest in academics and ix) lack of time management. The results of this research can be used as initial data for future research investigating similar problems in different contexts and issues.

Keywords*: Degradation, morals, students, hedonism*

Abstrak
Kemerosotan akhlak atau yang dikenal dengan dekadensi moral telah melanda para generasi muda khususnya mahasiswa di perguruan tinggi. Maka dari itu penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui apa saja bentuk-bentuk kemerosotan akhlak mahasiswa di perguruan tinggi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus (case study), data penelitian diambil melalui wawancara langsung dengan sepuluh orang informan (mahasiswa) dengan teknik purposive sampling. Untuk memperkokoh data wawancara penulis melakukan observasi partisipasi pasif dengan cara penulis datang secara langsung ke tempat kegiatan yang diamati. Seluruh hasil

wawancara kemudian dianalisis menggunakan pola Milles dan Huberman. Secara keseluruhan temuan penelitian mendapati sembilan bentuk-bentuk kemerosotan akhlak mahasiswa di perguruan tinggi. Sembilan temuan tersebut yaitu; i) lalai dalam beribadah, ii) pergaulan bebas, iii) terlibat penggunaan narkoba, iv) hedonisme, v) membuka aurat, vi) kurang beretika, vii) bertutur kata yang tidak baik, viii) tidak jujur dalam akademik dan ix) kurangnya manajemen waktu. Hasil penelitian ini dapat dijadikan sebagai data awal untuk penelitian berikutnya dalam mengkaji permasalahan ini dalam konteks dan isu yang berbeda.

Kata Kunci: *Kemerosotan, akhlak, mahasiswa, hedonisme*

Introduction

In the present days where science and technology are rapidly growing, which has become a quite difficult challenge for the youth in this country such as college students. In this day of age, everything depends on technology such as digital technology (Trianti, 2020). Accessing information has never been easier be it within or outside of the country. Because of this, students are free to access information or content that could have a negative impact and thus affect the student's morals (Al Mardliyah, 2020; Asril, 2021).

Degradation of morals or commonly known as Moral Decadence has struck the young generations, especially students. According to Satiawan and Sidik, (2021) college students are those who study at universities, public or private. Students are also considered to have a higher intellectual level, smart thinking, mature in attitude, always planning before doing something, fast reaction compared to individuals who only study in high school (Satiawan and M Sidik, 2021). For that reason, students as educated individuals should have noble characters because they are the next leader of the country as well as an example for the next generation. But in reality, moral degradation in younger generations such as students are getting worse, where honesty, justice, tolerance, helping each other that of which morals have been eroded by era and daily social environment which causes immoral actions (Iskarim, 2017).

According to Habibah, (2015) and Nata, (2018) morality (*akhlak*) in etymology comes from the word 'Khuluqun'which means behavior, habit, and attitude. According to the terminology, morality is a study of good or bad behavior

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either spoken words or actions both physically and mentally. While according to Satrian, (2019) morality is a pattern of behavior that accumulates aspects of obedience and belief that shows good behavior. Morality is ingrained in each individual, combined with behavior and actions (Habibah, 2015). If the behavior is good, then morality is also. And vice versa, if the behavior is bad, then morality is also bad (Anwar, 2019). Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) were sent to perfect the morality of humans, that is to improve the relationship between creation with Creator, Allah, and between creations with other creations (Habibah, 2015).

Then according to Al-Ghazali, (2014) morality is action or behavior that comes out easily, lightly without thinking and planning as a result of a character that is firmly embedded in one's soul. Besides that, Ibnu Maskawih also gave his opinions about morality described in the book Tahdzid al-Akhlaq wa Tathhir al-I'riqad, morality is human actions that were carried out without thinking and consideration beforehand as a result of encouragement from the soul.

Moral degradation experienced by the students today is very concerning, therefore the role for all groups and lines is needed to keep the next generation of the nation from being exposed to bad morals that can affect their personality. The moral degradation that occurred in these students includes fights, promiscuity, drugs, and so on (Setiawan, 2014). Based on information obtained from news.detik.com, one example was in 2017 the arrest of a student in Jakarta for being involved in a drug case with 105 grams of crystal methamphetamine and 40 ecstasy pills as evidence.

