
Student Ethics in the Perspective of the Qur'an and Hadith as a Foundation for Character Building in Islamic Education

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Abstract:

Education in Islam does not merely emphasize the mastery of knowledge but also the cultivation of students' morals and ethics. The Qur'an and Hadith provide clear guidance regarding the attitudes that should be embodied by learners in the process of seeking knowledge. This article aims to examine the ethics of students from the perspective of the Qur'an and Hadith and their relevance to contemporary education. This study employs a library research method by analyzing various written sources, including academic journals, Qur'anic verses, Hadith, and classical exegesis related to student ethics. The analysis focuses on selected Qur'anic verses concerning the ethics of seeking knowledge, particularly Surah Luqman verse 18 and Surah Al-Kahf verses 62 and 66–70, as well as Hadith on the virtues of seeking knowledge. The findings indicate that the ethics of students in Islam include humility, respect for teachers, diligence in learning, and patience in the process of acquiring knowledge. This study is expected to serve as a guideline for educators and students in implementing Islamic educational ethics effectively.

Keywords: *Ethics; Students; Al-Quran; Hadith; Islamic Education.*

A. Introduction

In the field of education, both in formal and non-formal institutions, the cultivation of ethical values is a crucial aspect of the learning process. This becomes more effective when it is grounded in the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith as the primary sources of Islamic education. The Qur'an and Hadith provide comprehensive guidance regulating human behavior, including the ethics of interaction between educators and students. Therefore, ethics constitutes a fundamental element in education, fostering attitudes of mutual respect, appreciation, and the maintenance of harmonious relationships.

In practice, educational ethics must be upheld by both educators and students in order to create a conducive, safe, and comfortable learning environment. However, current realities indicate a decline in students' ethical conduct toward educators. This is reflected in impolite behavior, the use of inappropriate language, and a tendency to treat educators as peers without observing the proper boundaries that should be maintained. This condition highlights a gap between the ideal values promoted in Islamic education and the practices observed in the field. (Agustiana et al., 2023).

Education, in its essence, is a process of shaping individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also possess noble character. In Islam, seeking knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim; however, it must be accompanied by proper ethics and manners (*adab*) so that the knowledge acquired brings blessings. The Qur'an and Hadith provide clear guidance regarding the ethics of a

seeker of knowledge, among others through the story of Prophet Musa and Prophet Khidr in Surah Al-Kahf, as well as the teaching in Surah Luqman verse 18 concerning the prohibition of arrogance.

Previous studies on student ethics from an Islamic perspective have been widely conducted. For instance, research by Agustiana et al. (2023) examines the ethics of educators and students from the perspective of Hadith, while Mubarok et al. (2025) analyze academic ethics based on the Qur'an and Hadith. However, these studies have not specifically integrated the analysis of particular Qur'anic verses with the formation of students' moral character within the context of Islamic education. Therefore, this study seeks to complement previous research by focusing on the analysis of Surah Luqman verse 18 and Surah Al-Kahf verses 62 and 66–70 as the foundation of student ethics.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to examine the ethics of students from the perspective of the Qur'an and Hadith as a foundation for shaping a generation that is both knowledgeable and of noble character.

B. Methods

This study employs a library research method by examining various written sources relevant to the research topic. The data sources consist of both primary and secondary data. The primary data include Qur'anic verses and Hadith related to student ethics, particularly Surah Luqman verse 18 and Surah Al-Kahf verses 62 and 66–70. Meanwhile, the secondary data are obtained from academic journals, books, and classical exegesis relevant to the discussion of ethics in Islamic education.

The data collection technique in this study was conducted through library research by collecting and reviewing various relevant literature sources, such as scientific journals, tafsir books, academic articles, and digital sources, both online and offline, related to the research topic. The data were then analyzed using a descriptive-analytical method to understand and interpret the concept of student ethics within the perspective of Islamic education.

C. Result and Discussion

1. The Concept of Educational Ethics

Educational ethics, linguistically, consists of two terms: *ethics* and *education*. The term *ethics* is derived from the Greek word *ethos*, meaning habit or behavior, which refers to moral principles or guidelines concerning right and wrong that shape human conduct in daily life. Meanwhile, *education* originates from the Latin word *educare*, meaning to guide, direct, or develop. In Arabic, education is referred to as *tarbiyah*, which denotes the process of nurturing, guiding, and developing an individual's potential.

