

Character education in light of Quran and Hadiths: Does character education affects the academic achievement of students?

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ABSTRACT

Character being reacting in a decent (fairness, responsible) way to the circumstances, need to be taught to the students. the current research was designed to investigate the character education highlighted in the Quran and Hadith, and to identify the effect of character education on secondary school students' academic achievement. For this purpose, stratified random sampling technique was used to select 1438 students from the population of grade 10 students of Hazara Division. A questionnaire was developed and used for gathering data from the respondents, which was validated by the experts. Cronbach reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was 0.712 which was got through pilot study conducted on 100 students. Frequency, Chart, mean, standard deviation, and regression analysis were used for the analysis of data. Results indicate that Quran teaches about some beliefs, framework of worship and adoption of life pattern of the Prophet (PBUH). Therefore, it is important to adopt good character like remaining brothers and using dialogue to resolve issues, and fight against injustice and oppression otherwise you will be discouraged and weakened. Be guard against oppression as Allah will forgive you. Results of survey indicate that teachers train students to follow teachings of Islam, resolve conflicts and apologize in case of hurting each other. Furthermore, character education has profound influence on academic achievement of students. It is recommended that education department should show high concern and implement check and balance system to actually implement character education at schools. Additionally, the physical, mental level, socioeconomic and religious status of the students should be kept in mind during provision of character education to students.

Key words: Character Education, Teachers, Secondary Schools, Students

Introduction

Character is a consistent internal temperament to react to circumstances with decency¹ It covers all human activities which are shown in mind, behaviors, feelings as well as actions on the basis of religious laws, norms, and customs. Character settles on one's thoughts and actions done. To do right in every situation is possible through good character²². Like the inculcation of all pieces of knowledge, good character also needs to be taught. The personality of the students is built gradually through character education³.

Truth, fairness, and responsibility are the major rules of good character⁴ which are needed to be taught. Due to the increasing tendency of negative behavior in youth,

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attention towards character education in public schools has been growing⁵. These students are guided to adopt certain prescribed behaviors⁶. In conclusion, schools can become important source of inculcation of decent temperament in the students. The aspects of decent temperament inculcated through formal schooling are discussed in the following headings.

Following the teachings of Islam

The basic teachings of Islam are explained in the following verses of Quran. The summaries of the verses are explained below.

Believe in GOD, do Good Deeds, join together with Others to Speak the Truth and Be Patient⁷

وَلَا تَقْرُبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ لَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا وَإِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدُوا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ وَبِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ أَوْفُوا ذَلِكُمْ وَصَّاكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

*And (do) not go near wealth (of) the orphans except with that which (is) best until he reaches his maturity. And give full [the] measure and the weight with justice. Not We burden any soul except (to) its capacity. And when you speak then be just even if he is a near relative. And (the) Covenant (of) Allah fulfil. That (He) has enjoined on you with it so that you may remember.*⁸

*Be kind to your parents.*⁹

*Patient people are loved by Allah.*¹⁰

The other teachings of Islam are that there is only one Allah and Muhammad (PBUH) is the Prophet of Allah.^{11,12,13}

Another belief in teachings of Islam is the existence of Angels. Each angel is assigned specific duty.

Prophets are humans chosen by Allah in the past at different times for conveying his messages, teachings, and legislation to the people mostly through revelation.^{12,13, 14}

The other important teachings of Islam are presented as framework for worship which are *faith (Shahada), (2) every day prayers (3) almsgiving (Zakat), (4) Ramadan fasting (5) pilgrimage (Hajj) once in life.*¹⁵

Therefore, the above verses of Holy Quran emphasize living according to teachings of Islam.

This style of living according to the teachings of Islam needs training. One of the important sources of training is the school teacher.