For universities to be able to minimize this despicable behavior, moral education is needed which can be the main core of one's religious values, because the religion and faith of a Muslim are not perfect if his morals are bad (Ghani, 2015). According to Julaeha, (2019) there are three aspects in reconnecting relationships and Educational Networks that affect the moral degradations of students in character education, namely the family, school, and community

environment. In reality, students who reflect disgraceful morals come from several research results Nurma, (2021); Samiroh and Muslimin, (2015); Susanti, (2013); Wafa, (2018) found that the behavior of students towards other people showed bad morals, especially the influence of globalization. In addition, students who have bad morals are not only affected by the flow of globalization, but also educational factors during classes. As such the result from Muzaqi, (2016); Samad, (2020); Setiawan *et al*., (2021) found that character education and moral education greatly affect the morals of students themselves.

Universities or College as a place to instill moral education to students needs to review the extent to which effectiveness has been realized. Satiawan and Muhammad Sidik, (2021) said that in higher education it is often found that morals are learned verbally or only in the form of dictation, question and answer, memorization, and then tested in written form. Education, which should be a transfer of values, sometimes only becomes a transfer of knowledge. If this continues, then students as the next generation are only recipients of information, without having to apply moral education that should be applied in everyday life. (Wahyudi, 2020). For this reason, universities must prepare good education, to instill good character in students.

Based on the description that has been explained that morality is the only barometer of one's faith. With morals, university students can become examples and role models for the next young generation. Not only that, humans who have good morals will have good values and ethics in their daily lives (Ali, 2021; Martins *et al*., 2020; Nieuwazny *et al*., 2021). As stated by Firdaus, (2020) without morality humans will not have values in their daily lives, their behavior can be likened to animals. In writing this study, the author will only focus on what forms of moral degradations occur in college students.

Literature Review

As the author has described previously, having good morals is an obligation that must be owned by everyone, including students. Currently, the Indonesian

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people are experiencing serious human resource problems, especially those related to the nation's morals and culture (Hasan, 2010). The great aspiration to build a society with a noble character through the educational process seems to be distorted by the reality of some of the lives of the younger generation who show oppositional behavior to the values, norms, and morals of the nation (Thab, 2009).

For example, ethics in sexual behavior among the younger generation reflects the weaknesses of today's society. Free sex life for some students is no longer a taboo subject but is considered normal and natural (Kadarisman, 2017). Coupled with the proliferation of reports such as cases of corruption, violence, sexual crimes, destruction of mass fights, brawls between students, consumptive economic life, and unproductive political life increasingly indicate that this nation is experiencing a moral crisis (Hasan, 2010; Supardi, 2015; Zarman, 2014).

As a result of the moral crisis, it is followed by a consumptive, materialistic, and hedonistic lifestyle which causes the exclusion of humanity, justice, togetherness, and social solidarity, lack of respect, and intolerance (Andari, 2012; Ghani *et al.*, 2014; Guswani and Kawuryan, 2012; Samiroh and Muslimin, 2015; Wafa, 2018). This shows that there is an environmental influence on student morals, where the influence tends to be negative such as disrespect for lecturers or teachers, lack of courtesy towards teachers and friends, intolerance among others and cheating during exams, and many others. In reality, students who reflect disgraceful morals come from several research results Nurma, (2021); Samiroh and Muslimin, (2015); Susanti, (2013); Wafa, (2018) found that the behavior of students towards other people showed bad morals, especially the influence of globalization. In addition, students who have bad morals are not only affected by the flow of globalization, but also educational factors during classes. As such the result from Muzaqi, (2016); Samad, (2020); Setiawan *et al.*, (2021) found that character education and moral education greatly affect the morals of students themselves.

Morals are traits that have always existed in humans since birth, and are spontaneous and static (Mardliyah, 2020). According to Wahyuni, (2015) morals in

Islam have several kinds, such as the character of shame, with presence of shame a Muslim will always maintain his honor because it is part of the faith that becomes aqidah and guidelines in life. For a Muslim, it is better to lose wealth than to lose shame, because shame is the faith that drives us to do good. Furthermore, in the Morals of Dressing, Muslim women are required to cover their awrah by wearing good clothes and covering all forms of their body curves by using syar'i clothing or hijab (Ahnan nd).

