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Learning Ethics: Foundations of Manners, Responsibility, and Character Formation in the Educational Process

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ABSTRACT

Learning is an important process in developing knowledge, skills, attitudes, and personality. Success in learning is determined not only by intellectual abilities and learning strategies but also by ethics that guide students' behavior in acquiring and using knowledge. This article aims to explain the concept of learning ethics, the principles of etiquette in seeking knowledge in Islamic education, their relevance to modern educational theory, and their application in academic life. The research uses a literature study method by reviewing classical literature on the etiquette of knowledge seekers, educational books, scientific articles on independent learning, and documents on academic integrity. The results show that learning ethics include good intentions, respect for educators, seriousness, discipline, academic honesty, critical and open attitudes, responsibility, and the use of knowledge for the common good. These values align with lifelong learning, independent learning, and academic integrity. Learning ethics need to be built through personal habituation, educator role modeling, a healthy academic culture, and support from the educational environment. Thus, learning ethics are not just manners, but the foundation for shaping learners who are knowledgeable, have character, and are responsible.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is not only aimed at conveying information but also shaping individuals who are capable of thinking, behaving, and acting responsibly. Learning is the main activity in the educational process because through learning a person acquires knowledge, develops skills, builds attitudes, and improves their quality. However, the learning process is not enough to be measured solely by the amount of material mastered or high academic grades. The way a person acquires, processes, and uses knowledge also needs to pay attention to moral values.

In the Islamic educational tradition, discussions about learning ethics are closely related to the concept of the etiquette of seeking knowledge. Knowledge is seen as something valuable and must be sought with the right intention, earnestness, humility, and responsibility. Al-Ghazali in Ihya' 'Ulum al-

Din places moral development as an important part of education, while Az-Zarnuji, through Ta'lim al-Muta'allim, discusses attitudes and procedures that must be observed by knowledge seekers. Both show that successful learning relates to personality formation, not just mastery of material.

In modern education, learning ethics relate to academic responsibility, honesty, appreciation for others' work, active engagement, and the ability to learn independently. Zimmerman (2002) describes self-directed learning as the process when learners set goals, strategies, motivation, and learning evaluations. UNESCO (2021) also emphasizes the importance of solidarity, cooperation, and shared responsibility in building the future of education.

The development of digital technology expands access to learning resources but also presents challenges such as plagiarism, the spread of unverified information, dependence on instant answers, and a lack of responsibility in using technology. Therefore, learning ethics need to be comprehensively understood so that learners can wisely utilize knowledge resources. This article discusses the definition and foundations of learning ethics, its main principles, application in learning, current challenges, and strengthening strategies.

2. METHODS

This article uses a library research method with a descriptive-qualitative approach. The sources of study include classical works on Islamic education, books on educational theory and learning, documents from educational institutions, as well as scientific articles relevant to the etiquette of seeking knowledge, independent learning, motivation, and academic integrity. Literature was selected based on its relevance to the focus of discussion and its contribution in explaining learning ethics.

The analysis was conducted by identifying the main ideas from each source, grouping ideas into themes of personal ethics, social relationships in learning, and academic responsibility, then synthesizing views from Islamic education and modern education. Because this research is library-based, the article does not present data from field observations or interviews.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Definition and Scope of Learning Ethics

Ethics relates to the values and principles used to assess the goodness or badness of human behavior. In the context of education, learning ethics can be understood as a set of values, attitudes, and behaviors that guide a person when seeking, receiving, developing, and applying knowledge. Learning ethics not only regulates the relationship between students and teachers but also relationships with fellow students, sources of knowledge, educational institutions, and themselves.

The scope of learning ethics includes four dimensions. First, the personal dimension, such as intention, discipline, seriousness, patience, and responsibility. Second, the social dimension, such as respecting educators, valuing peer opinions, cooperating, and maintaining polite communication. Third, the academic dimension, such as honesty, thoroughness, avoiding plagiarism, and citing sources. Fourth, the dimension of utilizing knowledge, which means using knowledge wisely and without harming others.