Character building training

Building the character of the students is the prime responsibility of the teachers. With the help of Quran and Hadith the teachers can better guide their students. Some of the important verses and Quran and Hadiths about the good character are presented as follows. Quran says about the Prophet (PBUH) that:

*“Indeed, you are of lofty character”*¹⁶

Allah said about the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him)

*“Truly, your nature (Character) is Excellent”*¹⁷

About good character, the Prophet (PBUH) said

"The only reason why I am sent is to perfect good Akhlaq".¹⁸

These are the some of the important elements stressed in Hadiths to be adopted. So it is the responsibility of the schools to inculcate these characteristics in the students as well to seek their place in paradise. The other important quality of good character stressed in Quran and Hadith is conflict resolution.

Conflict resolution training

In all spheres of life Quran is the greatest source of guidance. Its teachings included living in peace with each other, and creation of no conflict among each other. In Case of creation of any conflict, dialogue was suggested by the Prophet (PBUH)¹⁹.

It can be inferred that for bringing unity and harmony in the society, dialogue is important. Allah says in Quran:

It is stressed in Quran that reconcile between people if the fight with each other. And one should fight against a person who commits aggression and injustice. Then in case of reverting, one should make peace between them with justice as Allah loves justice.

This verse emphasizes on the reconciliation between two parties. If the two parties fight, make them to reconcile. In another verse of Quran, Allah says that:

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ رِيحُكُمْ وَاصْبِرُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

"Obey Allah and His Prophet and do not quarrel with one another, or you would be discouraged and weakened. Persevere! Surely Allah is with those who persevere."²¹

In the same way the Prophet (PBUH) informed the people that putting things right between people is more excellent than fasting, prayers and almsgiving (Sadaqah). He exemplified spoiling relations with people as shaver²².

On the other occasion the Prophet (PBUH) forbidden Muslims of stop talking for more than three days to each other, hating, and becoming jealous of each other.²³

The other effect of dispute among each other is that people loose strength.

To summarize it can be said that that dialogue and peace process can help towards bringing unity and harmony. Similarly, reconciliation is important character of the Muslims for the removing their mutual differences. Imagining the consequences of dispute, one finds that it demoralizes the people because of loss of strength among them.

Feeling happy with fellows

The widespread purpose of Islam is the development of friendship, sense of community, and a common purpose. Allah says that:

This verse stresses on remaining like brothers with each other and promotion of peace and reconciliation among each other.²⁴

The Prophet (PBUH) said that the believers remain kind and show love with each other like one body, so that the whole body is sleepless and in fever if any part of it is not well.²⁵

The Prophet (PBUH) said: *This Hadith highlights that mercy, affection, and kindness for each other is like whole body. When there is pain in any part of the*

*body, the whole body feels this pain*²⁶.

The hadith stresses on believers that they are like brothers and there is a need of reconciliation between brothers. One should fear Allah.

In the above Hadiths, the Prophet (PBUH) stressed on reconciliation with each others. He forbade the Muslims to boycott each other for more than three days.

It is important to highlight the character of great Muslim leaders to the students. The Prophet (PBUH) said that Jama'ah (team) is supported by Allah²⁷.⁴ Islam believes an effort should be accompanied by conversation and teamwork.²⁸

Great Muslim heroes and leaders are those who are selected neither by anyone nor by any committee. The leaders are to guide and establish the Islamic society. According to Quran the great leaders' own knowledge and power.

Investigation of bullying cases

As bullying is a form of oppression, all kinds of injustices and oppression are prohibited by Islam.

The Prophet (PBUH) said that since oppression on the day of resurrection is darkness, therefore "Be on your guard against oppression"²⁹ The Prophet (PBUH) said that one should not oppress another Muslim and not hand over him to oppressor. Allah will fulfill the requirements of that person who fulfill the needs of his brother;

On the Day of Resurrection, a person will be brought out that person of discomfort who brings out his brother out of discomfort and on the Day of Resurrection, Allah will screen him whoever screen a Muslim³⁰.

The Prophet (PBUH) advised for helping both oppressor and oppressed. When he was asked how one can help the oppressor, He replied that stopping him from oppression is a kind of help with him³¹.

Allah commands to bring peace between those who fight with each other but if one transgresses beyond bounds, then Allah Almighty says that fight against sinner until he obeys the order of Allah. And when he complies then live-in peace with him with justice and fairness as Allah loves the fair and just people³².

