

Analysis of Ethical Values Present in Islamiyat Textbooks at Secondary Level

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Abstract

The development of ethical values in students' personalities is the ultimate goal of religious education. So, the study was opted to analyze ethical values present in the Islamiyat Textbooks at the secondary level. The objectives of this study were (i) to explore the level of ethical values incorporated in the secondary level textbooks of Islamiyat. The textbooks of Islamiyat for grades 9 and 10 published by the Punjab Textbook Board, Lahore, were analyzed using a self-developed checklist, containing five ethical values, i.e., Human Dignity, Tolerance, Equality, Equity, and Peace. Data were analyzed by using frequencies and range. It was concluded that overall, Islamiyat textbooks for 9th and 10th grades showed that the ethical value 'Human Dignity' was highly emphasized. While 'Equity and Peace' were reflected moderately, Tolerance and Equality were considerably lower. Human dignity and equality were higher than tolerance and peace. It is recommended that secondary-level textbook writers ensure the incorporation of more balanced five universal ethical values in the text.

Keywords: Ethical Values, Islamiyat Textbooks, Secondary Level, Human Dignity, Equity and Peace.

Introduction

Ethical values direct us to be on the right path, distinguishing between right and wrong (Ammann, 2018; Schwartz, 2017; Hudson & Miller, 2006). Ethical values show the goal and quality of education. Ethical values help in developing a proactive social conscience amongst individuals. Ethical values help in disciplining life with respect to Pakistani society. Ethical values provide an ample opportunity to have a close view of different codes of ethics in the educational

process. Ethical values enable us to ensure harmony and create a consensus between different strata of society. Moreover, ethical development is an important goal of the national curriculum, especially at the secondary level (Rehman, 2019). A child studying at the Secondary level acquires different values (Niazi, Lodhi & Mehmood, 2021; Alberg, 2019). In Pakistan, many ethical problems are common in society, such as inequity, cheating, bullying, racial issues, lack of freedom of speech, and ill-discipline (Rehman, Aftab & Khan, 2018). It is necessary to look into the textbooks that ethical values are inculcated at the secondary level or not because education is the force that governs the behavior and personality of the students (Mohan & Shubashini, 2016). In this regard textbook of Islamiyat was thought to be suitably responsible for the inculcation of ethical values in students at the secondary level (Rehman, Aftab & Khan, 2018). Hence Textbooks of Secondary Level Islamiyat were analyzed to check the incorporated ethical values in the text to develop them in the students.

Literature Review

Ethical problems in a society are inequity, cheating, bullying, racial issues, lack of freedom of speech, and ill-discipline (Rehman, Aftab & Khan, 2018). When ethical values such as honesty, respect and justice are not upheld, moral corruption spreads. People begin to act out of self-interest, leading to dishonesty, injustice and mistrust in society. (Beauchamp et al., 2019). While ethical values serve as a binding force that unites individuals (Trajkovic, 2015; Aglozo & Cohen, 2025). The absence of values like tolerance and equality can cause discrimination, intolerance and social fragmentation (Dharma et al., 2025). Ignoring ethical values undermines respect for human dignity. People may face discrimination, violence and marginalization (Meyer, 2003). If ethical values are not imparted into education, students may lack of respect, empathy and moral responsibility. This affect both personality development and social harmony (Firdaus & Suwendi, 2025; Boiliu, 2025). UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), (2015) stresses that ethical and moral education ensures respect for human dignity and equality.

There is no evidence to prove the prevailing belief that a person is born good or bad in the sense that he acts or does not act according to the rules of the society to which he belongs. Much psychological evidence proves that morality is learned (Faizi, 2010). Ethical values have been defined as the “acts or behaviors in making wrong or right decisions” (Tuan Ibrahim et al., 2020). In embedding the ethical values and culture within individuals and throughout generations, the educational process is helpful and responsible (CIMA, 2013). So, imparting ethical values through the educational process is based on the curriculum and textbooks (Graham, 2014).

I. Islamic Code of Ethics

Latif (1979) wrote the Islamic code of ethics in his book Bases of Islam. He clearly defines concepts “What is wrong?” and “What to avoid?” He writes about

avoiding things such as weaknesses of the tongue, anger, pride, suspicion and jealousy, deceit and hypocrisy, heart-heartedness, miserliness and greed, dishonesty, immorality, class or racial prejudice, prohibited: food, drink, and gambling, etc., and usury. He also wrote “What is right or straight path?” and “What to Cultivate?” These are devotion to parents, sense of thankfulness, tenderness and gentility, kindness to animals, goodwill and kindness, self-denial, good manners, justice and uprightness, purity, modesty, fulfilling obligations, patience in trials, self-restraint and forgiveness, repentance and purity of life.

II. UNESCO Code of Ethics

UNESCO's (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) universal codes of ethics provide a formal framework of ideals designed to guide and encourage all the people connected with this process to achieve high standards of ethical values. UNESCO suggested promoting ‘Universal Values’ such as respect for human dignity, equity or justice, tolerance, equality, and peace, which are considered more important (UNESCO, 2019). Universal Ethical Values, as promoted by UNESCO, are foundational moral principles that transcend cultural, religious, and national boundaries, aiming to promote human dignity, peaceful coexistence, and global citizenship (UNESCO, 2015). These values are not culturally exclusive but are intended to be universally applicable, fostering a sense of shared responsibility among individuals and communities.

