

A Comparative Study on Educational Ethics: Insights from Islamic Educational Philosophy and Western Literature

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Abstract & Indexing



Abstract:

This research paper deals with the complex facet of moral framework in education. It juxtaposes a millennia-old Islamic educational philosophy with diverse ethical narratives of Western literature. Islamic educational philosophy is emblematic of the teachings of Quran and Hadith hence scholars like Al-Attas (2005) in Islamic philosophy: An Introduction and Rizavi (1963) in Islamic Philosophy of Education have elucidated the main principles of Islamic education.

Islamic philosophy of education emphasizes an integrative approach. It combines knowledge acquisition with ethical and moral growth. This philosophy anchors itself in the Quran and Hadith and hence advocates for the holistic development of individuals. The concept of Tarbiyah in this context is pivotal. It refers not just to education but also to nurturing and spiritual growth that aim for the formation of individuals who are intellectually capable, spiritually aware and morally upright (Al-Attas, 2005).

According to Shah (2015), in this tradition education transcends mere intellectual pursuit. It becomes a pathway to understanding and living a life aligned with Islamic tenets. It illuminates this aspect showing how Islamic education molds the character alongside the intellect. According to Al Zeera (2001) such an approach stands in contrast to more secular educational philosophies where moral and spiritual dimensions often remain distinct from academic pursuits.

*Simultaneously the Western educational literature with its roots in Greco-Roman philosophy has evolved through Enlightenment and modern thought and presents a contrasting ethical paradigm. Notable works in this domain include Nodding's (2010) works on educational philosophy and Biesta's (2015) *The Beautiful Risk of Education* which explores the aspects of Western educational ethics.*

Biesta (2015) explores the unpredictable nature of education. He challenges the prevailing focus on standardization and measurable outcomes in Western education. He argues for a more holistic approach that values the unique, the creative, and the unpredictable in educational processes. His work suggests that true educational excellence might lie in embracing uncertainty and supporting the individuality of learners.

Both the scholars contribute significantly to the discourse on Western educational ethics. Their works highlight a critical divergence from the communal, faith-based approach of Islamic philosophy. They present a narrative that values individual agency, critical thinking, and the development of

personal, moral and ethical frameworks. This Western perspective provides a counterpoint to the Islamic view, enriching the global dialogue on educational ethics (Biesta, 2015; Noddings, 2010).

This study's primary aim is a thorough analysis of ethical principles in Islamic and Western educational thought. It seeks to unearth the moral underpinnings and pedagogical implications within each tradition. The secondary aim is the evaluation of potential synergies between these frameworks. This inquiry proposes the integration of these diverse ethical narratives into contemporary educational ethic-based curricula that foster an inclusive and global ethical framework in education.

This study ventures beyond mere comparison. It endeavors to synthesize the ethical dimensions of these two rich traditions. Such a synthesis could offer fresh perspectives in the field of educational ethics that potentially transform how ethics are taught and understood in diverse educational settings. This comparative analysis may not only highlight the contributions of each tradition but also paves the way for a more integrated and comprehensive approach to teaching ethics in education.

Keywords: *Comparative Study , Educational Ethic,; Islamic Educational Philosophy , Western Literature.*

Research Objectives

- 1) To analyze the ethical principles presented in Islamic educational philosophy and Western literature
- 2) To evaluate how the ethical frameworks from both traditions can be integrated to enhance modern educational ethic-based curricula

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its capacity to bridge ethical paradigms from Islamic educational philosophy and Western literature that foster an understanding of educational ethics. By dealing with the moral foundations of both traditions, the study illuminates how by integrating these two perspectives, modern curricula may enhance ethics. It offers educators and scholars a novel lens through which to view educational ethics. This integration not only enriches the academic discourse but also has practical implications for developing a holistic and sensitive approach to ethics in education.

Literature Review

Sahin (2018) scrutinizes the divergent and convergent opinions between Islamic educational values and Western secular education principles. Central to the scholar's discourse is the juxtaposition of the communal, faith-centered ethos of Islamic pedagogy against the individualistic and secular framework prevalent in the Western educational systems. This goes in line with the current research topic which seeks to explore and integrate the ethical frameworks of Islamic and Western educational philosophies. His analysis offers a contribution to

understanding these distinct educational paradigms that highlight critical areas for potential synthesis and mutual enrichment in educational ethics curricula. His perspective on the balance of communal faith-based approach with that of individualistic secular perspective provides a foundational understanding for this study's aim of developing a comprehensive educational ethics framework.

Furthermore, Maula (2022) deals with the implications of the digital era on moral education by comparing Islamic and Western philosophical approaches. This research is critical in the context of the current study as it examines how both Islamic and Western educational philosophies adapt to the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital revolution. His analysis is relevant in exploring how these distinct philosophical traditions can inform and enhance moral education in a digitally interconnected world. This aligns with the research objectives of analyzing and integrating Islamic and Western educational ethics in the context of modern educational challenges such as digitalization. His study contributes to understanding how these philosophical facets can be applied and harmonized in contemporary educational settings.

