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Article:	**Prospects of Morality-Based Education in the 21st Century**
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Published:	Spring 2021
Article DOI:	https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.111.01

QR Code:

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Prospects of Morality-Based Education in the 21ˢᵗ Century

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Abstract

This article proposes to re-focus education towards morality and universal values, which have always been the traditional aim of education. This paper is designed using a qualitative research method applying content analysis to textual and video materials from a historical and contemporary perspectives. The paper demonstrates morality problems of the current mainstream education systems and how alternative systems are better equipped to inculcate values. It is observed that trans-disciplinary, problem-based and religious education helps build stronger ethical foundation in students regardless of their geographical location or income levels. The article proposes for schools and universities to include community engagement programmes in their curricula, support religious communities through special programmes, and promote values education at all levels not through academic subjects but through studies, research and development of real-life application of ethics at local and international levels. The paper adds value to existing research on ethics and values-based education and calls for further research in the field of education. It is also relevant to policy makers and researchers in public policy disciplines.

Keywords: morality-based education, trans-disciplinary approach, holistic education, universal values, ethics, alternative education

Introduction

The 20ᵗʰ century education continues to persist in the new millennium. Characterised by the standardised secular-scientific approach, modern education, especially in schools, has not had the strong foundation of morality, values and social justice. It was largely viewed as the means to prepare workers, employees, scientists, managers and docile citizens. Our environment today, as we enter the third decade of the 21ˢᵗ century, is such that humanity and the natural world experience tremendous stress resulting in crises,

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catastrophes and now a pandemic Covid-19, which happened with increased frequency and severity. Education plays the most important role in preparing young individuals for adult life, while our collective human condition is the reflection of that. Therefore, the education of the first Industrial Revolution era is no longer valid in the era of Internet of things, artificial intelligence and abundance of information and knowledge. In fact, the point we are at now has been classified as crisis – a crisis of education, because much of the global challenges of corruption, injustice, pollution, deprivation, desolation and hopelessness can be attributed to 'excellence without a soul," as Harry Lewis[1] so aptly described referring to education in America. Therefore, this paper attempts to propose to re-focus education towards morality and universal values, which have always been the traditional aim of education in general, while professional and vocational training had astrong ethical foundation.

The first part of the paper addresses the issue of morality and values education from a historical perspective. The section after that covers the need for moral values education in current circumstances. Section four looks at alternative education systems and ideas that authors deem to be positive with regards to ethical values instilled in students. Lastly, the conclusion recaps all the main points of the paper and makes the case for values-based education as the main approach to creating a balanced holistic personality. The paper is constructed using content analysis for the following two sections and case study research for examples of alternative education. Additionally, the authors' personal observations and experience affect the paper's logic and conclusions.

2. Morality and Values in Education: A Brief Account

The deficiency of morality nourishing elements in educational system has been noticed by the educators in different parts of the world throughout human history who have tried to reform school curricula, methods of teaching, teaching materials, and the overall philosophy of education. Such an opposition to mainstream schooling is manifested in a wide range of responses, from writings (academic and literary), to film industry and arts, and to alternative schooling systems taught all over the world. To demonstrate the importance of morality and ethics in educational training as has been highlighted by this movement, the paper reviews several scholars and their ideas that have had a profound effect on alternative schooling movement.

We begin with Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), the famous Greek philosopher, logician and unsurprisingly, educator. The goal of his writings, especially in *Nicomachean Ethics,* was to promote the idea of virtuous man, which was synonymous with an educated man. The ultimate goal of virtue and education, as Aristotle believed, was happiness within the society or *polis* (city-state). For Aristotle, virtue is of two kinds: intellectual and moral. The

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[1]Harry Lewis, *Excellence Without a Soul: Does Liberal Education Have a Future?* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007).

former is acquired through learning, while the latter – through habituation or action.[2] So, the ethics in Aristotelian thought are "based on such concepts as happiness, the mean, leisure and wisdom."[3] Here the mean denotes balance, whereas leisure denotes freedom to pursue the goal of happiness and virtue. So, when it comes to ethics, the emphasis is on doing or acting ethically helped by wisdom and reason. Aristotle wrote: "we become just by doing just actions, temperate by temperate action, courageous by courageous actions."[4]

Another scholar, Al-Farabi (872-950 C.E.), who earned the title of the second teacher (after Aristotle, who was the first teacher), was known for his intellectual contributions in the fields of philosophy, logic, music, physics and psychology. He had not written any work specific to the field of education, yet, his ideas on education and morality could be gathered from his philosophical works. According to Al-Talbi, for Al-Farabi, the aim of education was "to lead the individual to perfection"[5] and, through attaining virtues, to realise happiness for the individual as well as for society. And so, the virtuous city (*madīnah al-fāḍilah*) is the one, whose inhabitants, especially the leaders, are morally good people. Hence, on the practical level, education that leads to virtue, according to Al-Farabi, is achieved through combining learning with transformative action, and sciences that are impractical and don't lead to virtue are useless and even harmful.[6] Even though he seems to divide people into the elite and the commoners, the universal learning method applicable to both is habituation, or "frequent repetition of a particular action, at short intervals, over a long period of time."[7] Such repetition of ethical values, in turn, creates patterns of behaviour in the mind that lead to excellence and prevent one from excess or neglect.

