Role of Curriculum in Character Development: A Content Analysis of the 5ᵗʰ Grade Textbook

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The study analyzes the contents concerning character education in the Punjab Textbook Islamic Studies for the 5ᵗʰ class, 2020-2021. A curriculum is an attempt to communicate the most important ideas and elements of an educational proposal in a way that allows for critical examination and effective translation. To integrate character education into the curriculum, effective character education implementation is needed to enable professional development and peer interaction. The content of Islamic studies, therefore, requires investigating for specific context to instruct character values to students which can play a positive role in the country's peaceful environment. The system of education only gives information whereas the guiding role is completely ignored. The importance of character education is now realized by thinkers, teachers, intellectuals, policymakers, and society. It is evident from the analysis that the book has multiple strategies for affecting the character development of the students. The curriculum is very rich. However, efforts should be made to make it easier for students to unfold the hidden messages.
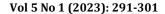
Introduction

Defined as the value in action, character comprises three parts namely moral feeling, moral knowing, and moral behaviuor displaying the doing and desiring for good (Lickona, 1989) Likewise, good character covers being conscious of acceptance of the good and showing the same through one's actions (Katilmis et al., 2011) making it as an integral part of one's character (Althof & Berkiwitz, 1999), and be the distinguishing mark (Homiak, 2007). The role of education is to strengthen the nation's roots by preparing the generations to have allegiance to their religious, ideological, and sociocultural norms. The existing social setup has problems such as bribery, moral corruption, trafficking, and adulteration which need eradication on a priority basis. Hence, the principles of character development are essential to be transmitted education in society.

Being a systematic process, character education instills virtues and values in students through teaching, law, environment, and religious and sociocultural norms (Marini, 2017) that can be instilled through schooling (Cooley, 2008). Hence, as one of the potential ways of adjusting character with good values, character education is a manner of adapting the students' behaviors to develop into good citizens. Character education develops the students for positive behavior and actions.

Character education has six pillars namely respect, fairness, responsibility, trustworthiness, and fairness customary to society and all of them are comprehensive in terms of ethical values (Britzman & Hanson, 2005). The suggested efficient imparting of education concerning character development comprises affording professional development, enhancing peer interaction, and adding character-related content to the school curriculum (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). School culture usually has an environment having a hidden curriculum of character development, teachers' attention of teachers to the same is essential in the textbooks, formal curriculum, and all other relevant material (Yaksel, 2005). Character education in the curriculum is everlastingly thought to be an effective way of nurturing learners to see things from diverse perspectives and providing them with essential training to cope with challenging situations Marshal et al., 2011). Religion is one of the possible options for inculcating morals (Akhlaqiat) into the learners' minds through effective teaching models. Because the Holy Quran testifies that without any doubt, the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the epitome of the standard character for all (Al-Quran, Sura Al Qalam, and 68:4).

Character education should, therefore, be incorporated into the curricula of early classes because it helps in building a solid footing for future generations (Anderson, 2000; Aynur, 2011). The fundamental obligation of the institution is to cultivate an atmosphere that strengthens the positive embankments of learners' behavior and thus they also practice those moral standards learned (Romanowski, 2022). According to Aynur (2011), it is essential to build a sturdy footing of constructive character throughout early schooling because the same can be effectively reinforced in the later grades.

There is no denying the fact that the primary level of schooling has a significant potential for building the learners' character and making them ready for a promised future through good character traits of a child. The grade 5th is the most apposite phase for inculcating positive values among the learners, it is thus essential to nourish the young children's minds in a manner that replicates their eagerness for future responsibilities with positive commitments to society. The focus of the study is, therefore, to pinpoint whether the content of the selected textbook promotes the values of character education.

The purpose of education in a country is the character building of its citizens which leads to the development and peace of a nation (Defitrika & Mahmudah, 2021). In advance countries so many researches are being conducted to ensure the purpose of education in the process of peace building and prosperity of the nation (Howe, 2019; Jia et al., 2022). In this regard, Pakistan is lagging behind to conduct researches for the purpose to highlight character education for the good character of its citizens. Some of the researches are conducted in the country related to students' behaviors and disruptions like Alam et al. (2022) who highlighted young children education as between a rock and a hard place that lead to students' disruption. Shah et al. (2021), conducted their study on the role of teachers' personality in the character building of the students at secondary level. Ashfaq (2021), conducted his comparative study between madrassa and university students to find religiosity in the character of the students. Naqvi (2021) demonstrated the role of religion in the character building of the students. But among all these studies were stated nothing directly about the role of textbook, Islamic studies and social studies in the character education of the students. The study is the first in its nature to state via content analysis in the subjects of Islamic studies and social studies about the contents related to good character in the light of religion and Pakistani culture at primary level schools in Pakistan.