2. The Foundation of Learning Ethics in Islamic Education

Islamic education views knowledge as a means to draw closer to Allah and provide benefits for life. Therefore, learning activities should ideally be based on good intentions. The intention is to make learning activities not solely oriented towards grades, titles, or praise, but also on the search for truth and benefit. This principle needs to be accompanied by humility, because the broader a person's knowledge, the more they should realize that there are still many things to learn.

Az-Zarnuji in Ta'lim al-Muta'allim discusses respect for knowledge and scholars, seriousness, perseverance, choosing study partners, and time management. This idea emphasizes that knowledge needs to be sought with seriousness and good behavior. Respect for teachers does not mean accepting all opinions without thinking, but rather conveying questions and differing views politely and based on reason.

Al-Ghazali in Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din emphasizes the importance of moral development and the responsibility of those who teach or learn. In the context of students, these values can be realized through humility, willingness to accept advice, not underestimating knowledge, and avoiding behaviors that hinder character formation.

The ethical foundation of learning can also be linked to the command to read and study in Q.S. al-'Alaq [96]: 1–5. This verse emphasizes the importance of reading and realizing that knowledge comes from Allah. Meanwhile, Q.S. al-Mujadilah [58]: 11 links faith and knowledge with the degree of nobility. These two references provide the basis that the pursuit of knowledge is a valuable activity that must be accompanied by spiritual and moral responsibility.

3. Main Principles of Learning Ethics

a. Straightening the intention and purpose of learning

Students need to understand the reasons and goals for their learning. Healthy learning goals include gaining understanding, developing skills, improving oneself, and providing benefits. Achievement orientation can be motivation, but it should not encourage dishonest actions or belittleing others.

b. Discipline and time management

Discipline is evident from the habit of being on time, preparing study materials, completing assignments according to deadlines, and creating realistic schedules. Time management helps students maintain consistency and avoid the habit of procrastinating work. Discipline is not just about obeying rules, but the ability to self-regulate oneself to achieve learning goals.

c. Respecting educators and appreciating others

Respecting teachers or lecturers can be done by paying attention to explanations, not interrupting conversations, asking questions politely, and responding to corrections openly. In relationships among students, ethics are manifested by not mocking friends' difficulties, not dominating discussions, respecting differences of opinion, and providing help without belittling.

d. Earnest, diligent, and not easily giving up

Learning is a process that requires practice and repetition. Students need to strive to understand the material, seek additional explanations when experiencing difficulties, and evaluate mistakes as part of the learning process. Dweck (2006) explains the importance of a growth mindset, which is the view that abilities can be developed through effort, strategy, and learning.

e. Honest and maintaining academic integrity

Academic honesty means presenting work results honestly, not cheating, not falsifying data, not committing plagiarism, and citing sources when using other people's ideas or writings. The International Center for Academic Integrity (2021) places honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage as core values of academic integrity. This principle applies to individual assignments, group work, exams, research, and the use of technology.

f. Think critically and be open to correction

Learning ethics does not mean accepting information without examination. Students need to examine sources, compare evidence, distinguish facts and opinions, and be willing to change their views when finding stronger reasons. Critical attitudes must be accompanied by politeness and

openness, not used to belittle others. Brookfield (2012) emphasizes the importance of questioning assumptions and evaluating evidence in critical thinking practice.

g. Responsible in using science and technology

Knowledge should be used for beneficial purposes. In digital learning, students need to choose trusted sources, maintain privacy, respect copyright, and not spread unverified information. Digital tools can be used to understand concepts according to educational institution rules, but not to replace thinking processes or acknowledge results that are not one's own work.

4. Learning Ethics from the Perspective of Modern Education

Modern education pays attention to active and independent learners. Knowles (1975) defines self-directed learning as the process when individuals take the initiative to recognize learning needs, formulate goals, determine sources and strategies, and evaluate outcomes. This independence requires responsibility, honesty toward one's abilities, and consistency.