Ibn Sina (980-1037CE) was one of the most famous Muslim polymaths, who excelled in philosophy, medicine, astronomy, mathematics, logic, psychology, physics, theology and poetry. Like Al-Farabi, he did not write a specific book on education, but his views on this important topic can be found in *The Canon* and *Politics*.[8] According to Abd Al-Rahman Al-Naqib, Ibn Sina's aim of education was to form a complete personality, including his mind, body and character. Also, the education is supposed to prepare the

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[2]Charles Hummel, "Aristotle (384-322BC)," in *PROSPECTS: The Quarterly Review of Comparative Education* (UNESCO, International Bureau of Education), vol. 23, no.1/2 (1993): 2. http://www.ibe.unesco.org/sites/default/files/aristote.pdf

[3]Ibid., 3.

[4]Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* Roger Crisp (trans), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 23. Accessed April 18, 2020. https://archive.org/details/aristotlenicomacheanethicsoup_380_0/page/n3/mode/2up

[5]A. Al-Talbi, "Al-Farabi," in *Prospects: The Quarterly Review of Comparative Education*, vol. 23, no ½ (1993): 2. Retrieved April 20, 2020. http://www.ibe.unesco.org/sites/default/files/farabie.pdf

[6]Ibid., 3.

[7]Quoted from "Al-Farabi," 6.

[8]Abd Al-Rahman Al-Naqib, "Avicenna," in *Prospects: The Quarterly Review of Comparative Education,* vol. 23, no. ½ (1993): 53-69.

individual to live in society and contribute through a chosen profession or trade. So, Ibn Sina viewed education not only as intellectual development, but a holistic one, where exercise, food, drink, sleep and cleanliness play as important a role as reading, writing and memorisation. He distinguished between intellectual and practical work, and, therefore, he also differentiated between their learning methods. Similar to Rudolph Steiner in the 20th century Germany, Ibn Sina divided the child's learning into stages: (1) from birth to six years; (2) six to fourteen; and (3) fourteen onwards. In the first stage, the child needs to strengthen his/her physical and motor skills, which is done through play and games. In the second stage the child is ready to receive instructions from a teacher. This is the stage when children begin to learn the Qur'ān, poetry, calligraphy and ethics. Ibn Sina also encouraged children to study in groups, especially together with the children of nobility to learn moral conduct and noble attitude from them. In the third stage, the child's aptitudes become more apparent whereby more specialised learning takes place, which is either intellectual or vocational. More importantly, at this stage adolescents should not be forced to acquire a skill or study subjects that do not correspond with their abilities or inclinations. Hence, the third stage is characterised with specialisation, which is built upon the sound foundation of the Qur'ān, language, and ethics.[9]

As we turn to contemporary thinkers and educators let us look at the person, who greatly contributed to ethical theory of education – John Dewey (d.1952). He was an American educator, psychologist, and philosopher, who wrote three important works on school education: *The School and Society* (1900), *Schools of To-morrow* (1915), and *Democracy and Education* (1916). In the opening chapter of *The School and Society*, Dewey writes about the difference between the traditional rural education, where children used to work together with their parents, siblings and neighbours, and learned very well about what's important for their lives, and the urban ('object-lessons') where children, separated from nature, only learn about nature through its representation in written materials or teachers' lessons. He adds that traditional learning, based on actual work, had an impact on "discipline and character building … training in habits of order and industry, and the idea of responsibility, of obligation to do something, to produce something, in the world."[10] In *Schools of To-morrow,* he begins the discussion by differentiating between what the child needs and what the adults think the child needs in terms of education.[11] He continues further with the idea that childhood is a natural process and maturity, like ripening of fruit, takes time. On the other hand, hurrying this process is counterproductive, even suicidal, and so he emphasises the play-time, something that adults may call "wasting of time."[12] All in all, in this particular book, Dewey reflects upon various school models in the US and Europe, and comes to the conclusion that best schools are those that balance

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[9]Ibid.

[10]J. Dewey, *The School and Society* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1900), 7.

[11]J. Dewey, and E. Dewey, *Schools of To-morrow* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1915), 3-5.

[12]Ibid., 6-7.

work (learning by doing) and academic study (object-lessons, learning from books), give time to play and explore the world, inculcate discipline through personal responsibility rather than force, and promote equality and fairness towards all layers of society without discrimination. In his *Democracy and Education*, John Dewey touches upon morality extensively. When writing about morality education at schools, he expressed doubt that without the right action and experience, morality learned for the sake of reciting it back to the teacher will not have the intended result of uplifting the individual with regards to his conduct in society. So, this dichotomy between theory and practice must be addressed through action. As education has a social function, moral education must not be separated from being useful to the society. Thus, the author argues for a balanced and holistic approach to education in general, and to moral education is particular.[13]

One of the most remarkable educators of the Russian pedagogical tradition was A.S. Makarenko (1888-1939), whose method transformed lives of hundreds of orphaned homeless children in Soviet Russia after the Civil War (1918-1920). His method primarily consisted in communal living, where each member had responsibility to contribute to the community through manual labor.[14] Makarenko's system of education had a great effect on the morale of the children, majority of whom lived on the streets, were gang members and led criminal lives before joining the commune. He managed to create self-governing self-sustaining rehabilitation/learning centers where children worked in the fields, tended to animals, and even opened a famous camera-making factory (F.E.D.) in the Kharkov colony.[15] Makarenko's system was hailed as one of the most successful contributions to Soviet education introduced at the most crucial time for the nascent Soviet state. Thus, much can be learnt from this experience with regards to moral values education because work, personal and collective responsibility and self-reliance had a great transformative power over children (mainly adolescents) who changed from delinquents to productive members of society.

