Building plurality and unity for various religions in the digital era: Establishing Islamic values for Indonesian students

Syarif[1]

Abstract

With the all-encompassing pace of development in communication and information technology, the planet is constantly changing over time, yet the gap between the rich and the poor is widening. The research questions of this study are as follows: (1) Is there a significant different in students' values before exposure to the-learning platform, and (2) Is there a significant difference in students' values before and after being exposed to the e-learning platform. This study employs a quasi-experimental research design to assess the effectiveness of transmitting Islamic values through an e-learning platform. Teaching moral values is believed to be an important part of education in Islam. The components of the syllabic formal education slowly impart information for the development of character. With the busy schedules of the individuals involved, the roles of family and the community in molding personalities is declining. The remaining hope for this country rests with teaching through an e-learning platform, but optimism is low due to the physical absence of a teacher. In contrast, this short report shows that using an e-learning platform with the integration of Islamic values can be effective for enhancing students' attitudes toward Islamic values. It also suggests an ICT-based model could help to define the development of Muslim students through an e-learning environment.

Keywords: *Information and communication technologies; e-learning platform; Islamic ethical values.*

Introduction

Ethical values and principles are an important part of society, and they change and grow within a community. Indeed, the coherence of a country's work and efforts depends upon it (Hayati & Caniago, 2012; Kurt et al., 2020; Stivens, 2006). Traditionally, students learn about ethics and acquire moral values from their communities, institutions, and teachers through conventional forms of education, ultimately integrating them into their character development. Further reinforcing these principles in a growing personality is usually achieved through content contained in the usual subject matter. In many instances, specialized courses on ethical issues are

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[1]*Dr. State Islamic Institute (IAIN) of Pontianak, Indonesia; Email: syarififti@gmail.com*

given to students (Yigit & Tarman, 2013). The climate and the cycle of socialization remain key factors in determining students' academic achievement and character development (Liu et al., 2020). Learning and adhering to ethical values is seen as being just as essential to a student as learning about an industry. Islam places great importance on respecting moral values. Graduates who have technical skills but lack moral values are comparable to machines that function merely to meet their needs, irrespective of the potential benefits of participating in society.

Economic development is forcing educational institutions to become more business-oriented and offer courses that are in demand in the job market. Consequently, the teaching of ethics is progressively fading from the syllabus (Bigagli, 2019; James, 2018). Similarly, households and especially teachers have increasingly less time to focus on children's moral development. Unity in communities is also weakening, and often no one cares about the behavior of a neighbor's child, as would have been the case years ago. It is a major concern that the current education system, particularly in technology disciplines, is creating robots that lack moral principles and interpersonal skills (Hoffman et al., 2020; Miller, 2018).

The incredible growth and inclusive pace of information and communication technology (ICT) has led to tremendous shifts in all sectors of society, particularly in education and specifically e-learning (Baez Zarabanda, 2019; Montenegro Rueda & Fernández Cerero, 2019). E-Learning is a teaching–learning process that can be implemented without time or space constraints through the use of technology (Shen & Ho, 2020; Tadeu et al., 2019). Given these benefits, however, e-learning often complicates conventional issues like cheating, plagiarism, and so on. Compared to traditional schooling, students are more likely to deviate from the expected standards and conduct themselves unethically due to the lack of physical interaction with a teacher (Graafland, 2020; Morris, & Chapman, 2019; Zare, 2018). In short, the instructor, who acts as the conduit for learners' internalization of ethical values, literally disappears in e-learning programs. This directly impacts the development of pupils, which is one of the main objectives of schooling from an Islamic point of view and a key factor in creating a socially just community. With the advent of ICT and the changed positions of teachers and students in an e-learning environment, including religious ethics and values in the education process becomes a major challenge for Muslim teachers (Abdullah & Chong, 2019; bin Salahudin et al., 2016; Darko et al., 2020; Marshall, 2018; Tan et al., 2018; Wahab, Quazi & Blackman, 2016). However, this obstacle should not be seen as insurmountable but rather embraced as an opportunity to create something

