GOOD MANNERS IN ISLAM

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Abstract

This study adopts a library-based research methodology, relying on scholarly sources such as books, journals, and academic articles. It explores the concept of adab (good manners) in Islam and its close relationship with academic ethics, emphasizing their shared role in fostering a positive and productive learning environment. In Islamic teachings, adab refers to a set of moral and behavioral principles derived from the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), guiding individuals to act with integrity, respect and discipline. Academic ethics similarly provide moral standards for behavior within educational settings. By understanding and practicing adab, students and educators can cultivate commendable character, enhance ethical conduct, and contribute to a harmonious academic community. This research underscores that the principles of adab are not merely cultural or social norms but are deeply rooted in Islamic guidance, highlighting their enduring importance in shaping both personal and educational development.

Keywords

Adab in Islam, ethical values, academic integrity, moral education, Islamic teachings, educational ethics.

INTRODUCTION

Islam emphasizes the significance of good conduct as the foundation for moral integrity and a peaceful community life. The Qur'an highlights the importance of noble behavior by describing the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as possessing an exemplary moral character (Qur'an, 68:4). In the same spirit, the Prophet himself emphasized that the purpose of his mission was to refine and perfect moral values. These teachings demonstrate that good manners in Islam are not merely cultural traditions but fundamental principles that shape individual behavior, personal development and peaceful social relations.

Education likewise plays a crucial role in developing a civilized, ethical and sustainable society from an Islamic perspective, education is not limited to the transmission of knowledge; rather, it is a holistic process aimed at cultivating character, spirituality, and moral awareness a key pillar of Islamic education is adab, which encompasses proper conduct, ethical responsibility, and moral discipline in interactions with others as well as in one's relationship with God . Prominent scholars such as Imam Al-Ghazali and Syed Muhammad Naqib Al-Attas regard adab as the core of genuine education, arguing that moral and character development should take precedence over the mere accumulation of knowledge. Moreover, adab integrates ethical consciousness with spiritual values by guiding human behavior through principles such as honesty, respect, humility, accountability, and sincerity. Therefore, adab should be understood not simply as a collection of social conventions, but as a comprehensive life framework that nurtures balanced, ethical, and intellectually refined individuals.

In formal educational environments, including schools and universities, the practice of adab is essential for fostering respectful relationships among students, educators, and academic

staff. It also serves as a moral foundation for maintaining academic integrity, which is vital for the credibility and effectiveness of educational institutions. As such, strengthening adab within academic settings contributes to both ethical conduct and social cohesion.

Accordingly, examining the internalization of adab values as a strategy for enhancing academic ethics is both timely and necessary. This study aims to explore the concept of adab in Islam, its role in character formation, and its contribution to strengthening ethical standards in educational institutions. A deeper understanding of adab is expected to support the development of a character-based learning environment and to produce individuals who demonstrate integrity, responsibility and a strong commitment to making positive contributions to society and the nation.

RESEARCH METHODS

The present research employs a qualitative library-based approach to examine the concept of adab and its significance in Islamic education and academic ethics. This approach was selected because it enables a thorough and meaningful exploration of ethical principles and educational values.

The research involved a detailed review of Islamic texts alongside contemporary scholarly works to gain insights into moral conduct and character formation. In addition, relevant academic books and peer-reviewed articles were consulted to enrich the analysis and provide a broader perspective. The collected data were examined using qualitative content analysis, through which key themes related to adab, ethical behavior, and academic integrity were identified and interpreted. These themes helped clarify how Islamic ethical values can guide behavior within educational contexts. To ensure reliability, findings were cross-checked across multiple sources, and all references were meticulously documented. As this study is entirely based on documentary evidence, no human participants were involved.

THE MEANING AND CONCEPT OF ADAB IN ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

In Islam, adab represents a core element of education, inherently linked to its aim: nurturing individuals who are knowledgeable, morally upright, and spiritually responsible. The term adab comes from the Arabic word adaba which etymologically refers to politeness, refined behavior, and character development. Although sometimes equated with morals or ethics, adab in Islamic education has a broader scope, encompassing not only outward conduct but also the intellectual and spiritual dimensions of human life. From a terminological perspective, manners are a cohesive set of ethical values internalized within the soul, expressed through respectful, polite, and courteous behavior toward others and Allah ta'ala. Manners reveal the depth of one's character and moral integrity, guiding individuals in social and academic interactions. Within Islamic education, manners are more than prescriptive social rules; they form the foundation for a balanced and holistic soul, integrating cognitive (ilm), affective (amal), and spiritual (ta'dib) dimensions. According to contemporary Muslim scholar Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, adab lies at the heart of (ta'dib) the process of Islamic education aimed at internalizing values. He emphasizes that adab involves not only understanding what is right but also knowing the proper placement and proportion of all things. Al-Attas identifies three essential aspects of adab:
1. recognizing and valuing ultimate truths;
2. behaving ethically toward oneself and others in accordance with these values;
3. applying knowledge responsibly and morally.

Thus, adab emphasizes both external conduct and intellectual and moral awareness in the ethical use of knowledge.

In formal educational settings, adab manifests in two interrelated dimensions. The practical dimension includes daily behaviors such as showing respect to teachers, being kind to

peers, avoiding rudeness, and upholding honesty and discipline. The intellectual dimension involves critical thinking, expressing opinions politely, applying knowledge wisely, and understanding the limits of freedom of thought in academic contexts. These dimensions are inseparable and mutually reinforcing, producing individuals who are both intellectually competent and morally upright.