A contemporary Muslim thinker Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas[16] is quite particular in distinguishing two kinds of education existing in the world. One is *tarbiyyah,* which conveys the message of nurturing, feeding, nourishing, rearing, increasing in growth. This meaning, according to Al-Attas is "neither appropriate nor adequate in conveying the conception of education."[17] The true concept of education is locked in the term *ta'dīb*, which carries the meaning of education of the mind and instilling the *adab* or

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[13]J. Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916), 402-418.

[14]"Anton Makarenko," in *Wikipedia*. Retrieved April 19, 2020. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anton_Makarenko

[15]Istoriya youtube channel, "Tayna Semeynoy Zhizni Pedagoga Makarenko," in *youtube.com* (June 20, 2018). Retrieved April 19, 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swQGr3f2Zdk

[16]Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism* (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation, 1993).

[17]Ibid., 151.

manners, ethics and morals.[18] Hence, Al-Attas views the purpose of education as the pursuit of goodness in the spiritual and moral lives of human beings.

Perhaps the best overview of knowledge and ethics (*adab*) in Islam was produced by Franz Rosenthal (d. 2003) in his famous *Knowledge Triumphant*. He shows that Muslim scholars had been interested in ethics from the very beginning of Islamic scholarship. Most writings, reviewed by Rosenthal, connect ʿ*ilm* and *adab* as two inseperable entities, knowledge being the foundation and ethics as its practice.[19] Rosenthal quotes Abd Al-Karīm As-Samʿānī (d.1166) who wrote in *Adab Al-imlāʾ*: "Knowledge without *adab* is like fire without firewood. *Adab* without knowledge is like a spirit without a body."[20] Hence, ethics and morality had been the major theme of Muslim scholars in the medieval times writing about *adab* and ʿ*ilm*. So, clearly as education is about acquisition of knowledge, ethics has always remained its essential part.

Many more educators and scholars wrote or expressed their views about the need for moral values in the educational process. Such views today can be collectively classified as holistic,[21] which denotes a particular approach to teaching and learning that is characterised by experiential learning and positive human values. So, it aims at developing the human beings' intellectual, social, creative, spiritual and physical capabilities. Therefore, holistic education is indeed a movement that has other terms for it, such as alternative education, problem-based or value-based education, as well as transdisciplinary education.

3. The Need for Moral Values-based Education

As demonstrated by the short overview above, educators have always envisaged education as inclusive of moral values. Contemporary scholars and philosophers of education recognise the shortcomings of the modern organised learning at school and university levels. For example, Harry R. Lewis, in his famous *Excellence without A Soul,* critically examines the modern higher education in America, especially the Harvard College, where he was the Dean from 1995 to 2003, and accuses the higher education institutions in the USA as having lost its purpose and moral ground.[22] Another university professor in the USA, writing about moral education, opines that the current standards-based learning environment is detrimental to morality and tends to produce "unacceptable results" such as "Unabomber" who was a prodigy in mathematics and a distinguished

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[18]Ibid., 151-152.

[19]F. Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 252-284.

[20]Ibid., 252.

[21]"Holistic Education," in *Wikipedia.* Retrieved April 21, 2020. https://en.wikipedia.org /wiki/Holistic_education

[22]Harry R. Lewis, *Excellence Without A Soul: Does Liberal Education Have A Future?* (USA: Public Affairs, 2007).

alumnus of the Harvard University.[23] Similar story is reported from the United Kingdom, where, according to Norman Brady, the "modern university as being in a state of 'moral loss' and in need of 'moral reconstruction'."[24] A clinical psychologist, Carol Rayburn, suggests that despite attempts at moral education in modern schools, the pace of violence is increasing and that "society is living by a code of survival of the greediest."[25]

Collectively the scholars and practitioners of the holistic education movement demonstrate all the problems which exist in contemporary organised education systems. The system, created during the Industrial Revolution of the 18th-19th centuries, focuses on producing workers/employees for industrial settings, which is done through the emphasis on STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) subjects, standardised or centralised exam-based assessment, divisions by age, and teacher-centred classroom settings – all of these are poor methods of promoting holistic education.

Consequently, we are witnessing the world in crisis because it is dominated not by ethical values but by self-interest, especially in politics, business and finance. The inequality that persistently grows despite growing GDP point to problems of ethical nature. The consumer capitalism based on competition rather than cooperation has created the system of enmity, hatred, selfishness, greed and nihilism. Despite the great number of good people, who contribute to charity, help one another and spread peace in general, the world populations and the environment suffer from policies and business practices that favour the elites and lack ethics. Education has a lot to do with this situation of inequality, oppression, exploitation and neglect.

Moral values cannot be taught in a classroom, especially in the environment of general corruption and moral decay in the greater society. James Campbell, head of Asia Aware Institute, noted that "morality 101 is not enough."[26] Morality and ethics are innate human traits, God-given gifts for humanity to live in peace and harmony. They can be nurtured in family and society through personal example of responsibility and accountability for actions that one decides to take in his/her personal or public capacity. When children, adolescents and young adults, who already have that God-given gift, see enough examples of good responsible behaviour in adults around them, especially parents, teachers, leaders

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[23]Robert W. Howard, "Preparing Moral Educators in an Era of Standards-Based Reform," in *Teacher Education Quarterly,* vol. 32, no.4 (2005): 43-58.