that can yield amazing results when resources are used appropriately. This paper therefore discusses the effectiveness of integrating e-learning for the character development of students. A paradigm is therefore introduced where ICT and e-learning systems can be used to compensate for the absence of the traditional participants in the development of a student's character.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was formulated based on the effectiveness of e-learning platforms, so it could answer the question of how the pre- and post-experiment attitude scores of the respondents differ with the use of an e-learning platform. Through this model, friends, peers, general members of society, instructors, and course materials may play a role in the development of a student's character when a course is presented online. The remainder of this study addresses the role of ethics in culture, the value of ethics and education in the Islamic context, sustainable development and ethics, and e-learning with ethical concerns. Following a review of all these, a concept is presented. A summary of the findings and suggestions for future work are offered at the end.

Research Questions

Two research questions sought in this study are as follows:

1) Is there a significant different in students' values before exposure to the-learning platform?
2) Is there a significant difference in students' values before and after being exposed to the e-learning platform?

Methods

Research Design

This study employs a quasi-experimental research design, which is commonly used in teaching–learning settings, specifically the pretest-posttest experimental research method. This method is considered appropriate for examining the effects of an innovation within educational settings, and it is a commonly used method for educational research because it measures learners' performance before and after a particular intervention is introduced.

Research Participants, Sampling Procedure, and Ethical Considerations

The respondents of the study comprised 30 Indonesian students, most of whom were female (n=24), with the rest being male (n=6). The sampling size was calculated using the t-test for the mean difference for the math pairs of G*Power with a power of 0.90. Meanwhile, the test for homogeneity in variances comprised Levene's test for the equality of variances set at the 0.05 alpha level. According to the study's respect for ethical standards, the participants' personal information and data were handled confidentially. A written request was approved by the school authorities before participants were selected and involved in the study. Parental consent was also secured by the researcher, with the parents being supplied information about the risks and benefits of the study for their children. With the study's purpose being made clear, the parents allowed their children to participate   in the study along with the affirmation of the school headmaster and department head. The respondents and parents also completed a data privacy agreement form, with the anonymity of the respondents and their institutions being respected for ethical reasons.

Research Instruments

This study used a necessary research instruments that was developed by the researcher. The values instrument comprised ten items relating to the Islamic values of students toward themselves and the community, and this was based on the instrument of Padela et al. (2019) for measuring Muslim modesty. Modesty is distinctively characterized as an intra-psychic self-view, a public self-presentation, or a mixture of the two. The instrument has a Cronbach Alpha of 0.83.

Data Analysis

For scoring and interpreting the gathered data, descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean, and standard deviation were used. The pre- and post-test scores were analyzed and interpreted before and after their exposure to the values-based e-learning platform, and the following scale was adopted: 4.20-5.00 — Highly Favorable; 3.40-4.19 —Favorable; 3.60-2.39 — Neutral; 1.80-2.59 — Not Favorable; 1.00- 1.79 — Very Unfavorable.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1. Students' values before and after exposure to the-learning platform

The scores of respondents are described in this part of the study to provide a clear background for the pre-test and post-test attitude scores when using the e-learning platform. Table 1 presents the differences between the pre- and post-test attitude scores of the respondents when considered as a whole. The respondents expressed a neutral (uncertain) level of attitude before being exposed to the e-learning platform. However, the results reveal that there was some improvement in the learners' attitudes toward values after being exposed to the e-learning platform.

Table 1.
Students' values before and after exposure to the e-learning platform

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptive Interpretation
CLT Attitude Score				
Pre-test	30	2.50	0.86	Uncertain
Post-test	30	3.83	0.69	Favorable

Notes: 4.20-5.00- Highly Favorable; 3.40-4.19- Favorable; 3.60-2.39- Neutral; 1.80-2.59- Not Favorable; 1.00- 1.79-Very Unfavorable

Research Question 2. Is there a significant difference in students' values before and after being exposed to the e-learning platform?