Lovat (2020) focuses on Islamic education's current and historical dimensions. This work scrutinizes principal themes within Islamic pedagogy and their potential enlightening effects on Western education. Integral to this discourse is the analysis of Islamic educational values and methods, tracing their evolution and impact over time. He posits that emphasis of Islamic education on holistic development, spiritual growth, and moral values can offer insights to Western educational paradigms as is often characterized by a more secular and technocratic approach. This perspective aligns with the current research's theme, seeking to fuse Islamic and Western educational ethics. His contribution is important in understanding how the value-laden tradition of Islamic education can complement and enhance the more secularized Western education system, offering a clear view beneficial for the development of a globally inclusive educational ethics framework.

Rufai (2012) proposes an Islamic-Based Teacher Education Programme model that aims to provide a more suitable alternative for teacher education in settings where Islamic-based curricula are implemented. He evaluates the current Western and Islamic teacher education models and the proposed IBTEP model's components and effectiveness. This model addresses the specific needs of educational settings in the Islamic context and how it proposes to improve upon existing practices in teacher education. The analysis considers the degree to which the IBTEP model aligns with the goals of preparing teachers for implementing educational curricula in Islamic-based settings.

In examining the context of Islamic and Western educational philosophies, scholars like Sahin (2018), Maula (2022) and Lovat (2020) have provided critical insights. A number of studies like Sahin's (2018) examination of Islamic and Western liberal secular educational values, Maula's (2022) comparative analysis in the digital age, and Lovat's (2020) exploration of Islamic education's enlightening potential for Western pedagogy collectively reveal the threads of this perspective. However, a notable research gap persists in the practical integration of these philosophies into a cohesive educational and ethical framework. While these studies indicate the theoretical underpinnings and potential synergies, there remains a paucity of research on the implementation and impact of such an integrated approach in diverse educational settings. This gap signifies an opportunity for further exploration into how Islamic and Western educational ethics can be harmoniously blended to enrich modern educational systems, a pursuit central to the current research endeavor.

Research Method

A qualitative research method is employed in this study. This approach is well-suited for exploring the aspects of educational ethics within Islamic and Western traditions. Qualitative research allows for the analysis of texts that facilitate the understanding of the ethical principles and their pedagogical implications.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is anchored in two primary domains: Islamic educational philosophy and Western educational ethics. Drawing from Al-Attas (2005) and Rizavi (1963) the framework incorporates key elements of Islamic philosophy emphasizing "Tarbiyah"- a concept that transcends traditional education to include moral and spiritual nurturing. This perspective integrates knowledge acquisition with ethical and moral growth which advocates the holistic development of individuals.

Moreover, the Western educational paradigm as informed by scholars like Biesta (2015) and Noddings (2010) offers a contrasting view. It emphasizes individual agency, critical thinking and personal ethical development as rooted in philosophy and evolving through Enlightenment and modern thought. Biesta's critique of standardization in education and advocacy for embracing educational unpredictability along with Noddings' emphasis on care and relational ethics provide a comprehensive view of Western educational ethics.

The theoretical framework aims to synthesize these diverse ethical accounts. It proposes a comparative analysis that seeks to understand how these divergent ethical frameworks can inform and enhance each other. This synthesis is not merely academic; it aims at practical application of contemporary educational settings that fosters an inclusive and globally aware ethical framework. The study thus positions itself at the intersection

of these two rich traditions hence offering a perspective on educational ethics and its pedagogical implications.

Analysis

In order to analyze the ethical principles in Islamic educational philosophy and Western literature, this study deals with their core tenets by comparing their approaches and illuminating their distinct philosophical underpinnings.

Islamic educational philosophy which is deeply rooted in the teachings of the Quran and Hadith offers a comprehensive view of education that intertwines knowledge, ethics and spirituality. This philosophy, as Al-Attas (2005) elucidates, is not merely about academic learning but encompasses “*Tarbiyah*” a term that signifies nurturing both the intellect and the soul. In this context, education is seen as a holistic process that shapes individuals to be intellectually capable, spiritually aware and morally upright. This approach is reflective of a broader Islamic worldview where education is inseparable from religious and ethical instruction, aiming to develop well-rounded individuals.

Contrasting this, Western educational literature, with its roots in Greco-Roman philosophy, has evolved through centuries of thought, notably during the Enlightenment. This tradition, as explored by Noddings (2010) and Biesta (2015) places a strong emphasis on individual agency, critical thinking, and the development of personal moral and ethical frameworks. It diverges from the communal, faith-based approach of Islamic philosophy, instead of advocating for an education system that promotes independent thought, questioning, and a pursuit of knowledge that is often secular in nature.