Manners are also closely tied to innate human values note that many Hadiths emphasize that humans are born in a state of fitrah, an innate disposition toward goodness and noble character. Properly guided through education grounded in adab, this natural tendency can grow into virtuous behavior, whereas neglect may lead to deviation from moral principles.

Moreover, adab extends to one's relationship with knowledge, nature, and the Creator. A disciplined student demonstrates humility, diligence, and integrity in learning, avoids arrogance or misuse of knowledge, and pursues learning with the intention of worshiping Allah and attaining His pleasure. This aligns with the Qur'anic guidance: "Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due, and when you judge between people, to judge with justice" (Qur'an 4:58), emphasizing that ethical conduct is central to education and social responsibility.

In conclusion, adab is the cornerstone of the Islamic educational system. It teaches students not only to acquire knowledge but also to apply it responsibly and ethically. Educational success is therefore measured not solely by academic achievement but also by moral and spiritual development, evident in daily conduct. By consistently integrating the principles of adab into education, we cultivate individuals who are intellectually capable, morally conscious, and positively contribute to society.

THE ROLE OF ADAB IN ACADEMIC ETHICS

In the Islamic scholarly tradition, adab holds a central position as a moral foundation that guides all aspects of life, including higher education. This concept extends beyond simple social etiquette; it also defines how individuals engage with knowledge, teachers, peers, and the academic process. In the context of academia, proper manners are essential for fostering ethical conduct with integrity and dignity.

Academic ethics, which encompass principles such as honesty, accountability, and respect for intellectual property, are deeply rooted in the values of civility. Without a strong moral foundation, ethical codes risk being treated merely as formal rules that can be disregarded. Conversely, when individuals internalize moral values, ethical behavior naturally emerges from their character.

Research in educational environments indicates that while most students are aware of academic rules, many do not fully appreciate the moral significance of etiquette as the foundation of these ethics. Understanding ethical principles is shaped by institutional culture, campus norms, and official regulations. However, the development of virtues such as courtesy, respect for diversity, and humility is often insufficiently emphasized within formal educational programs. In practice, good manners in academic settings manifest through respectful classroom interactions, courteous discussion, and professional behavior toward faculty and staff. For instance, discussion etiquette is not only a matter of communication skills but also a reflection of moral maturity. Students who listen attentively argue respectfully, and accept differing viewpoints demonstrate manners that contribute to a healthy academic environment.

The relationship between manners and academic ethics can be observed in three key contributions. Enhancing Research Quality: Proper manners provide a moral framework for conducting research, guiding researchers to uphold scientific integrity. This includes avoiding data manipulation, preventing plagiarism, and respecting participants' rights, such as voluntary participation. Viewing knowledge as a trust motivates researchers to preserve the validity and reliability of their work without compromising ethical standards for personal or academic gain.

Building Trust within the Academic Community: Courteous conduct in academic interactions fosters mutual trust among students, faculty, and peers. Transparency in research intentions, honesty in providing information, protection of confidentiality, and openness to feedback are essential elements for maintaining fairness and accountability in scholarly activities.

Strengthening Academic Reputation: Individuals and institutions that consistently demonstrate ethical behavior and proper etiquette earn respect and credibility. Courtesy in professional interactions, respect for diverse perspectives, and openness to constructive criticism enhance both personal and institutional reputation, contributing to sustainable academic collaborations at national and international levels.

Manners and ethics are mutually reinforcing. While manners represent internalized values and moral awareness, academic ethics express these principles externally through established rules and practices. Therefore, cultivating an ideal academic character begins with instilling proper manners in students from an early stage. This ensures the development of scholars who are not only intellectually capable but also morally upright.

Promoting ethical values in academia is not merely a formal requirement but a strategic necessity for creating a high-quality, ethically responsible, and globally competitive educational system. Universities that nurture both intelligence and moral integrity produce graduates who significantly advance scientific knowledge and contribute to the welfare of society.

CONCLUSION

Adab, grounded in Islamic teachings, encompasses the norms of conduct that regulate human behavior. It is closely associated with concepts such as morals, ethics, and akhlak. Linguistically, the term "adab" in Arabic conveys notions of politeness, refined manners, and proper etiquette, and it is also intimately connected to the education of the self, particularly the cultivation of moral and spiritual character ("ta'dib al-nafs"). Ethics, broadly understood, concerns the systematic study of right and wrong, as well as the principles that guide moral judgment. In classical Greek philosophy, ethics (ethos) pertains to habits, character, dispositions, and patterns of thought. From this perspective, academic ethics can be defined as a coherent framework of principles that directs the conduct of all members of the scholarly community. In higher education, manners and academic ethics are deeply interrelated. Politeness, respect for diverse perspectives, and civil behavior in academic discourse constitute essential expressions of ethical practice. The observance of proper manners shapes the way individuals listen attentively, respond thoughtfully, engage constructively, and uphold decorum within scholarly interactions.

Suggestions:

Based on this study, it is recommended that all stakeholders explore alternative approaches to reinforcing ethics and manners in academic settings. These practices can provide valuable guidance and insights, promoting a more ethical, respectful, and productive academic culture.

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