The attitudes of the respondents toward values improved after being exposed to the e-learning platform, but was this significant? The post-test results were significantly higher than the pre-test results, with respondents being able to score at a significantly higher level on the attitude test after using the e-platform. It can be surmised that the exposure of respondents to thee-learning platform enhanced their attitudes toward values from a neutral to a favorable level. Hence, there is a significant difference in the pre- and post-test attitudinal scores.

Table 2.
Difference in students' values before and after exposure to the e-learning platform

Values	Mean Score	SD	Mean Diff.	t-value	Df	P	Effect Size
Pre-test	2.50	0.86					0.75
Post-test	3.83	0.69	-1.33	-7.10	29	0.00**	

*= Significant at 0.01 level**=Significant at 0.05 level
*ns= not significantd=Effect Size Convention (Cohen's d):*Large Effect Size

From the findings, it can be concluded that using an e-learning platform that integrates Islamic values can effectively enhance students' attitudes toward Islamic values, so an appropriate integration of such values into an e-learning platform can promote the development of these values in students. This finding will help teachers to apply e-learning in the classroom while also building up the moral and ethical personalities of the students. From an Islamic point of view, ethics can be interpreted as a set of moral values and rules that allows people to distinguish what is right from what is wrong or what should or should not be done. Islamic morality is therefore one of the most important aspects of Islamic culture. Since the inception of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad was primarily concerned with educating and disciplining Muslims to have the right personal qualities and show appropriate etiquette (Kamla, 2019; Leong et al., 2016; Michalopoulos, Naghavi & Prarolo, 2016; Smith, Nixon & Pearce, 2017). Education is a means of transmitting moral values or wisdom that will then enhance people's behavior, both physically and mentally, as stable and responsible persons who are capable of carrying out their duties as God's representatives on Earth.

E-learning is an education process that leverages the possibilities of digital technologies to create content, measure student ability, and improve engagement between students and teachers. The delivery may be synchronous, where the interaction between students and the teacher and students with other students is simultaneous, or it may be asynchronous, where such interactions take place separately under time and location constraints. In both styles, students need to be adequately inspired to learn in order to compensate for the negative effect of the distance between themselves and their instructors (Jando et al., 2017). Students learn moral and ethical principles through their interactions with other students, communities, and other members of society, but e-leaning may also transmit these values. E-learning with a strong emphasis on Islamic values may take place entirely online in a virtual world or in combination with face-to-face settings, which is called mixed learning.

Conclusion and Implications

From the findings, it can be concluded that using an e-learning platform that incorporates Islamic values is effective for enhancing students' Islamic values. Indeed, an appropriate integration of Islamic values into an e-learning platform was found to promote students' development of values.

As an implication of the study, it is recommended for a learning management system (LMS) to develop a collection of e-learning products based on different ethical values, with only one or two being included at random with each online course. It is of course expected for all teachers to have a firm grasp of all these ethical values. Questions about the ethical values learned can be included in the final review of the online course taken by applicants. The site should have a list of different ethical principles that can be seamlessly integrated into various courses. A first step would be to establish course materials about the various aspects of academic integrity, with them also explaining the importance of these ethical values, their effect on culture, and the sanctions that could be levied on an individual for violating them. Such content should be arbitrarily included in the various courses that a student takes online. Academic institutions should also establish policies and rules on academic honesty and provide appropriate instruction to teachers.

Limitations and Avenue for Future Research

Despite having satisfied its specified objectives, this study has several limitations that could be overcome in future reviews and studies. First, there is a need to replicate the study with the inclusion of specific variables. Second, the data for this study were sourced through a self-assessment survey, which consequently limits any generalization of this study. The use of a mixed-methods approach is therefore encouraged to validate the findings of the present study.

Potential future research could also follow two avenues: The first would be to come up with facilities for LMS service development. This should cover software innovations and their integration into e-learning courses. A framework for the involvement of volunteers in an ethical appraisal of participants—such as by friends, families, peers, and general volunteers—should also be developed. On the second avenue, future work could be based on an empirical examination of the model. Such research could be carried out on the internalization of individual ethical values. In the first instance, this could focus on academic integrity and see how the new paradigm can be fully incorporated. Primary evidence could then be obtained and systematically tested to establish the model's validity.

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