In addition, a person's morals can be influenced by several factors, namely internal factors and external factors (Asy'ari, 2017). According to Hamzah Ya'kub, (1983) in (Wahyuni, 2015) several things affect the morals of a person based on internal and external factors, namely family, community, and school environment. In this modern era, there has been a moral crisis among students. For this reason, guidance from various elements is needed to control the morals of the younger generation such as students. If this crisis is left unchecked, the nation's future will likely decline and collapse (Susanti, 2016).

It is through policies issued by the government regarding various legal bases that further strengthen the importance of morality to realize the goals of the nation to become a cultured and civilized nation (Santosa, 2016). Ibn Khaldun viewed that the existence of a country depends on the extent to which its people hold on to high values (Hasaruddin, 2010).

Research related to the issue of the forms of moral degradations of college students has been widely studied by previous researchers, such as Agustina, (2018); Angela, (2019); Engkizar *et al.*, (2018); Nurma, (2021); Satrian, (2019); Setiawan *et al.*, (2021); Trianti, (2020). However, the focus of the research above is only on the relationship, impact, improvement as well as role related to moral Moral Decadence. Especially in research on forms of moral decadence in college students, it has never been touched and discussed by previous researchers. Therefore, the author is interested in researching in more depth what forms of moral degradations occur in students in universities.

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Method

This study uses a qualitative method with the case study approach (qualitative case study design), according to Bartlett and Vavrus, (2016); Bolton, (2021); Crowe *et al*., (2011); Gustafsson, (2017); Martell, (2017); Moleong, (2017); Murniyetti *et al.,* (2016); Sugiyono, (2016); Taylor, (2013); Zhang *et al.*, (2018) Kasmar *et al.*, (2019; Maputra *et al*., (2020) Case study is a type of research used by the researcher who wants to observe in depth a phenomenon or event, either individually or in community groups. Referring to the opinion above, it is related to the issues and problems that the authors raise in this study, this type of research is very appropriate to use.

Sources of data were taken from ten informants who are active students studying in universities. All informants were selected using the purposive sampling technique. Elkhaira *et al*., (2020); Engkizar *et al.*, (2018); Rahwarin *et al.*, (2020); Syafril *et al.*, (2020); Putri *et al.*, (2020); Putra *et al.*, (2020) The selection of informants must meet four criteria, namely being active in the field being researched, having competence related to the problems being studied, being willing to take the time to provide information for researchers, and honest in providing information by the facts that occur in the field.
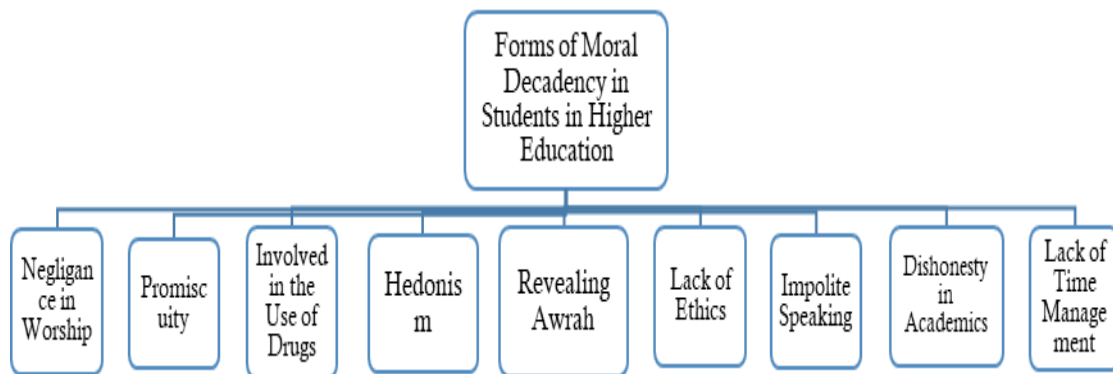
After the interview data was completed and taken from all of the informants, then the interview data transcript process was carried out to take out the themes according to the objectives and needs of the research data. According to Castleberry and Nolen, (2018); Clarke and Braun, (2018); Herzog *et al.,* (2019); Neuendorf, (2018); Terry *et al*., (2017); Syafril *et al.*, (2021) Thematic analysis is one of the analytical techniques that researchers can use in analyzing the results of interviews so that they can be seen clearly and easily understood by readers.