[24]Norman Brady, "From 'Moral Loss' to 'Moral Reconstruction'? A Critique of Ethical Perspectives on Challenging the Neoliberal Hegemony in UK Universities in the 21st Century," in *Oxford Review of Education,* vol. 38, no.3 (2012): 343-355.

[25]Carol Rayburn, "Assessing Students for Morality Education: A New Role for School Counsellors," in *Professional School Counselling,* vol. 7, no. 5 (2004): 356-362.

[26]James Campbell, "The Roles and Models of Values-based Education: Lessons from History and Contemporary Approach," in AKEPT Talk DOVE Series 1 *Mainstreaming Values-based Education in Universities: Leadership and Management Perspectives* (Kuala Lumpur, International Islamic University Malaysia, 9 June 2020). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yV5UKdJheA Retrieved June 22, 2020.

and other important figures, moral values will become the norm in society. Schools and universities do not have to teach morality in class. Multiple experiences around the world show that teaching subjects that deal with morality as a subject does not translate to ethical behaviour in children that attend those classes and pass exams. Malaysian schools had been teaching morality for decades.[27] Yet, the juvenile delinquency only continued to grow.[28] It clearly failed just like the anti-tobacco campaign of "*Tak Nak*."[29]

Schools and universities in the Soviet Union had programmes and subjects designed to inculcate the communist ideals in the Soviet citizens, yet as soon as the USSR disintegrated in 1991, all negative human traits resurfaced in a matter of months. The whole society in Russia and in some post-Soviet republics fell into corruption, amorality, hatred, selfishness and armed conflict. All communist ideals vanished and until now the Russian population is suffering from corruption in all spheres of public and private life.

Another reason for the need of moral values education is the fact that practicing religious people tend to be less involved in criminal activities. There are numerous studies from around the world proving that morality, religiousness, and social uprightness come together like hand-in-glove. It also prevents anti-social behaviour and substance abuse. Following are just a few examples from the USA, Mexico and Turkey.

The 2007 National Survey on Drug Use and Health[30] studied the relation between substance use and religiosity in adolescents. The substances they considered in this particular study were tobacco, alcohol, prescription drugs, marijuana and other illicit substances. The research results show that religiosity reduces substance abuse in adolescents. The study also showed that religious adolescents had better family relationships, lower rates of delinquency, greater mental and physical well-being. A 2003 review of literature in the US also showed spirituality positively correlated with adolescents' health attitudes and good behaviour.[31] Another research published in 2013

[27]Vishalache Balakrishnan, "The Development of Moral Education in Malaysia," in *Asia Pacific Journal of Educators and Education,* vol. 25 (2010): 89-101.

[28]Muzaffar Syah Mallow, "Juvenile Delinquency in Malaysia: Current Issues and Promising Approaches," in *Proceedings of INCESS15-2nd International Conference on Education and Social Sciences* (Istanbul, 2-4 February, 2015, 260-267). Retrieved June 22, 2020. http://www.ocerint.org/intcess15_e-publication/papers/49.pdf.

[29]Hizlinda Tohid, Noriah Mohd Ishak, Noor Azimah Muhammad, Farah Naaz Momtaz Ahmad, Anis Ezdiana Abdul Aziz, Khairani Omar, "Perceived Effects of the Malaysian National Tobacco Control Programme on Adolescent Smoking Cessation: A Qualitative Study," *Malaysian Journal of Medical Sciences,* 19 (2), April-June (2012): 35-47. Retrieved June 22, 2020. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3431733/pdf/mjms-19-2-035.pdf

[30]Jason A. Ford, and Terrence D. Hill, "Religiosity and Adolescent Substance Use: Evidence from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health," *Substance Use and Misuse*, 47 (7) (2012): 787-798. Retrieved June 27, 2020. https://doi.org/10.3109/10826084.2012.667489

[31]Lynn Rew, and Y. Joel Wong, "A Systematic Review of Associations among Religiosity/Spirituality and Adolescent Health Attitudes and Behaviors," *The Journal of Adolescent*

confirms previously cited and other studies that find an inverse relationship between religiosity/spirituality and substance abuse by adolescents.[32] Two other studies showed the same conclusion although greater avoidance of substance abuse and criminal behaviour in adolescents and young adults is achieved with "social religiosity" as opposed to "private religiosity."[33] Effectively, people who regularly practice their religion in a community, have a lower tendency toward immorality and criminal behaviour.

A study from Mexico by Taboada focuses on institutional crime prevention where the author discusses the role of moral values education in the prevention of crime and antisocial behaviour.[34] The author describes a holistic crime prevention programme while asserting that the criminal justice system is not sufficient on its own. The work of the larger community is needed to achieve this aim. Moreover, it is unrealistic to expect changes in the criminal behaviour without changes at an emotional, cognitive and social interaction levels that is to say through comprehensive moral values education.[35]

Studies from Turkey correspond with similar studies around the world and the ones cited above, and show that practiced religiosity effectively reduces criminal behaviour.[36] The study by Güneş differentiates between culture-based religiosity and practice-based religiosity, whereby the latter demonstrated a strong negative correlation with criminal attitudes while the former did not display any correlation. In another study, conducted by Kızmaz, the author tried to establish any association between religiosity and crime.[37] He applied a questionnaire and one-to-one interviews to a sample of 80 inmates in a prison in eastern Turkey. The sample group was categorised according to the number of prison

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Health: Official Publication of the Society for Adolescent Medicine 38 (4) (2003): 433-442. Retrieved July 2, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2005.02.004