Overall, educational ethics can be understood as moral principles that regulate the process of guiding and developing individuals through education in terms of behavior, attitudes, and interactions within the learning environment. Terminologically, educational ethics refers to a set of moral principles governing the behavior and interactions among all parties involved in the educational process—such as teachers, students, and the school environment—to ensure that education is conducted in a proper, just, and ethical manner. (Nurzam & Maujud, 2025) In the context of educational ethics, the concept of *akhlak* plays a very important role as the foundation of behavior for both students and educators.

The word *akhlak* comes from the term “أخلاق,” which is the plural form of “خلق” (*khuluq*). Etymologically, *akhlak* refers to a person's character, temperament, and moral conduct. In

language usage, the term *akhlaq* is often equated with ethics and morals. According to Ibn Miskawayh, *akhlaq* is a state of the soul that drives a person to perform actions spontaneously without prior deliberation. Meanwhile, Imam al-Ghazali defines *akhlaq* as a quality that is firmly rooted in the soul, from which actions emerge easily without the need for thought or consideration. Similarly, Ibrahim Anis explains that *akhlaq* is an inherent disposition of the soul that produces various actions, whether good or bad, spontaneously without thinking or deliberation. (Habibullah et al., 2020)

In the Qur'an, there are two terms used to describe the concept of education: the word *rabb*, which gives rise to the concept of *tarbiyah*, and the word *'allama*, which comes from the verbal noun (*masdar*) *ta'lim*. According to al-Raghib al-Ashfahani, *tarbiyah* means the process of nurturing or developing something gradually until it reaches perfection. Meanwhile, *ta'lim* refers to the process of imparting knowledge that can be repeated and multiplied, thereby leaving an impression or effect on a person. (Nihayah, 2009)

Thus, the concepts of *tarbiyah* and *ta'lim* in the Qur'an do not only emphasize the function of education as a means of transferring knowledge, but also as a process of shaping students' morals and character. This shows that educational ethics are closely related to the fundamental values of Islamic education, making both of them the philosophical foundation for the implementation of an ideal educational system.

2. Student Ethics

Students in Islamic education are individuals who are in the process of growth and development, both physically and psychologically, in order to achieve their educational goals through educational institutions. They are human beings undergoing development in accordance with their respective *fitrah* (natural disposition). Students can also be characterized as individuals who are in need of knowledge, guidance, and direction

According to Ibn Jama'ah, as cited by Abd al-Amir Shams al-Din, the ethics of students can be classified into three categories: (1) ethics related to oneself, which include purifying the heart, sincerity of intention, asceticism (*zuhd*), simplicity, and related virtues; (2) ethics related to educators, which include obedience, respect, honoring the teacher, attending to their needs, and accepting admonition or disciplinary measures; and (3) ethics related to learning, which include adhering to the teacher's guidance, consistently engaging in study, applying acquired knowledge in practice, and pursuing knowledge in a gradual and systematic manner. (Mubarok et al., 2025)

The ethics of students, viewed from the aspects of personality and the process of seeking knowledge, can be described as follows. First, Imam al-Nawawi emphasizes that a student should purify their heart from various spiritual diseases so that knowledge can be received, retained, and ultimately practiced. A pure heart in acquiring knowledge is analogous to fertile soil that readily receives seeds for cultivation. Second, a student should eliminate all factors that may hinder their efforts in striving for knowledge and should remain content (*ridā*) with limited provisions while exercising patience in facing life's difficulties.

Third, Imam al-Nawawi also highlights that a student must demonstrate humility (*tawadū'*) toward both the teacher and the knowledge being pursued, showing obedience, engaging in discussion, and seeking the teacher's guidance—just as a patient adheres to a doctor's advice. Fourth, in selecting a teacher, a student should learn from individuals who are truly competent in their field, possess sound religious character, are recognized for their knowledge, and are known for their honor and integrity. (Salminawati, 2015).

Allah states: (ولا تصعر خدك للناس) “*And do not turn your cheek away from people (in arrogance)*” (Qur’an 31:18).” This verse implies that one should not turn their face away from others while communicating with them out of arrogance or disdain. Rather, individuals are encouraged to maintain humility and exhibit a pleasant demeanor in social interactions. According to Ibn Jarir al-Tabari: أصل الصَّعْر داءٌ يُصيبُ البعيرَ في عنقه ورأسه، فيلتوي عنقه، فشبه به (المتكبر) “*The origin of the term al-ṣa’r is a disease that affects a camel’s neck and head, causing it to bend; thus, it is likened to an arrogant person.*”

Allah further states: (ولا تمش في الأرض مَرَحًا) “*And do not walk upon the earth exultantly (with arrogance)*” (Qur’an 31:18). This verse prohibits individuals from walking on the earth with arrogance, pride, or a sense of superiority. Such behavior reflects attitudes of *takabbur* (arrogance), authoritarianism, and rebellion against moral values. A person who behaves in this manner risks incurring the displeasure of Allah.