As for instance, Noddings (2010) highlights the importance of 'care' in education, which suggests that ethical education should be grounded in relational ethics, empathy, and understanding which contrasts with the community and faith-based approach of Islamic philosophy. Biesta (2015), on the other hand challenges the standardization prevalent in Western education and advocates for a system that values creativity, uniqueness and the unpredictable nature of the educational process.

The Islamic educational philosophy as further expounded by Rizavi (1963), places significant emphasis on the moral and ethical development of individuals within a communal and religious framework. It advocates for an educational approach where moral teaching is not an adjunct but a central component of the educational process. This perspective is in contrast to Western educational ethics as seen in the works of Biesta and Noddings, tend to separate moral education from academic learning and treating it as a supplementary aspect rather than an integral part of the educational journey.

In drawing parallels, it becomes evident that while both philosophies value the moral and ethical development of individuals, their approaches and underlying principles differ significantly. Islamic philosophy views education through the lens of faith and communal responsibility, while Western philosophy emphasizes individualism, personal moral development, and often a separation of ethical teaching from religious doctrine.

Moreover the practical implications of these philosophies in educational settings also vary. The integration of religious teachings with academic learning aims to create an environment where students grow in their faith and morality alongside their intellectual development in Islamic educational systems. In many Western educational systems, there is a clear demarcation between academic learning and moral or religious instruction that relegates the latter to private sphere or specific subjects. Rivaldy (2022) deals with how Islamic education blends with spiritual and moral teachings with scholarly knowledge. “Adab” or proper etiquette is a core element in the Islamic educational approach. Such integration is crucial for cultivating individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also morally upright. His views reflect the Islamic perspective where education transcends mere knowledge dissemination and focuses equally on character and spiritual shaping. This aligns seamlessly with Al-Attas and Rizavi's teachings.

On the other hand, the Western educational philosophy finds a distinct voice in John Dewey's progressive educational theory. *Democracy and Education* by Dewey (1903), champions an educational system that prioritizes experiential learning, critical thought and fostering individual moral and ethical discernment. His theory rests on the premise that education ought to be learner-centric, aiming to equip individuals for active, thoughtful participation in a democratic society. This methodology spotlights personal experience and rigorous inquiry and stands in sharp contrast to Islamic educational philosophy's more communal, faith-oriented approach. Dewey's (1903) emphasis on self-agency and experience-based learning underscores a pivotal aspect of Western educational ethics which prioritizes personal growth and critical reasoning above communal or doctrinal dictates.

Furthermore the evaluation of the integration of ethical framework from Islamic and Western traditions for enhancing modern educational ethics curricula necessitates an exploration of their convergence and divergence points. Islamic educational philosophy deeply rooted in the Quran and Hadith emphasizes holistic development that intertwines knowledge with moral and spiritual growth. This approach, as elucidated by scholars like Al-Attas (2005) and Rizavi (1963), advocates for academic learning to include nurturing of the soul and character.

On the other hand, Western educational thought, as discussed by Noddings (2010) and Biesta (2015), centers on individual agency and

personal ethical development. It values critical thinking and personal moral judgment, often in a secular context. Dewey's (1903) emphasis on experiential learning and developing individual moral and ethical judgment through a democratic education system showcases this approach.

The challenge in integrating these ethical frameworks lies in reconciling Islamic education's communal, faith-based approach with Western education's individual-centric, often secular ethos. However, this integration holds potential for enriching modern educational ethical curricula. It could offer a more comprehensive, culturally sensitive approach that may accommodate students coming from diverse backgrounds in a global educational landscape.

As for instance the integration of the Islamic educational mode with a focus on character and spiritual development with Western emphasis on critical thinking and individual moral judgment may create a more balanced curriculum. This curriculum would not only respect religious and cultural values but also foster individual ethical autonomy and critical inquiry. Such a synthesis could be instrumental in developing students who are not only academically proficient but also ethically and spiritually aware and capable of navigating the complexities of a multicultural world.

This integration also addresses the increasingly recognized need for education systems to cater to the moral and spiritual well-being of students, alongside their intellectual development. By drawing from Islamic educational principles, modern curricula can incorporate elements of character education, community service, and ethical decision-making within a broader moral framework. Simultaneously, the focus of Western educational ethics is on agency and critical inquiry of an individual which ensures that the moral education does not become dogmatic but remains open to inquiry and personal interpretation.

The integration of these aspects foster qualities like tolerance and understanding among students from diverse backgrounds. By exposing students to a variety of ethical perspectives, educators can encourage respect for different viewpoints and an appreciation for cultural and religious diversity.