[32]Joan Kuba, and P. Ann Solari-Twadell, "Religiosity/spirituality and Substance Use in Adolescence as Related to Positive Development: a Literature Review," *Journal of Addictions Nursing* 24 (4), (2013): 247-262, Retrieved July 2, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1097/JAN.0000000000000006

[33]Christopher P. Salas-Wright and et. al., "Religiosity Profiles of American Youth in Relation to Substance Use, Violence, and Delinquency," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 41 (12), (2012):1560-1575, Retrieved June 27, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-012-9761-z; and Michael J. Mason and et.al., "Dimensions of Religiosity and Access to Religious Social Capital: Correlates with Substance Use Among Urban Adolescents," *Journal of Primary Prevent* 33 (2012): 229-237 Retrieved June 27, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10935-012-0283-y

[34]Walter B. Taboada, "Moral Education as a Method of Preventing Crime," *Trends in Organised Crime* 4, 41-43 (1998). Retrieved June 27, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02900337

[35]Ibid., 41-43.

[36]T. Güneş, "The Relationship between Religiosity and Crime: A Case Study on University Students in Turkey" (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation), (Ankara, Middle East Technical University, 2003).

[37]Z. Kızmaz, "Din ve Suç Cezaevinde Hükümlü Bulunan Bazı Suçluların Dindarlık Durumları," [Religiosity Of Some Offenders Convicted in Religious and Criminal Prisons], *Sosyal Bilimler Araştırma Dergisi,* 8 (18), (2010): 27-58 (2010).

sentences and two groups emerged: first timers and repeat offenders. Although religiosity level was found to be low in both groups, the repeat offender group showed a more negative view towards religion than the other group. Kızmaz argues that the low level of religiosity can be considered as a causal factor in criminal activities and the resulting prison sentence. The inmates who reported less religiosity were repeat offenders, which demonstrated a negative correlation between religiosity and crime.[38]

In another study from Turkey, Costu surveyed ex-offenders on probation in Istanbul. He had a sample of 100 participants from different backgrounds, the majority of whom were male (95%), between ages 26-55 (76%), had low or middle level income (87%). Also, they identified themselves as religious or very religious (79%), frequently attending moral-religious seminars in custody prior to their release.[39] The survey focused on the effectiveness of the moral values education practices currently conducted within the probation service as well as suggestions for improvement. One important finding of the survey revealed that most respondents either asked for an increase in religious classes prior to release or said the current practice was sufficient.[40] This can be interpreted as morality and matters of belief were considered more important and should be given more coverage in the probation programmes on moral values education. Interestingly the moral values identified in this particular survey focus on religion as it is the main source of moral teachings in the Turkish culture. This also displays an interesting relationship between attitutudes towards crime and religion. Although the participants were on probation and many had spent time in prison due to their offences, most identified themselves as religious and deemed religion as an important part of the probation's moral values programme.

Thus, the need for values education not as a school subject but as a comprehensive social programme is apparent. Educational institutions, as well as all other social institutions including families, must play a vital role in such a programme contributing to society through work, spirituality, and focus on the essence of education rather than the form as discussed in section two above.

As this paper is concerned with moral values education through educational institutions, in the next section we will touch upon real schools, systems and models that, in our estimation, are better suited to inculcate ethics and morals in students. We refer to them as alternative education.

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[38]Ibid.

[39]K. Costu, "Denetimli Serbestlikte Değerler Eğitimi ve Moral Rehberlik," [Values Education and Moral Guidance in Probation], in D. Ozyoruk (Ed.) *International 10th Anniversary Symposium on Turkish Probation Proceedings* "International Approaches" (357-368), (Ankara: Artpub Medya, 2016).

[40]Ibid.

4. Alternative Education Enhances Moral Values

Alternative education often refers to methods of pedagogy that is different from the mainstream, which is usually centralised, standardised and exam centred. Any school, college, university or education system as a whole that differs from the main, government organised and run system, can be described as alternative. So, in this section we discuss several such schools, school systems and universities that are not in the category of 'mainstream.'

There have been many attempts to establish alternative school systems in many parts of the world throughout the 20th century. Many of them go back to ideas brought forward by such thinkers and practitioners as John Dewey (d. 1952), Maria Montessori (d. 1952), Rudolf Steiner (d. 1925), Jean Piaget (d. 1980), Paulo Freire (d. 1997) and others. Alternative schools are based on their respective teaching philosophies and methods that are different from the mainstream. They may be characterised by integrated curriculum that is centred on the student, experiential, holistic or active learning, low student-teacher ratio, individualised approach, non-traditional assessment. The alternative systems below seem to be more representative of the holistic education.

We begin with the International Baccalaureate, which is a non-profit foundation dedicated to offering education at pre-school, school and diploma levels to children aged 3-19. Founded in 1968 in Geneva (Switzerland), it offers internationally recognisable, progressive and trans-disciplinary programmes that promote "intercultural understanding and respect."[41] It has two programmes specific to schools: Primary Years Programme (PYP) and Middle Years Programme (MYP). The latter for children of 3-12 years of age, and the former is for 11-16-year-old children. The PYP is described as trans-disciplinary and is based on six major themes: (1) Who we are; (2) Where we are in place in time; (3) How we express ourselves; (4) How the world works; (5) How we organise ourselves; and (6) Sharing the planet.[42] MYP, on the other hand, is focused on six needs covered by community or personal projects: global, intellectual, personal, physical, creative, and social.