Treating each other with respect.

People have different faiths as well as opinions which should be acknowledged. We should not make a fun of each other. Allah also forbids people of making fun of each other. This is evident from the verse of Holly Quran. Allah prohibits men and women making fun of each other. It also stops people from finding faults and defaming each other by calling bad names. These acts are very bad and the people are oppressors.³³

"Shame on all such persons who talk about the failings of others and indulge in ridiculing them."⁵ Allah has sent a message to the world:

وَقُلْ لِيُجَادِيَ يَتَقُولُوا الَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

*It is said that the believers speak only excellent words.*³⁵

From the above verses of Quran, it is clear that Muslims have love and kindness all people irrespective of faiths, race, and nation as they consider them the creatures of Allah. A true Muslim treats all humans with respect and kindness.

Apologizing and forgiving each other

Apologizing and forgiving each other is an important aspect of character development.

The Prophet (PBUH) said that one should not oppress another Muslim and not hand over him to oppressor. Allah will fulfill the requirements of that person who fulfill the needs of his brother;

On the Day of Resurrection, a person will be brought out that person of discomfort who brings out his brother out of discomfort and on the Day of Resurrection, Allah will screen him whoever screen a Muslim³⁶.

In the same way, not accepting the apology of a Muslim brother is a sin.³⁷

"If a man makes an excuse to his bother and he does not accept it, he will bear a burden of sin like that of the tax-collector."³⁸

It is Makruh to refuse the apology of a Muslim. It is among Allah's attributes to accept apologies and to forgive sins. Allah punishes a person who does not accept apologies "Pardon them and overlook – Allah loves those who do good"³⁹.

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: يَا عَلِيُّ مَنْ لَمْ يَقْبَلِ الْعُذْرَ مِنْ مُتَّصِلٍ صَادِقًا كَانَتْ أَوْ كَانَتْ بَأْسًا لَمْ يَنْتَلِ شَفَاعَتِي

The prophet (PBUH) said that not accepting the apology of a person is a sin.⁴⁰

Similarly, a person having a promise or contract with Allah, he will intercede.⁴¹

It is also evident that exercising self-restraint and swallowing back anger requires patience. So in conclusion we can say that apologizing and forgiving each other are vital qualities of people.

Objectives of the survey

1. To explore the character education highlighted in the Quran and Hadith.
2. to identify the effect of character education on secondary school students' academic achievement.

Population of survey

Population of the study came from Hazara Division with class ten students.

Sample of survey

This study picked up Fourteen Hundred and thirty-eight (1438) students from the population of school students at secondary level of grade ten class. The distribution of the sample represented fifty percent public school students, fifty percent private sector school students, while the percentage of male and female students was 50.4% and 49.6% respectively. In the same way urban and rural location wise students were fifty- fifty percent.

Sampling technique

The technique of random sampling was used for the selection of students from public as well as private sector school students.

Methodology adopted for research

The descriptive survey research study used questionnaire for the collection of data from the students.

This survey comprised of the following phases.

Preparation phase

The questionnaire was developed for measuring the character education. This questionnaire was developed after the consultation of relevant literature. The experts of the field validated the questionnaire. This questionnaire comprised of nine items which meant for measuring the different aspects of character education. The questionnaire developed about character education was translated in to Urdu from English and then from Urdu into English through back translated method. The purpose of applying this method was to ensure that original and translated questionnaires convey the same meaning. The questionnaire was represented five-point Likert scale. It had the options of "Never", "sometimes", "Don't know", "often", and "Always". The options were assigned 1 for "Never" and "Always" was assigned 5. For checking the understanding level of the students, hundred students were contacted for conducting a pilot study. Reliability coefficient for the items of questionnaire of character education was 0.712. The selection of schools was done through simple random sampling technique and eighty-four schools were selected. After obtaining formal consent from the respective school Heads, twenty students were selected from each school.