Thus overall by integrating the ethical frameworks of Islamic and Western educational philosophies into modern educational ethics curricula offers a promising avenue for developing well-rounded, ethically conscious individuals. It not only addresses the academic and intellectual needs of students but also caters to their moral and spiritual development. Such an integrated approach could be pivotal in preparing students to thrive in an increasingly complex and interconnected world that may foster a generation of individuals equipped to navigate diverse ethical landscapes with empathy, understanding, and critical acumen.

Discussion

This analysis presents the ethical dimension of Islamic and Western educational philosophies. The key findings elucidate on various aspects of educational ethics. Firstly, the communal versus individualistic approach in educational ethics becomes apparent. Islamic philosophy as deeply entrenched in Quranic teachings advocates for a collective, faith-based educational system. This system intertwines moral and spiritual development with intellectual growth, a notion supported by Sahin (2018) who indicates the communal ethos of Islamic pedagogy. This contrasts sharply with the Western paradigm, which as Sahin notes leans towards individualism and secularism. Western education has evolved from Greco-Roman and Enlightenment ideals (Noddings, 2010) with an emphasis on personal moral framework and critical thinking (Biesta 2015). This divergence in pedagogical approach underpins distinct educational outcomes of the two named systems.

Secondly, the impact of digital era on moral education (Maula 2022) offers critical intersection. Both Islamic and Western educational systems face challenges and opportunities in integrating digital tools into ethical education. Maula's analysis is particularly relevant in understanding how these philosophical traditions can adapt to and enhance moral education in a digital world. This is significant in our current, technology-driven educational landscape, where the integration of ethical values within digital pedagogies becomes increasingly pertinent.

Thirdly the potential for mutual enrichment between these educational philosophies is evident. Lovat (2020) deals with the historical and current dimension of Islamic education with its potential to inform and enrich Western education. The holistic development, spiritual growth, and moral values emphasized in Islamic pedagogy offer insights that can counterbalance the secular, technocratic focus of Western education. This synthesis of ideas could lead to a more balanced educational approach which combine the strengths of both systems.

In drawing parallels, we notice that while both Islamic and Western philosophies prioritize ethical development, their methodologies differ significantly. Islamic education views moral education through the lens of faith and community responsibility. In contrast, the Western philosophy stresses individual moral development, often in a secular context. This dichotomy offers a rich ground for synthesizing these approaches potentially leading to a more holistic educational model.

The practical implications of these philosophies in educational settings also vary. Islamic educational systems aim to create environments where students develop intellectually, morally, and spiritually. Western systems, conversely, often separate academic learning from moral or religious instruction. This bifurcation, as noted by Rivaldy (2022), presents a challenge in integrating these diverse approaches.

However, this integration holds immense potential for enriching modern educational ethics curricula. A synthesis of Islamic and Western

educational philosophies may offer a more comprehensive approach which is accommodative of diverse student backgrounds in a globalized world. For example, combining the Islamic focus on character and spiritual development with the Western emphasis on critical thinking and individual moral judgment may be a balanced curriculum. This curriculum respects religious and cultural values while fostering individual ethical autonomy and critical inquiry.

Moreover, integrating these educational philosophies addresses the need for education systems to cater to the moral and spiritual well-being of students. By drawing from Islamic educational principles, modern curricula can incorporate elements of character education, community service, and ethical decision-making. Concurrently the focus of Western educational ethics is on personal agency and critical thought ensuring that moral education remains open to inquiry and personal interpretation.

Furthermore, the integration of these educational philosophies might foster greater tolerance and understanding among students from diverse backgrounds. Exposing students to a variety of ethical perspectives encourages respect for different viewpoints and an appreciation for cultural and religious diversity. This is crucial in our increasingly multicultural societies.

Conclusion

Reflecting on the analysis of both objectives, it is clear that the ethical concerns in Islamic and Western educational philosophies offer distinct yet complementary perspectives. Islamic philosophy, with its holistic approach integrates spiritual, moral, and intellectual development which allays education as a comprehensive process of character building. This tradition views education as an all-encompassing journey, not just in the acquisition of knowledge but also in the nurturing of moral and spiritual values. The emphasis on *Tarbiyah*— the nurturing of the whole person — reveals a deep commitment to developing individuals who are intellectually enlightened and morally grounded.

In contrast, the Western educational thought with its focus on individualism, critical thinking and personal moral judgment provides a counterbalance. This perspective values the development of critical thinkers who are encouraged to question and explore. It emphasizes experiential learning and personal ethical development in a secular context. The Western approach offers a pathway to education that prioritizes individual agency and ethical autonomy. Together, these contrasting philosophies illuminate the nature of education that highlight the importance of a balanced approach that fosters intellectual rigor, ethical discernment and personal growth. Integrating these perspectives could lead to a clear and comprehensive educational ethics curriculum one that

embraces diversity and spark empathy and prepares students to navigate the complexities of a global society.



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