The PYP and MYP aim to create lifelong learners who are inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective.[43] One interesting point about the IB programmes is the focus on 'international-mindedness', which is absolutely necessary in the current environment of multicultural and multiracial societies.

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[41]"The History of the IB," in *International Baccalaureate* (2017). Retrieved July 8, 2019. https://ibo.org/globalassets/digital-tookit/presentations/1711-presentation-history-of-the-ib-en.pdf
[42]Ibid.
[43]"What is an IB Education?" in *International Baccalaureate,* (2013). Retrieved July 8, 2019. https://ibo.org/globalassets/what-is-an-ib-education-2017-en.pdf

Another system in our list is named after its founder, Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952), an Italian medical doctor turned educator, who believed in and practiced 'scientific pedagogy.' Her approach to education is described as 'child-centred' and is based on the psychological and anthropological observations. The main elements of the Montessori education are: Multi-age classrooms, a special set of educational materials, student-chosen work in long time blocks, collaboration, the absence of grades and tests, and individual and small group instruction in both academic and social skills.[44]

This system can be safely described as integrated and trans-disciplinary because conventional subjects are not the focus of learning. Instead, pupils experience learning through self-determination, free choice, interconnectedness, interesting curricular materials and activities, embodied cognition, orderly social interaction, peer tutoring, clean and well-organised environment.[45]

The third school system in our list is the Waldorf schools. They originate in Stuttgart (Germany) and are named after the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory, which Rudolf Steiner visited in 1919. Shortly afterwards, the school for factory workers' children was established and Steiner became its 'pedagogical consultant.' These schools are based on 'anthroposophy' (literally means *human wisdom*) – a kind of humanistic philosophy that recognises the existence of the spiritual world. This movement is trying to reconcile spirituality with science in a rational manner.[46] Waldorf schools across the world follow a form of trans-disciplinary education as each topic in a subject is connected with a similar topic in another subject.

The next system is not alternative but mainstream in this Nordic country of Finland. This school system is accepted, funded and run by the government. However, comparing to the rest of the world, the Finnish education system is quite special. It is in operation in a country known for prosperity, inclusive society, innovation, natural beauty, harsh climate and happy people.[47]

The Finnish education system came to global prominence when its fifteen-year-olds began scoring the highest marks in OECD's "Programme for International Student Assessment" (PISA) tests in the first decade of this century. These tests are designed to evaluate "the extent to which … students, near the end of their compulsory education, have

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[44]A. Lillard, and N. Else-Quest, "Evaluating Montessori Education," in *Science* 313, 2006: 1893-1894. Retrieved July 2, 2019. http://www.montessori-science.org/Science_Evaluating_Montessori_Education_Lillard.pdf

[45]A. Lillard, "Shunned and Admired: Montessori, Self-Determination, and a Case for Radical School Reform," in *Educational Psychology Review* (Springer US, 2019): 1-27. Retrieved July 2, 2019. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10648-019-09483-3

[46]"History of Waldorf Schools," in *Wikipedia,* March 11, 2020. Retrieved June 27, 2019. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Waldorf_schools

[47]Finland was declared the happiest country on Earth in the World Happiness Report in 2018 and in 2019.

acquired key knowledge and skills that are essential for full participation in modern societies."[48] Though the latest PISA results have shown Finland losing the top position, it is still in the top ten.

The Finnish school curriculum is a three-tier system, whereby the National Core Curriculum outlines the general guidelines, the district level curriculum is further targeted to local needs, and the final school-level curriculum is the one being delivered to students at schools and is the result of further refinement by each particular school administrators and teachers.

Though the curriculum is described as 'subject-based,' it nevertheless emphasises equality, equity, justice, quality and experiential learning, while teacher-training is of absolute importance. Recently, the Finnish education began a shift towards providing students with competences and skills instead of just knowledge of subjects.[49] The system is also referred to as 'comprehensive school model.'[50]

When it comes to the education of immigrant children, Niemi writes: The aim of immigrant education is equality, working bilingualism and multiculturalism. The goals of immigrant education are to prepare immigrants for integration into the Finnish education system and society, to support their cultural identity and provide them with a functioning bilingualism so that in addition to Finnish or Swedish, they have a command of their own native language.[51]

Once again, equity is emphasised when it comes to education for all, including immigrants, many of whom are Muslims. Consequently, there are no Islamic schools in Finland, but Muslims have access to religious education through public schools.[52] Last, but equally important point is about teacher training. All schoolteachers (even at primary level) in Finland are required to obtain a master's degree. This requirement is aimed at increasing the standard of teaching at all levels.[53]

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[48]OECD, *PISA 2015 Results: Policies and Practices for Successful Schools,* Volume II, (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2016), 25. Retrieved June 27, 2019. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264267510-en

[49]Erja Vitikka, Leena Krokfors, and Elis Hurmerinta, "The Finnish National Core Curriculum: Structure and Development," in Hannele Niemi, Auli Toom, and Arto Kallioniemi (eds.), *Miracle of Education: The Principles and Practices of Teaching and Learning in Finnish Schools* (Rotterdam: SensePublishers, 2012).

[50]Hannele Niemi, "The Societal Factors Contributing to Education and Schooling in Finland," in Hannele Niemi, Auli Toom, and Arto Kallioniemi (eds.), *Miracle of Education: The Principles and Practices of Teaching and Learning in Finnish Schools* (Rotterdam: SensePublishers, 2012).