In addition, the researcher also conducted passive participation observations with the researcher coming to the location of the observed activity but was not involved in the activity (Winarni, 2021). Data analysis was carried out using the

pattern found by Huberman and Miles, (2002) namely through the stages of data reduction activities, presenting data, and drawing conclusions.

Findings and Discussion

Based on the results of interviews that the authors conducted with ten informants and also the results of observations that the authors did, the results of the analysis found that there were nine Forms of Morals Decadency in Students in Higher Education which were found from fellow campus students of the authors as well as students from different campuses. Each of which was - obtained seven results from the interviews and two from the observations of the author. The nine forms can be seen in figure 1, as follows:

Fig 1. Forms of moral decadence in students in higher education

For the results of the discussion in this study to be more interesting to read, the author will describe the excerpts from interviews with informants based on the Forms of Moral Decadence. The description of the interview that will be shown by the author is a brief statement from the informant during the interview. Although the interview excerpts were conveyed by informants in different editorials, they had more or less the same aims and objectives

The first theme namely Promiscuity, the informant said that the form of moral degradation in students today is free sex behavior or adultery which is increasingly happening. This theme was stated by informants 2 and 6 as excerpts of the interview in table 1 below:

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Table 1. Excerpts of the first theme interview

Theme	Informant	Interview Excerpt
Promiscuity	2	*The forms of moral declination that I know are cheating behavior, free sex.....*
	6	*there are many cases of adultery or free sex among students, which we can see a lot of news that occurs such as adultery between students,*

The second theme namely Involved in the use of drugs, the informant said that a form of moral degradation in students today is the use of illegal drugs or activities related to illegal drugs or misuse of drugs. This theme was stated by informants 6 and 7 as excerpts of the interview in table 2 below:

Table 2. Excerpts of the second theme interview

Theme	Informant	Interview Excerpt
Involved in the Use of Drugs	6	*....Students do drugs and there are even lecturers who do things like that to their students..*
	7	*The form of student decline can be seen from small things, namely leaving absences and plagiarism to big things, drugs*

The third theme namely Hedonism, the informant said that the form of moral decadency in students today is hedonism behavior. This theme is stated by informant 3 as an interview excerpt in table 3 below:

Table 3. Excerpts of the third theme interview

Theme	Informant	Interview Excerpt
Hedonism	3	*One of the attitudes that I encounter a lot is hedonism among students. In my opinion, seeking the pleasures of life is something that is okay to do but within certain limits, as a student who is also still a teenager, still looking for his place in society. but most students seek pleasure that exceeds the limit, so they do not pay attention to the norms, rules, or values that apply.,*

The fourth theme, revealing awrah. The informant said that a form of student moral declination today is removing the hijab when they are outside of the campus, they make the hijab only a campus rule. This theme is stated by informant 5 as an interview excerpt in table 4 below:

Table 4. Excerpts of the fourth theme interview

Theme	Informant	Interview Excerpt
Revealing Awrah	5	*a lot happened that I saw even on my campus which is based on Islam, the female students wear the hijab just to obey the campus rules, when they are outside the campus they take off their hijab*

The fifth theme is Lack of ethics, the informant said that a form of moral decadency in students today is the lack of student ethics to lecturers as well as teachers and other people. This theme was stated by informants 8, 9, and 10 as excerpts of the interview in table 5 below:

Table 5. Excerpts of the fifth theme interview

Theme	Informant	Interview Excerpt
Lack of Ethics	8	*One of the declinations in student morals is the lack of politeness and courtesy to others. such as, not greetings when passing by an older person*
	9	*Lack of politeness and courtesy towards lecturers, for example, it is very rare for students to want to shake hands with their lecturers*
	10	*Small things like arriving late, embracing or speaking to lecturers like friends, the extinction of greeting culture,...*

Sixth Theme, Impolite speaking, the informant said that a form of moral decadency in students today is speaking words that are not good to lecturers and fellow friends. This theme was stated by informants 1, 4, and 10 as excerpts of the interview in table 6 below:

Table 6. Excerpts of the sixth theme interview

Theme	Informant	Interview Excerpt
Impolite Speaking	1	*Moral declination that I often find is students who talk dirty or commonly called Toxic*
	4	*There are still students who speak bad words to the lecturer or their friends*
	10	*...embracing or speaking to lecturers like friends,...*

The seventh theme namely Dishonest in academics, the informant said that a form of moral decadency in students today is the behavior of cheating and

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plagiarizing the work of others. This theme was stated by informants 2 and 7 as excerpts from the interview in table 7 below:

Table 7. Excerpts of the seventh theme interview

Theme	Informant	Interview Excerpt
Dishonest in academics	2	*The form of moral declination that I know is cheating behavior...*
	7	*The form of student declination can be seen from small things, namely leaving absenteeism and plagiarism,....*

In addition to the seven forms of moral decadency of students in college, the author also found two moral decadence of students in the writer's campus area which were obtained through observation. As for these morals decadency, namely i) Negligence in worship. The main point here is not responding to the call to prayer. The are many students who ignore the call to prayer, while they are still carrying out their respective activities which according to the author himself can be paused first, this attitude is included in the category of neglecting worship; ii) Lack of time management. As a student who can manage their own life, of course, they have to be able to manage their time well. An example of the theme is a female student who hangs out late at night. This kind of behavior is a sight that the author sees quite often, the number of female students who were still hanging out late at night in cafes with their male friends.

In actuality, research and issues related to moral degradation have been widely studied by previous researchers in the world of education for example Satrian (2019); Nurma (2021); Satiawan and Sidik (2021); Agustina (2018); Trianti, (2020); Angelia (2019); Sari *et al.*, (2021). However, it is different from the discussion that the author will adopt which only discusses the forms of Moral Degradation in Higher Education.

As previously discussed, the degradation in morals in universities and colleges is currently very concerning. As the research conducted by Murniyetti *et al.*, (2016) from several data that have been collected the moral degradation of the younger generation, first as many as 3.8 to 4.2 million drug users in Indonesia ranging from students to university students; second, pornography, 64% of students and

universities students learn sex through pornographic films, resulting in as many as 39% of respondents from the age between 15-19 years old and 25% aged 20-25 years having had sexual intercourse (Setyawan *et al.,* 2019) (KPAI, 2016). These are all part of the many degrading behaviors of the younger generation in Indonesia.

Regarding the forms of the moral degradation of university and college students that the authors have conducted interviews with ten informants, to be more engaging, the seven findings of this study will be discussed based on theories, expert opinions, and ways to improve student morals so that they are not easily influenced by deviant behavior.

First, Promiscuity, according to several informants who stated that the factors that cause sexual behavior and adultery as a form of student moral degradations are environmental factors, family, lack of understanding about the dangers of free sex and low religious knowledge and an unfavorable environment are the reasons students fall to this act. Besides that, according to Setyawan *et al.*, (2019) Jaafar *et al.,* (2020); Kaputra *et al.*, (2021) parental factors also greatly influence students' promiscuity, especially those who still live with their parents. They will be more prone to promiscuity, because they feel constrained and lack socialization, thus they will want to feel what freedom feels like.

Second, Involved in the use of drugs, according to previous informants, nowadays the decadence in student's morals is also caused by promiscuity that is carried out so that it will lead to involvement in the use of illegal drugs. As previously explained, there are 4.2 million drug users, ranging from students to university students. 48% of them are addicts and 52% are users as well as those who just want to try it (Badan Narkotika Nasional, 2012). According to the informants, the cause of drug usage in students is due to the person's weak faith and weak self-capacity in protecting themselves. We cannot deny that indeed at the end of time there are many slanders either from outside or within ourselves. It is a challenge that one must face, and if they are not strong enough to protect themselves against it, they will be carried away by the temptation. according to Masyitah, (2017);

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Rahmadi, (2016) the role of parents is very influential on the behavior of children and teenagers, a better approach and direction is needed for adolescents to avoid promiscuity such as drug use.