Nussbaum, (2006) has consistently emphasized the importance of values such as: Human Dignity, which means respecting the intrinsic worth of every individual. Tolerance means acceptance and appreciation of diversity in culture, opinion, and belief (Verkuyten, et al. 2020). Equality and equity mean providing equal rights and opportunities while recognizing and addressing unequal starting points (Espinoza, 2007). Justice means promoting fairness, the rule of law, and accountability (Tyler, 2006). Peace means not only the absence of conflict but the presence of cooperative and respectful relationships (Linstrom, & Simic, 2017). These values are central to UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education (GCED) framework, which aims to empower learners to assume active roles in resolving global challenges and promoting a more just, inclusive, and sustainable world (UNESCO, 2015). In education, these universal ethical values are embedded into teaching and learning to support the development of moral reasoning, empathy, civic engagement, and critical thinking. Teachers act as facilitators of ethical dialogue, guiding students to connect values with real-world contexts through reflection, debate, service learning, and collaborative projects (Sharkey & Gash, 2020; Döring et al., 2024). By internalizing universal ethical values, students are better equipped to engage with the complexities of modern society and contribute positively to a diverse and interconnected world.

Ethical Values in Education and Its Relations with Textbooks

In education, ethical values are the moral principles and norms that influence how students behave, learn, and build relationships with society and the school

environment (Smetana, 2017). According to UNESCO (2021) states that education should promote respect, responsibility, justice and human dignity to build ethical societies including some other values such as honesty, fairness, empathy, respect, cooperation and responsibility. Moral and civic education must cultivate humanistic values that support peace, tolerance and mutual understanding (UNESCO, 2022). Ethical values in education help students develop moral reasoning and decision-making skills for personal and social growth (Narvaez, 2010). Ethical decision-making frameworks in education foster critical thinking and moral awareness among learners (Krettenauer, 2017). Textbooks play a vital role in transmitting ethical values to students by presenting moral lessons, cultural norms and examples of good characters (Su, 2018). Textbooks shape learners' ethical awareness by imparting principles of fairness, inclusion, and responsibility (OECD, 2023). According to Iyer (2013), the education system in the 21st century should ensure the promotion of values-based education in school textbooks. Textbooks are the main source to promote ethical values for quality education, and are also beneficial for promoting a positive school environment. The content of the textbooks integrates ethical discussions, encourages students to reflect on real-life dilemmas, and apply moral reasoning in their studies (Rehman, 2019).

Statement of the Problem

Ethical problems in Pakistani society are inequity, cheating, bullying, racial issues, lack of freedom of speech, and ill-discipline (Rehman, Aftab & Khan, 2018). To overcome all these problems, promoting ethical values in education is the force that governs the behavior and personality of the students (Mohan & Shubashini, 2016). A Textbook included in ethical values to assist teachers in educating students and developing their ethical values. The best way to promote ethical values is to provide appropriate ethical material in textbooks and educate it through teaching and learning practices. Students learn, express, and impart ethical values for future perspectives (Hammond, et al 2020). So, this study was carried out, to analyze ethical values present in Islamiyat textbooks at secondary level.

Objectives of the Study were:

- i. To explore ethical values, present in the textbooks of Secondary Level Islamiyat.
- ii. To identify the level of ethical values, present in the textbooks of Islamiyat at the secondary level.

Material and Methods

The research was based on document analysis, a qualitative perspective of textbooks on Islamic Studies, to identify ethical values at the secondary level. This study included textbooks of Islamiyat for 9th and 10th classes published by PTBL. This study used a self-developed checklist for analyzing ethical values addressed in the textbooks. The Checklist contained 5 Universal ethical values: Human Dignity, Tolerance, Equality, Equity, and Peace, which were found very frequently

in the Textbooks. So, frequency distribution and percentage were applied.

Results of Analysis of Islamiyat Textbooks for grades 9th and 10th

Content analysis reflects the frequency of each category of ethical values presented in manifest and latent content (Words, phrases, pictures, obligations, images, sentences, activities, oblige, exercises, supporting some ethical values) has been taken from different units of the Islamiyat Textbook of 9th and 10th grade. Unit-wise content analysis of the Islamiyat Textbook is as follows:

Table 1

Result of Content Analysis of Islamiyat Textbook for 9th Grade

Ethical Values	Overall Total (f)	Overall Total (%)
Human Dignity	51	81%
Tolerance	03	5%
Equality	nil	nil
Equity	03	5%
Peace	06	9%
Overall Total	63	100%

Table 1 reflects the frequency and percentage of each ethical value present in the manifest and latent content (words, phrases, pictures, obligations, images, sentences, activity, oblige, exercise, supporting some ethical values symbols) of the Islamiyat Textbook. Overall results of the Islamiyat Textbook contain words, phrases, and 63 sentences which support the development of 'Universal Ethical Values' (f=63): Human Dignity, Tolerance, Equality, and Equity. 51% related to Human Dignity (f=51) addressed at the highest values among others, 9% of about Peace (f=6) addressed at the second highest values among others, 5% of Tolerance (f=3) and 5% deals with Equity (f=3), which addressed at last values among others and no ethical values has been found regarding Equality.