[51]Ibid., 23.

[52]M. Daneesh Shakeel, "Islamic Schooling in the Cultural West: A Systematic Review of the Issues Concerning School Choice," *Religions* 9, 2018. doi:10.3390/rel9120392.

[53]H. Niemi, "The Societal Factors."

The schools and school systems above represent a reality that is different from the mainstream education practiced across the world. These alternative schools have their own philosophies that students and staff subscribe to and practice. Students at these schools are treated with respect and their success in learning is facilitated through low teacher-student ratio. The schools are non-authoritarian and democratic in nature and involve different stakeholders in the management of schools and programmes. Their curricula emphasise the study of issues and problems in an interdisciplinary manner rather than strictly following the given traditional disciplines that are disconnected from each other. Assessment of student development is non-threatening and looks at the personality of the student as a whole rather than the ability to perform at exams. Lastly, the schoolteachers get specialised training in accordance with their respective philosophies.[54] Consequently, alternative education has its own ecosystem with schools, curricula, teachers and teacher learning programmes, assessment approaches and methodologies.

With regards to tertiary education, it can also be classified as mainstream and alternative. Most of the universities around the world practice the mainstream approach whereby studies are divided into specific disciplines, semesters, centralised assessments, and corporate style management. Alternative is anything that is different from mainstream.

When it comes to ethics, it is taught as a subject within different disciplines but often the culture of ethics within university environment is lacking.[55] This is one of the reasons why scandals take place at universities around the world. The 2019 college admissions scandal in the US[56] indicates the susceptibility of higher education institutions to corruption in developed nations while it is rampant in middle- and low-income countries according to Transparency International *Global Corruption Report: Education.[57]* The culture of diminution of ethics in higher education can also be attributed to corporate model of mainstream universities, which seek business-like efficiency in governing the institutions of higher learning. Such management style puts unnecessary pressure on administration, faculty, and students. Consequently, this results in unhealthy competition, undercutting, plagiarism and other corrupt practices among the university campus community, whereas academic freedom promotes the "pursuit and dissemination of truth."[58] Therefore, higher

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[54]For an excellent review of alternative schooling, please, see Anne Sliwka, "The Contribution of Alternative Education," in OECD, *Innovating to Learn, Learning to Innovate* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2008). https://www.oecd.org/education/ceri/40805108.pdf Retrieved June 23, 2020.

[55]James F. Keenan, *University Ethics: How Colleges Can Build and Benefit from a Culture of Ethics* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015).

[56]Wikipedia, *2019 College Admissions Bribery Scandal,* Wikipedia (8 June 2020). https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019_college_admissions_bribery_scandal Retrieved June 24, 2020.

[57]Transparency International, *Global Corruption Report: Education* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

[58]Jeff Mitchell, "A Communitarian Alternative to the Corporate Model," in *Academe,* vol. 93, no. 6 (2007): 48-51.

education institutions (mainstream and alternative) that focus on "pursuit and dissemination of truth" are better at safeguarding the intellectual and moral virtues.

Thus, we can identify the following criteria for an alternative higher education institution that promotes moral values and ethical research and teaching: (1) positive social impact; (2) democratic governance; (3) trans-disciplinary problem-based curriculum; (4) academic freedom in pursuit and dissemination of truth; and (5) student-centred teaching.

Identifying institutions of higher learning based on the criteria above is an extremely difficult task primarily because most of the universities position themselves as subscribing to principles of social responsibility, democracy, non-discrimination and equal opportunity, as well as academic freedom. This is particularly so in institutions of higher learning in Europe and North America and in other culturally similar countries, such as Australia and New Zealand. However, similar policy statements can be found in university websites almost anywhere in the developing world. So, officially most universities in the world subscribe to good governance, democracy, freedom, and recently sustainability. However, few universities combine all five criteria stated above. Hence, identifying such universities, classifying and analysing them is a subject for another research.

For this paper, it would suffice to state our earlier assertion that higher education that inculcates moral values should at least be interdisciplinary, problem-based and student-centred. There are universities and colleges that match these criteria, although these are more of an indication of what is possible in higher education. They are not all alternative and some are quite the mainstream. The example of the Quest University[59] in Canada and Colorado College[60] in USA are interesting with regards to their block plan curricula, low student-teacher ratio, and interdisciplinary studies. Worcester Polytechnic Institute (USA) is interesting with regards to its project-based curriculum (the WPI Plan introduced in 1970).[61] These New Zealand and Australia based universities – University of Auckland, University of Sydney and Western Sydney University – are recognised by the Times Higher Education World University Ranking for the sustainable development goals impact (year 2020).[62] According to Prof. Sohail Inayatullah, the list of such universities could include Tamkang University of Taiwan, which positions itself with a slogan "Creating Excellence with a Soul" strategically via the values of good conduct, intelligence, physical education, teamwork and beauty.[63] Also, University of Turku in Finland is known as a multidisciplinary research university with the values of "ethicality, criticality, creativity, openness and communality."[64]

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[59] https://questu.ca/
[60] https://www.coloradocollege.edu/
[61] https://www.wpi.edu/
[62] https://www.timeshighereducation.com/rankings/impact/2020/overall
[63] http://english.tku.edu.tw/about/index.html
[64] https://www.utu.fi/en/university/strategy-and-values