Zimmerman (2002) defines self-regulated learning as the process when learners actively manage their thoughts, motivations, and behaviors to achieve learning objectives. In practice, learners set targets, choose strategies, monitor understanding, and reflect on outcomes. Learning ethics support this process through discipline, perseverance, and willingness to self-evaluate.

Ryan and Deci (2000), through self-determination theory, explain that motivation relates to the need for autonomy, competence, and social connection. A learning environment that values responsible choices, provides opportunities for growth, and builds positive relationships can support intrinsic motivation. Thus, learning ethics are not only imposed on individuals but also need to be supported by the educational environment.

UNESCO (2021) emphasizes education as an effort to build a shared future through cooperation, solidarity, and responsibility. This perspective broadens the ethics of learning: learners not only pursue personal success but also learn to live together, respect diversity, and contribute to society.

5. Implementation of Learning Ethics in Academic Life

The application of learning ethics can begin **b**efore learning activities. Students prepare equipment, read the initial material, ensure personal readiness, and arrive on time. During the lesson, students listen, note important points, ask questions when they do not understand, and do not disturb others' concentration.

In discussions, students need to express opinions based on reason, listen to responses, and not impose their views. In group work, each member performs tasks fairly, acknowledges the contributions of other members, and resolves differences through communication. In task preparation, students write in their own words, note sources, use citations appropriately, and do not take others' works.

After learning, students can reflect: what material they have understood, which parts have not been mastered, which strategies need improvement, and how that knowledge can be applied. Reflection helps learners recognize their own development and plan the next steps.

6. Challenges of Learning Ethics in the Digital Era

Internet access provides ease in obtaining books, articles, videos, and learning materials. However, this convenience can also lead to habits of copying without understanding, using unclear sources, spreading misinformation, or relying on automatic answers without verification. Other challenges include social media distractions, impolite communication in digital spaces, and a lack of respect for privacy.

To face this, students need to apply digital literacy: checking the credibility of authors and publishers, checking publication dates, comparing information with other sources, and distinguishing

primary and secondary sources. The use of technology must be transparent and follow the policies of teachers or universities. Students remain responsible for verifying the accuracy of information and must not claim the output of tools as the result of research or personal experience.

7. The Role of Educators and the Environment in Shaping Learning Ethics

Learning ethics grow more easily in environments that set a real example. Educators can demonstrate punctuality, honesty, fairness, politeness, and openness to questions. Academic rules need to be clearly communicated, applied consistently, and accompanied by explanations of the moral reasons behind those rules.

Families can support through habituation of responsibility, provision of study time, attention to processes beyond just grades, and open communication. Educational institutions can build an academic culture by providing citation guidelines, information literacy training, guidance services, and educational and fair violation handling mechanisms. Collaboration between students, educators, families, and institutions forms the foundation for forming sustainable learning ethics.

4. CONCLUSION

Learning ethics is a set of values and behaviors that guide a person in seeking, receiving, developing, and using knowledge responsibly. From the perspective of Islamic education, learning ethics are rooted in good intentions, manners towards knowledge and educators, humility, sincerity, and a focus on usefulness. In modern education, these values relate to learning independence, self-regulation, motivation, critical thinking, and academic integrity.

The main principles of learning ethics include straightening intentions, discipline, respecting educators and others, diligence, honesty, openness to correction, and responsibility in the use of knowledge and technology. Its application is evident in learning preparation, classroom participation, discussions, group work, assignment preparation, resource use, and reflection after studying.

Learning ethics cannot be imposed solely on students. Educators, families, and educational institutions need to build an environment that sets an example, clear rules, and supports character development. Thus, the success of education not only produces individuals who master knowledge but also learners who are civilized, honest, independent, critical, and able to use their knowledge for the common good.

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