Literature Review

The term "curriculum" is used in a variety of contexts. It is a "course of study," according to the Oxford definition. It comes from a Latin word that means "chariot race track." The concept of curriculum is a race with a succession of obstacles to clear (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). According to Renzulli (2021), curriculum refers to the entire learning and school-guiding process, which can be done in groups or individually. Cooper et al. (1975) stated curriculum is an attempt to communicate the most important ideas and elements of an educational proposal in a way that allows for critical examination and effective translation. Berkowitz and Bier (2005) suggested that to integrate character education into the curriculum, effective character education implementation is needed to enable professional development and peer interaction. In each character education program, giving interpersonal training and presenting a defined agenda puts the focus on morals, ethics, and values to encourage family involvement, provide mentors and role models, and use a multi-strategy approach. Berkowitz and Bier (2005) highlighted Character education is one of the reasons why it should be incorporated into school curricula. Moral education was widely taught in schools and incorporated into the curriculum in the 19th century, when children learned values such as loyalty, honesty, and hard labor, largely through the

"McGuffey Reader Tales of valor and Virtue" series (Goda et al., 2012, p. 3). Character education has become an integral feature of all American schools' educational programs. It was previously prohibited from public school curricula due to the belief that teaching values is linked to teaching religion (Skaggs & Bodenhorn, 2006). Kortbaoui et al. (2009), specified that the decline in the importance of implementing character education in public schools in the United States in the early twentieth century was linked to four societal forces: personalization, logical positivism, rising pluralism, and secularism. They defined personalization as a condition in which people believe they have the freedom to choose their own beliefs and that no one has the authority to impose their own ethics and values on others. These views have harmed the principles of social commitment and turned the focus to mere self-satisfaction. Kortbaoui et al. (2009) further explained that pluralism is widely recognized or implemented in educational institutions because no other view of truth is acknowledged or agreed upon by the entire society, and with the secularization drive, all religious and governmental ideas and interests were separated. Kortbaoui et al. (2009) are giving their point of view that knowledge evolves in response to circumstances, and positivists define morality as sentiments. They remarked that positivists emphasized that morality is unscientific and so does not belong in school curricula.

Methodology

In this qualitative study content analysis of the Islamic Studies textbook. The objective of the analysis was to study the way the book supports the character-building of the students. Before starting the content analysis, a lens was set for observing the content of the book. Six pillars of character building were taken as criteria for the analysis. These pillars are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. The content contributing to the development of any of the six pillars was selected for the analysis. Contents were coded, recoded, and themes were identified which are presented in the results sections.

The book comprises the following five chapters:
1.   The Holy Quran
2.   Faith and prayers (Emanyat & Ebadat)
3.   Life of the Holy Prophet (Serat-i-Taybba)
4.   Ethics (Ikhlaq-o-Aadab)
5.   Personalities of Islam and Origin of guidance (Haydiat ka sir chasma/Mashieer-i-Islam)

Data Analysis and Results

   The contents of each chapter were coded in the first step. In the second step, the codes were categorized according to their essence and meaning. The themes that emerged are presented here below.

Controlling human behavior through belief.

   Muslims believed in the oneness of Allah Almighty (God). This belief molds the character of the followers. "Allah witnesses that there is no deity except Him, (Quran 3/18)" The content

of the Islamic studies book started by Surah Al-Fateha the first surah (chapter 1) of the Quran begins with the verse "In the name of Allah, the most gracious, the most Merciful" Maulana Maududi, an Islamic scholar said that in the Islamic culture, every work started by this verse to ensures the divine help and blessings of Allah (God). It produces good results and keeps away evil intentions. The name of Allah creates in him (human beings) the right attitude of mind and directs them in the right direction. Allah's blessing protects him from the temptations of Satan. The Holy Quran opens the Holy name of Allah, the unique name of God Who extends mercy to all mankind because He is exceptionally Gracious (Al-Raheem) to those who follow; the Lord of the believers; the Only and the "Master of the Day of Judgment".

The Surah voices that Muslims are not permitted to worship any other than the Almighty Allah and links the heart purified of pride and show off. The accepted path of worship in Islam, the well-defined path promising the divine pleasure of Heaven as the prophet Muhammad, the last prophet propagated and follow without any doubt.

Belief on here after and its impact on Human Character.