There are many more examples of higher educational institutions around the world that correspond, at least partially, with the criteria above. However, the main message to understand from these examples is that universities in the twenty first century must strive to liberate societies from the shackles of ignorance, arrogance, irresponsibility and neglect of basic human and environmental rights. This way, in our estimation, universities will be the transmitter and champion of moral values with respect to students and the greater society. We can end with the quote from Jeremy Henzell-Thomas, who summarised that

> [a] complete, comprehensive and integrated concept of education requires that the teacher is not only responsible for the instruction and training of the mind and the transmission of knowledge (*ta'lim*) but also with the education of the whole being and the nurturing of the soul (*tarbiyah*), the cultivation of moral discipline (*ta'dib*), and how to learn from one another in the spirit of critical openness and respect for diversity (*ta'aruf*).[65]

6. Conclusion and Recommendations for Public Education

This article presented the primary thoughts of our research on the necessity of morality-based education in order to achieve better and more responsible societies. Findings of this study can be summarised in the following points.

First, the significance of education in character and morality development was articulated throughout human history by philosophers and polymaths including Aristotle, Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina. In fact, their vision of the scope of education was much more comprehensive than our modern understanding of education. Ibn Sina, for instance, viewed education not only as intellectual development, but a holistic one, where exercise, food, drink, sleep and cleanliness play as important a role as reading, writing and memorisation. Ethics and morality had been the major theme of Muslim scholars in the medieval times as they deemed *adab* and *ʿilm* as two facets of the same mission. As education is about acquisition of knowledge, ethics has always remained as essential part of that process. Such perspective remains being a central debate in modern Islamic thought. For example, Naquib Al-Attas also viewed the purpose of education in our days as the pursuit of goodness in the spiritual and moral lives of human beings.

Second, a profound shift took place in educational system since the age of Industrial Revolution, particularly concerning its purpose and methods. Earlier philosophers and great thinkers deemed that aim of education was to form a complete personality, including his mind, body and character. In short, education was supposed to prepare individuals to live in society. These noble purposes completely differ from the aims of modern educational system which heavily focuses on producing employees for industrial settings through an emphasis on STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) subjects,

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[65]Jeremy Henzell-Thomas, "Towards a Language of Integration," in Ziauddin Sardar, and Jeremy Hanzell-Thomas *Rethinking Reform in Higher Education: From Islamization to Integration of Knowledge* (London: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2017), 218.

standardised or centralised exam-based assessment, divisions by age, and teacher-centred classroom settings.

Third, the existing contemporary education system produces mostly excellences without souls who are dominated not by ethical values but by self-interest and greedy competition attitude. The current world crisis at all aspects of society spanning from the failure of family institutions up to environmental disasters are directly related to the absence of morality cultivating elements in educational systems. Thus, many educators and scholars indicated the need for moral values in the educational process. Such views today can be collectively classified as holistic (identified as alternative education, problem-based or value-based education, or trans-disciplinary education), which denotes a particular approach to teaching and learning that is characterised by experiential learning and positive human values.

Fourth, the paper suggested that morality-based education especially the religious one is capable to improve society and behaviours. A few examples from the USA, Mexico and Turkey demonstrated that practicing religious people tend to be less involved in criminal activities. It also prevents anti-social behaviour, tendency towards immorality and criminal behaviour and substance abuse. Thus, adolescents who received religious education have better family relationships, lower rates of delinquency, greater mental and physical well-being.

Moreover, as the paper highlighted, there have been some attempts to establish alternative school systems in many parts of the world throughout the 20th century, which are different from mainstream exam-oriented, centralised and standardised system. These alternative systems can be characterised by integrated curriculum that is centred on the student, experiential, holistic or active learning, low student-teacher ratio, individualised approach, and non-traditional assessment. But still, these alternative schools are extremely limited and not available for the majority of general public. Consequently, this paper suggests to study these isolated educational experiences in the way of improving educational systems and practices.

There are some recommendations could be drafted at the end of this study. We acknowledge that modern educational system has morality components as theoretical knowledge. Yet, multiple experiences around the world show that teaching subjects that deal with morality as a theoretical subject does not translate to ethical behaviour in children that attend those classes and pass exams. This paper highlights that morality cannot be taught in classrooms, rather, it should be learned by observing examples and models in society. Therefore, the schools and universities should consider community engagement programmes in order to enhance learning of ethics and morality by 'doing education' and assigning responsibilities as effectiveness of such method was proven by Makarenko in Russia a century ago.

Hence, the need for values education should not be understood as a supplementary school subject but this study recommends it as a comprehensive social programme.

Educational institutions, as well as all other social institutions including families, must play a vital role in such a programme contributing to society through work, spirituality, and focus on the essence of education rather than the form.

Also, this study suggests that unhealthy competition, undercutting, plagiarism and other corrupt practices that exist among the university campus community completely conflict with the very foundations of academic freedom that is intended to promote the 'pursuit and dissemination of truth.' Therefore, higher education institutions (mainstream and alternative) that inculcate moral values should at least be interdisciplinary, problem-based and student-centred.

In sum, this paper proposes to re-focus education towards morality and universal values, which have always been the traditional aim of education in general, while professional and vocational training had a strong ethical foundation. A move towards holistic approach should be the next step in education as current moral and social crises indicate a need to develop humans in a holistic way. So, education should aim at developing the human beings' intellectual, social, creative, spiritual and physical capabilities. But the foremost, educational system of future should be capable to teach adolescences to be happy as well as responsible and dynamic human beings, and form a complete balanced personality, including his mind, body and character.

Acknowledgement

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