Implementation stage

Personal visits of the researcher enabled the researcher to collect the needed data. for making sure that the students respond accurately to the items of the questionnaire, they were briefed about the explained the manner with which the questionnaire could be filled. The respondents were ensured that the information they provided would be kept confidential and would be used for research purpose only. It took about 20 minutes to return the filled questionnaire. frequency, bar chart, mean, standard deviation, and regression analysis were used for the analysis of the data. Software SPSS was used to analyze the data collected from the students.

Results and Discussions

The data was analyzed according to the objectives which are presented in the following tables and bar charts.

Table 1

		Never	Sometimes	Don't Know	Often	Always
1	stress of teachers to live according to Islamic teachings	338	203	50	256	591
2	provision of character building training	22	87	78	385	866
3	Conflict resolution training	65	40	113	196	1024
4	feeling happy with class fellows	238	56	203	63	878
5	emphasis of Character education in curriculum	54	211	34	449	690
6	Character of great Muslim	53	33	56	150	1146

	heroes is a part of our curriculum					
7	investigation of bullying cases in schools	210	82	341	144	661
8	treating each other with respect	277	83	83	162	833
9	apologizing each other in case of hurting	265	64	50	108	951

Table 1 highlight that majority (591+256) of the students opined that their teachers stress the students to live according to Islamic teachings. These results indicate that majority of the students were agreed that they were provided character building training. The elements of good character are that the students should remain honest and fair in life. It is true that the inculcation of these qualities are the responsibilities of the teachers. These qualities should be inculcated in them along with formal educational training. elaborates that majority (385+866) of the students expressed that teachers provide character building training to the students. Majority (1024+196) of the students were agreed that their teachers train them for the resolution of conflicts. majority (878+63) of the students feel happy in the company of their class fellows in the class. majority (690+449) of the students expressed that character education is emphasized in curriculum of grade 10. majority of the students (1146+150) say that character of great Muslim leaders is a part of our curriculum. Majority of the students (661+144) responded that the school administration investigates bullying cases at school. majority of the students (833+162) responded that their class fellows respect each other. Majority of the students (951+108) expressed that the students apologize each other in case of hurting each other.

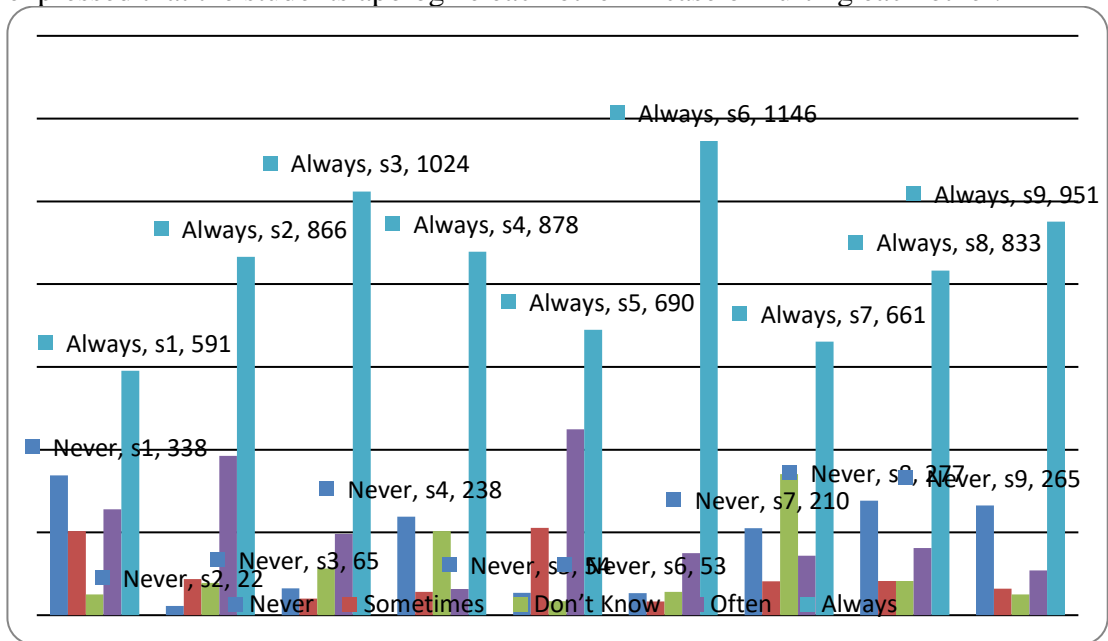


Table 2
Descriptive statistics of students

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Character education	1438	4.24	0.59

Table 2 depicts that the mean (M), and standard deviation (S. D) of character education provided by teachers is 4.24 and 0.59. This result indicates that character education is provided by the teachers at a greater level to their students in secondary schools.