The content includes two Quranic prayers which emphasized the belief in the life hereafter. Life without belief in the life hereafter becomes meaningless. Muslim characters have fear of Allah and belief in the life hereafter restraining from all evils. Lead a life in obedience to the laws given in the Quran by Almighty Allah, "Our Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the hereafter and defend us from the torment of the fire" (Dua page No. 6 Surah Baqra 201/2). In this Dua, one seeks good for this life and the life hereafter. Muslim character always prays to Almighty Allah for themselves and others. The above content statements tell us the importance of good deeds and their rewards. A good character can do good deeds. This dua established a character who prayed for him and his offspring, his parents, and all Muslims. The content teaches the values like respect, caring, responsibility, and trustworthiness. It also talks about the virtues which are blessings in this world and the life hereafter. A Muslim (Momin) not only prays for himself and his parents but also for all Muslims' success in this life and the life hereafter. If good deeds are not rewarded and bad deeds are not punished then life will be worthless. "If we do good and noble actions in this world, we shall be given a reward in the life hereafter." "We should spend our time on good deeds" (Chapter No 2, Page no 8) "Good deeds on earth are meant to prepare for life after death". The content statements tell us the importance of good deeds and their rewards. A good character can do good deeds.

The Holy Prophet as a Role Model for Character Development:

The life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is based on the Holy book of Allah, the Quran. It is therefore a perfect example for all people at all times. The Holy Prophet's ﷺ aspects of life have been recorded and all his actions how he spent his life, and how he talked and prayed all are recorded. He was offered all kinds of temptations, but He never compromised, even though he left his birthplace Makkah, for the sake of truth.

His behavior as a leader, and teacher. ruler, husband, and friend were exemplary. He impressed even his bitterest enemies with his conduct. His wife Hazrat Ayesha said that "the character of the Prophet ﷺ was the Holy Quran". What Quran says he practically acts upon it. He had a very gentle and forgiving nature. He said, "I have been sent as a mercy". "Quraish called him Sadiq and Amin" the trustworthy. (Textbook page No.12,13,15.)

He was affectionate, loving, sincere, and honest. A true Muslim follows the Prophet ﷺ in every aspect of life. The content tells us that the life of the Holy Prophet is a complete model to practice in life. honor, love, caring, respect, trustworthiness, and other values in the life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is given in the lesson. The content shows good conduct, behavior, truth, fairness, and all the character traits.

The book also reported on the important event of the Prophet's life to make an impact on students' personalities and character building. Once the holy prophet ﷺ made a treaty with the Jews of Madina. They had broken the treaty and began to plot and intrigue against the Muslims. They were expelled from Madina. With the help of Jews, the Quraish attacked the Muslims of Madina. Consultation of the Holy Prophet ﷺ with his companions decided to dig a trench around the city. Muslims had to face great hardships with patience at last they succeed. This is another example of Muslims bearing hardship and fulfilling promises and showing courage in the time trial. Trustworthiness, responsibility, caring, and citizenship traits are shown in the lesson.

Fasting is the 3rd pillar of Islam, and its importance and social benefits

Fasting during the month of Ramzan is obligatory for Muslims. In Arabic, it is known as 'saum' which means staying away from eating drinking, and all bad actions. The purpose of fasting is to make a Muslim pious and Allah's fearing so that he becomes a man of good deeds and interactions. A person who fasts is bound to keep away from all evil and avoid what is forbidden by Almighty Allah.

Fasting is teaching a man discipline and self-control. It makes him bear hardships and remains without food and drinks for the whole day. It develops sympathetic feelings for the poor and hungry. It develops patience, caring, and obedience to Allah. Character traits like self-control discipline, bearing hardships, trust in Allah, fear of Allah, and keeping himself from all evils.

Collective Wellbeing through Ethics

Chapter four is related to the character-building and development of a society of collective well-being. Because it is about ethics. It starts with the introduction of morals and manners. The themes that emerged from the contents of this chapter are presented below.

Fulfillment of the promise (Wadha-ke –Pabandi)

"Fulfillment of the promise is the quality of true believers." "The Holy Prophet PBUH said, he who does not keep his promise has no faith." "A person who fulfills his promises is respected and honored." Islamic values teach fairness and the fulfilling of promises.

Forgiveness (Ufo-O-Darghuzar)

"Forgiveness means to not take revenge. Allah says in Quran "No doubt upon the forgiveness of Allah Almighty". Forgiveness is a quality of Allah. One who forgives his fellow Allah will forgive him. Ethical traits like trustworthiness, responsibility, respect, and caring are part of the text.