The result of 9th-grade Islamiyat textbooks shows that the ethical value 'Human Dignity' is highly emphasized. Peace was reflected moderately, while Tolerance and Equity were considerably lower. Equality is almost neglected.

Table 2

Result of Content Analysis of the Islamiyat Textbook for 10th Grade

Ethical Values	Overall Total (f)	Overall Total (%)
Human Dignity	28	54%
Tolerance	05	10%
Equality	06	12%
Equity	08	14%
Peace	05	10%
Overall Total	52	100%

Table 2 reflects the frequency and percentage of each ethical value present in the manifest and latent content (words, phrases, pictures, obligations, images, sentences, activity, oblige, exercise, supporting some ethical values symbols) of the Islamiyat Textbook. Overall results of the Islamiyat Textbook contain words, phrases, pictures, obligations, images, sentences, activities, and exercises, supporting some ethical values symbols at 52 sentences, which support the development of 'Universal Ethical Values' ($f=52$): Human Dignity, Tolerance, Equality, and Equity. Among them 54% deals with Human Dignity ($f=28$) addressed at the highest values, 14% of about Equity ($f=8$) addressed at the second highest values among others, 12% related to Equality ($f=6$) which was addressed at the third highest value among others and 10% of about Tolerance and Peace ($f=5$) addressed at least values among others. The overall result of 10th-grade Islamiyat textbooks shows that the ethical value 'Human Dignity' is highly emphasized. Equality and Equity were reflected moderately, while Tolerance and Peace were considerably lower.

Table 3

Overall Results of Content Analysis of Islamiyat Textbooks with Respect to 9th and 10th Grades

Ethical Values	9 th Grade	10 th Grade	Total Frequency
Human Dignity	51 (81%)	28 (54%)	79 (68%)
Tolerance	3 (5%)	5 (10%)	8 (7%)
Equality	Nil	6 (12%)	6 (5%)
Equity	3 (5%)	8 (14%)	11 (10%)
Peace	6 (9%)	5 (10%)	11 (10%)
Overall Total	63 (54.7%)	52 (45.2%)	115 (100%)

Table 3 shows the results of the content analysis of Islamiyat textbooks for 9th and 10th grades concerning the analysis of ethical values. These books of grades 9th and 10th include universal ethical values, human dignity, tolerance, equality, equity, and peace, collectively including 115 sentences. Individually, human dignity was addressed as the highest value among others, 68% ($f=79$). Equity and peace were addressed at the second highest value among others, 11% ($f=10$) each, Tolerance was addressed at the third highest value among others, 7% ($f=8$), and Equality was addressed at the fourth highest value among others, 5% ($f=6$). The textbook of Islamiyat grade 9th addressed the highest values with 54.7% ($f=63$) as compared to the textbook of grade 10th with 45.2% ($f=52$). The overall result of 9th and 10th-grade Islamiyat textbooks shows that the ethical value 'Human Dignity' is highly emphasized. Equity and Peace were reflected moderately, while Tolerance and Equality were considerably lower.

Conclusions and Discussion

Conclusions were drawn from the analysis of textbook Islamic studies are as follows.

- i. It was concluded that 9th-grade Islamiyat textbooks show that the ethical value 'Human Dignity' is highly emphasized. Peace was reflected moderately, while Tolerance and Equity were considerably lower. Equality is almost neglected. The result is similar to the study by Khokhar (2021) who analyzed Islamiyat textbooks in Pakistan and found that they emphasize human dignity, equality, and social justice, highlighting the importance of respecting all individuals regardless of their background.
- ii. It was also concluded that the textbooks of Islamiyat grade 10th addressed the ethical value 'Human Dignity' at a high level. Equality and Equity were reflected moderately, while Tolerance and Peace were considerably lower. Similar to this result a study by Suhaib, & Mahmood (2023) explored that Islamic textbooks promote tolerance and peace.
- iii. It was concluded that overall, Islamiyat textbooks for 9th and 10th-grade showed that the ethical value 'Human Dignity' was highly emphasized. Equity and Peace were reflected moderately, while Tolerance and Equality were considerably lower. A similar study by Siddiqui, & Habib (2022) in Punjab, Pakistan, at the secondary level, found that Islamiyat covers some ethical values (Human dignity and equity) at a higher level, while other ethical values, like tolerance, equality, and peace, were at a lower level in textbooks.

Recommendation

- iv. As human dignity and equality were higher as compared to tolerance and peace. It is recommended that secondary level textbook writers may ensure incorporation of more balanced five universal ethical values in the text.
- v. It is also recommended that Textbooks writers may include real-world examples, narrative passages, and culturally relevant scenarios that help students to understand the practical application of Human Dignity, Equity, Equality, Tolerance, and Peace.

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