This is further emphasized in the continuation of the verse: (إنَّ الله لا يُحبُّ كلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ) “*Indeed, Allah does not like those who are self-deluded and boastful.*” The term *mukhtāl* refers to one who is arrogant and self-conceited, while *fakbūr* denotes a person who boasts and shows off before others. Together, these traits reflect both internal arrogance and its external manifestation in behavior toward others. (Ibnu Katsir, 2004)

Qur’an 31:18 emphasizes the prohibition of arrogance in social interactions. One manifestation of such arrogance is turning one’s face away from others while communicating, driven by a sense of superiority or the tendency to demean others. This behavior not only undermines social harmony but also reflects a deficiency in ethical communication. Hence, the verse underscores the importance of cultivating humility, friendliness, and respectful interpersonal relationships as essential components of ethical conduct. Allah states:

وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ (18)

“*And do not turn your cheek away from people (in arrogance), nor walk upon the earth exultantly. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are arrogant and boastful*” (Qur’an 31:18).” (According to Ibn Kathir in his tafsir, the phrase (ولا تصعر خدك للناس) refers to a person who turns their face away while speaking or being addressed by others, out of arrogance or by belittling the interlocutor. Such behavior reflects an attitude of pride and a lack of respect toward others. (Islam, 2019) Furthermore, this verse emphasizes that humans are prohibited from displaying arrogance in their interactions. Within the context of education, students are expected to embody humility, both toward their teachers and their peers, as part of proper ethical conduct in the learning process. Allah states:

فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَا قَالَ لِفَتْنَاهُ آتِنَا غَدَاءَنَا لَقَدْ لَقِينَا مِنْ سَفَرِنَا هَذَا نَصَبًا (62)

“*So when they had passed beyond it, he said to his servant, ‘Bring us our morning meal. We have certainly suffered in this, our journey, much fatigue’*” (Qur’an 18:62). This verse describes the journey of Prophet Musa and his young companion as they traveled a considerable distance until midday on the second day. At that point, Musa asked his companion to bring their meal, as they began to feel fatigue after a long journey. This illustrates the physical challenges faced in the pursuit of knowledge. (Al-Mahalli & As-Suyuti, 2001) This verse reflects the exemplary conduct of Prophet Musa’s companion, who faithfully assisted and accompanied his teacher in the pursuit of knowledge despite physical exhaustion. It underscores the ethical values that students should embody, including respect for the teacher, readiness to provide assistance, patience, and perseverance in the learning process. Allah states:

قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَى هَلْ أَتَّبِعُكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُعَلِّمَنِي مِمَّا عَلَّمْتَ رُشْدًا (66) قَالَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا (67) وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَىٰ مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ خُبْرًا (68)

“Moses said to him, ‘May I follow you so that you teach me from what you have been taught of right guidance?’ He said, ‘Indeed, you will not be able to have patience with me. And how can you be patient over what you do not encompass in knowledge?’” (Qur’an 18:66–68).

These verses describe the dialogue between Prophet Musa and the righteous servant of Allah (Khidr). Musa humbly requests permission to follow him in order to learn from the knowledge granted by Allah. In response, Khidr explains that Musa may not be able to remain patient, as he will encounter events whose deeper meanings he does not yet comprehend. This indicates that not all knowledge can be immediately understood, as every form of knowledge possesses dimensions and wisdom that may not be fully accessible at a given time. The term *kbubran* in the verse signifies profound and comprehensive understanding. It highlights that knowledge encompasses both outward (apparent) and inward (hidden) aspects.