Pliability (Burdbari)

the book reported as, Quran says, "Control the loose temper and forgive to the people." (Surah Al Imran 134/3) Prophet (ﷺ) bears the pain and forgives his enemies. He shows kindness to the creatures on earth has that Allah may be kind to you. Prophet ﷺ was well known for his kindness and sympathy to the poor, orphans, and widows. When he became the head of the state and could take revenge on the enemies, He treated all captives and prisoners very kindly. Responsibility, respect, caring, kindness, sympathy, and forgiveness are the qualities presented in the lesson.

Tolerance (Rawadhari)

"Tolerance means a state of accepting and permitting the beliefs of others. It also means broadminded, patient, and self-control" A woman was abusing the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He never cursed her instead he showed tolerance and prayed for her. He is always merciful and kind to them. The whole life of prophet ﷺ is full of occasions when he bears pains with patience and shows his tolerance. Responsibility, respect, caring, and tolerance are part of the life of an Islamic character.

Kindness (Raham Dali)

"Allah is Rehman and Rahim. Allah loves those who are kind. Quran says Allah is not kind to him who is not kind to men. Our Holy prophet ﷺ was sent as Rehmat for all the worlds." Life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is the practical embodiment for Muslims. Character traits like trustworthiness responsibility, respect, fairness, citizenship, caring, peace, prosperity, love, and kindness are indicated in this lesson content.

Austerity (Kifayat Shaire)

"Islam teaches moderation in all matters. Extravagance and waste, on one hand, and miserliness on the other are both forbidden." Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Two things do not fit in a faithful person miserliness and bad temper." In Islam extravagance and waste, on the one hand, and miserliness on the other are both forbidden. The Holy Quran says, "Make not thy hand tied to thy neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach….17/29 Muslims are a justly balanced people and they have moderate life. Allah does not like an extravagance. The content indicated the values of responsibility, respect, fairness, citizenship, and caring, which are indicated by the austerity in the character.

Model personalities

Content in textbook class 5th consists of the following personalities and their life.

Life of Hazrat Isa A.S. is the message of sympathy and love for destitute people.

"Hazrat Isa known as Jesus Crist was the prophet of Allah. He spoke in a fever of his mother in infancy. He preached for the oneness of Allah. People were indulging in many evils. He taught them the fair values of sympathy and pity. His character is full of values like Respect, caring, Responsibility, trustworthiness, love, fairness, and sympathy for human beings. Some people accept the religion and they are called 'Hawari'. His life is full of events of sympathy and a living attitude.

Life of Hazrat Usman R.A. is an example of generosity

He was an honest trader. He bears the pain with patience. He was a pious and modest man. Moreover, he was a sympathetic, courageous, and honest man. "Hazrat Usman (R.A) was famous for his generosity and honesty." Hazrat Usman (RA) spent his wealth on Islam. He was a noble and honest trader. His life is full of events when he practiced the values like trustworthiness, responsibility, respect, fairness, citizenship, caring, and generosity.

The life of Hazrat Khalid bin Waleed (R.A) is the symbol of bravery and nobleness

Hazrat Khalid bin Waleed is a "Brave and Noble man. He was commander of the Islamic army. He was a courageous worrier". Hazrat Khalid- Bin-Waleed (RA) was a great worrier of Islam. His life was a symbol of bravery, trustworthiness, responsibility, fairness, courage, and respect. He was awarded the title of Saif-Ullah the sward of Allah due to his bravery.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed at investigating and analyzing the content of the Islamic studies textbook 5th class on character. It is concluded that adequate material relating to character education is incorporated in the textbook of Islamic studies for class 5th. It is inferred that the Islamic Studies book, chapter IV shows the ethical values indispensable for the students' character building at the primary level. It is also discovered that the curriculum of the elementary level is a continuous sequential process that includes every aspect and the components of character education. The rich curriculum of the textbook strives to inculcate the importance of character education in 5th-grade students. The book has multiple strategies for affecting the character development of the students. The book has many themes that possess latent power of character building. However, chapter of the book is about ethics which objectively promote character building in students. Similar, conclusion was also drawn by Pala (2011). He concluded that the inclusion of ethical themes in curriculum creates a pleasant and moral atmosphere through engagement and participation. It is recommended that similar themes may be added in other text books too for reinforcement of character teachings.

The curriculum is very rich. However, efforts should be made to make it easier for students to unfold the hidden messages. Teachers should unfold the hidden messages of the book. Teachers should complement the content with examples. It will make it easy for the 5th-grade children to apply them in their real lives. Teachers should be role models of character to inculcate values among the students. the work of Ma et al. (2011) support this findings as they reported that curriculum should be relevant to students' life to develop them intellectually,

emotionally, and socially. Teachers' involvement in character building program can be improved by planning, commitment and involvement of other stakeholders.

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