Third, Hedonism, according to the informants, is one of the forms of moral decadence experienced by students in higher education is hedonism. According to Tambingon *et al.,* (2018) Hedonism is a behavior in which a person enjoys pleasure, personal enjoyment, luxury, and ability above all others. According to the informants, this hedonistic attitude is allowed to do but there are certain limitations. Sadly, most students are looking for pleasure that exceeds those limitations, and because of that, they do not pay attention to the norms, rules, and values in society.

Fourth, Revealing awrah, according to the informants, another form of moral degradations in college students is revealing their awrah. One form of revealing awrah is removing the hijab. Hijab is used only as a rule that must be obeyed by female students, rather than one of the obligations of all Muslim women to cover their awrah that of which must be obeyed. Based on the explanations of student informants who took off their hijab outside of campus hours due to social factors and also the lack of religious understanding of the student. According to Salma, (2021) the concept of hijab or headscarf implies the value of obedience to religious orders in covering the awrah. For Muslim women to cover their awrah is an obligation, as ordered in QS. Al-Ahzab 59 regarding the order to wear the hijab for Muslim women (Lisdiyastuti, 2015).

Fifth, Lack of Ethics, according to several informants unethical behavior is one of the forms of moral degradation. Some forms of unethical behavior are the lack of politeness to others, not greeting the older people when they pass in front of them, the culture of shaking hands is rare, as it is very rare for students to shake hands with their teachers. According to Al-Attas, (1995) Adab is a behavior that must be practiced or carried out against oneself, and which is based on knowledge,

then that behavior or practice must not only be directed to fellow human beings, but also to the fact that it is ma'lumat for science.

Adab is also integration between faith, knowledge, and deed which when the three are put together will produce harmony in attitude, action, and putting things in their place so that in the end justice in life will be created. It can be understood that adab is not only limited to behavior but also indications of civility will be actualized in the condition of the soul which will affect behavior by the teachings of Islam. Thus it can be said that civilized humans must also be knowledgeable. While those who are knowledgeable are not necessarily civilized, because to reach the stage of adab, a person is not enough just to be knowledgeable but also to think deeply and train his soul to practice his knowledge.

Sixth, Impolite speaking, one form of moral degradations in college students today is impolite speaking. According to the informants, the cause of impolite speaking is due to environmental social factors that make students speak bad words, they are following negative social flows. For example, the Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessing of Allah SWT be upon him) made speaking politely a similar thing with sadaqah of wealth. Between speaking politely and sadaqah of wealth have similarities. Sadaqah of wealth can please the person who is given the sadaqah, while good speech will also please others who hear them (Wahyuni, 2015).

Seventh, Dishonest in academics, according to several informants who stated that there were several forms of moral decadences of students in higher education, namely cheating, plagiarism, and absencies in classes. Cheating is something that students often do during exams. There are various ways to fill out exam answers, such as asking questions and even exchanging answer sheets, to seeing small notes tucked in a certain place, for them to get a good score. Cheating is an act that greatly affects a person's moral decadence. Because they no longer believe in their abilities, even though every human being can think optimally which has been given by Allah SWT. The act of cheating is driven by the view that the actions have an

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advantage for them and a belief that other people want them to do so (Amalia, 2016; Engkizar *et al.*, 2021; Hasanah *et al.*, 2019). If this continues, of course, it will have an impact on the moral degradation of students and will affect the sustainability of the future. The behavior of leaving absences to other students is a way for students who are late to come to class or those who skip class hours. This kind of behavior certainly affects the students' morals from the aspect of honesty. Because those who should be absent are not present in class, with the presence of this absentee being present in class, this is one of the bad ways that students do just for the lecture assessment so that they can pass the class.

Conclusion

This paper has managed to uncover forms of Moral Decadence found in college students. There are nine forms of student moral decadence retrieved from observation and interview, these forms are negligent in worship, sexual promiscuity, involved in drug abuse, hedonism, revealing awrah, lack of ethics, impolite speaking, dishonest in academics, and lack of time management. Therefore, as students with good morals, we must protect ourselves from immoral behavior with religious knowledge, which aims to form humans with noble character. Community norms are no less important because they were made based on our religion, Islam, so that people can live in a safe, orderly, and peaceful manner. It is also important that we seek positive things, such as positive environments, keeping ourselves busy with positive things, and learn positive things, so that students can understand manners and etiquette from our surroundings that is also prioritizing manners and etiquette.

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