Although Prophet Musa is known for his extensive knowledge of divine law, there remain dimensions of knowledge beyond his current understanding. Therefore, the process of learning requires patience and humility on the part of the student, particularly when encountering matters that are not yet fully understood. Allah states:

قَالَ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ صَابِرًا وَلَا أَعْصِي لَكَ أَمْرًا (69) قَالَ فَإِنِ اتَّبَعْتَنِي فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِي عَنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ أُحَدِّثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا (70)

“He said, ‘You will find me, if Allah wills, patient, and I will not disobey you in any matter.’ He said, ‘Then if you follow me, do not ask me about anything until I make to you about it a mention.’” (Qur’an 18:69–70). These verses describe Prophet Musa’s response, in which he expresses his commitment to remain patient and not to oppose his teacher’s instructions. His statement reflects humility and sincerity in the pursuit of knowledge. The inclusion of the phrase *in shā’ Allah* indicates his reliance upon the will of Allah in fulfilling his commitment. Furthermore, the righteous servant of Allah establishes a condition: Musa is not to question anything until an explanation is given. This condition highlights an important principle in the learning process—that a student must exercise self-restraint and adhere to the teacher’s guidance, waiting for the appropriate time to receive clarification. (Shihab, 2002) This verse underscores the essential ethics of a student in the pursuit of knowledge, including humility, seeking permission from the teacher, and maintaining patience throughout the learning process.

The story of Prophet Musa and Prophet Khidr provides important lessons regarding the ethics of a student in the pursuit of knowledge. A student should demonstrate patience, humility, and respect toward the teacher. In addition, students are expected to follow the teacher’s guidance and avoid hastiness in understanding a lesson. These values are highly relevant to contemporary education, as they contribute to the establishment of harmonious relationships between educators and students and support the effectiveness of the learning process. (Mirza & Alamri, 2025)

3. Student Ethics in the Qur’an

- a. **Humility – Qur’an 31:18** *“And do not turn your cheek away from people (in arrogance), nor walk upon the earth exultantly. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are arrogant and boastful.”* This verse teaches students to maintain humility toward both their teachers and their peers, avoiding any form of arrogance in attitude and behavior.

- b. **Respect for Teachers – Qur’an 18:66** *“Moses said to him, ‘May I follow you so that you teach me from what you have been taught?’* This verse highlights the importance of seeking permission and demonstrating politeness toward the teacher in the process of acquiring knowledge.
- c. **Willingness to Assist and Support the Teacher – Qur’an 18:62** This verse describes the companion of Prophet Musa who assisted and accompanied his teacher throughout the journey despite experiencing fatigue. It emphasizes that students should actively support their teachers and contribute positively to the learning process.
- d. **Patience in Learning – Qur’an 18:67–70** These verses explain that Khidr reminded Prophet Musa to remain patient in following the learning process, to wait for the appropriate time to understand the knowledge being conveyed, and not to ask questions prematurely. This highlights that patience is an essential ethical quality that students must possess in the pursuit of knowledge.

This indicates that the ethics of students in Islam are not merely normative in nature but also have practical implications for shaping students’ character within modern educational settings. Values such as patience and respect for teachers, for instance, can serve as effective solutions to the decline of student ethics in the contemporary era. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized the virtue of seeking knowledge: *“Whoever follows a path in pursuit of knowledge, Allah will make easy for him a path to Paradise”* (Narrated by Muslim)

مَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَلْتَمِسُ فِيهِ عِلْمًا سَهَّلَ اللَّهُ لَهُ بِهِ طَرِيقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ (رواه مسلم)

Scholars such as Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali explain that this hadith indicates that seeking knowledge is a path that leads to divine guidance and facilitates the way to Paradise. Knowledge also serves as a means for individuals to deepen their understanding and practice religious teachings more effectively. (Abduh, 2015) This hadith indicates that seeking knowledge is a highly virtuous act of worship. Therefore, students should strive earnestly in their studies and uphold proper etiquette toward both their teachers and the knowledge they acquire. Based on the foregoing discussion, the ethics of students from the perspective of the Qur’an and Hadith can be summarized as follows:

Table 1. Student Ethics in the Perspective of the Qur’an and Hadith

| No. | Student Ethics | Source | Implementation |
|-----|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Humility | Qur’an 31:18 | Not being arrogant toward teachers |
| 2 | Respect for teachers | Qur’an 18:66 | Being polite when asking questions |
| 3 | Patience | Qur’an 18:67–70 | Not being hasty in learning |
| 4 | Diligence in learning | Hadith (Muslim) | Studying earnestly and consistently |

The table above indicates that student ethics are not only normative in nature but also have practical implications in daily educational practice.

D. Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the Qur'an and Hadith provide clear guidance regarding student ethics in the pursuit of knowledge, including humility, respect for and obedience to teachers, diligence in learning, and patience in the process of acquiring knowledge. The application of these ethical values is expected to produce students who are both knowledgeable and possess noble character.

This study also demonstrates that ethical values derived from the Qur'an and Hadith have practical implications for addressing the moral crisis in the field of education. Therefore, these values should be integrated into the curriculum and learning practices as a foundation for students' character development.

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