Table 3
Descriptive statistics of female students

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Character education	713	4.28	0.56

Table 3 depicts that the mean (M), and standard deviation of character education provided by teachers is 4.2 and 0.56. This result indicates that greater amount of character education is provided by the teachers to their female students in secondary schools.

Table 4
Descriptive statistics of female students

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Character education	725	4.20	0.62

Table 4 depicts that the mean (M), and standard deviation of character education provided by teachers is 4.21 and 0.62. This result indicates that greater amount of character education is provided by the teachers to their female students in secondary schools but the value of standard deviation shows that there is greater variation in the responses of students about the provision of character education.

Table 5
Effect of character education on academic achievement of students

	β	S. E	B	t	P value
(Constant)	3.187	0.119		26.80	0.000
Character education	0.092	0.028	0.087	3.31	0.001
R square=0.08		Adjusted R square=0.07		F statistic= 10.947	
probability=0.01					

Dependent Variable: academic achievement

Table 5 illustrates the mathematical value of R square is 0.08 which shows that 0.8% percent variability in academic achievement of students is explained by character

education provided by teachers to students. At 0.05 level of significance the value of F statistics of 10.947 and 0.01 p value point out and correct forecasts the model among the factors. The value of Beta of character education (0.092) depicts considerable impact on academic achievement. The t value of 3.309 confirms this result with 0.001 value of p.

Discussion

According to the results of the study, the students responded that character education is provided to them in the schools. Contradictory to these results Iqbal, Idris, and Ali (2018)⁶ found that as a whole, moral development is not given great importance in the school but teachers make their efforts at the individual level to provide moral education to the students. It is a fact that the holy Quran, and Hadiths has given much importance to good characters such as fairness, cooperation, loyalty, good manners, and respect⁴³ and the prophet (PBUH) in his life has made efforts to correct the character of the people. For example, the Prophet (PBUH) said that He has been sent to correct the moral character of people⁴⁴.

Further, character education is provided by the teachers to both male and female students in secondary schools. It is a fact that the initial goal of character education is to exemplify good character characteristics for students⁴⁵.

The results of the study found that character education has significant positive effect on academic achievement of Students. A number of researchers have found the positive results of applying character education programs in the schools, including higher academic achievements, fewer suspensions as well as dropout, and fewer risk behaviors of students⁴⁶. For example, it is found that modest relationship exists between character education like empathy and academic success⁴⁷. If Students are engaged in helping, sharing, and consoling behaviors, they will excel in their academics as adolescents⁷. So, Educators and parents hope that in schools with more positive, and less disruptive, behavior, students will achieve better academics at a higher level⁴⁵.

Conclusion

It is important to adopt good character like remaining brothers and using dialogue to resolve issues, and fight against injustice and oppression otherwise you will be discouraged and weakened. Be guard against oppression as Allah will forgive you. Both male and female students responded that character education is provided in school at secondary level. Character education profoundly affects the academic achievement of Students at secondary level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were suggested on the basis of findings and conclusions.

1. The education department should show high concern and should implement check and balance system for the actual implementation of character education at schools.

2. The teachers may be trained to effectively provide character education to the students in their respective schools. In this way the students will be able to equip with moral values and they will be able actively and productively participate in social learning programs.
3. The teachers should be aware in the provision of character education according to their physical and mental age level. In the same manner, the socioeconomic and religious background of the students should also be kept in mind while working on their moral development.
4. In addition to the development of the character of the students in the class, workshop, seminars and other relevant programs should be organized for the character building of the students.

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