# Socialisation and character education in the Muslim world: exploring the role, impact, and necessity of indoctrination

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**Abstract**

This investigation seeks to understand the importance of imparting character education to students across the educational spectrum. It examines the intricate nexus lying between shared boundaries that form the provision of education, socialisation, and indoctrination. It delves into the multifaceted elements of character education, emphasising the transmission of moral, social, religious, and ethical values. By analysing the role of educators as key influencers, the research underscores the challenges in fostering positive characteristics amidst the modern digital landscape and diverse cultural contexts, particularly in the Muslim world. The study employs a qualitative descriptive approach, utilising a narrative literature review to understand the subjective aspects of morality and social values and appreciate the importance of character education within religious and secular frameworks. There is no doubt that education has a profound impact on students, especially in their formative years, shaping them into moral, well-behaved, and intelligent members of society. It should equip students with the knowledge and character to thrive as contributing citizens, both locally and globally, in the digital age. This study found that teachers are somewhat reluctant to be accused of 'indoctrination', but this is inherently an integral element of education, and should therefore be embraced, acknowledged, and used for good: instilling critical thinking, along with a moral compass and the values needed to be upstanding and successful members of society.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami pentingnya memberikan pendidikan karakter kepada siswa di seluruh spektrum pendidikan, dengan mengkaji hubungan yang kompleks antara pendidikan, sosialisasi, dan indoktrinasi. Penelitian ini menyelami berbagai elemen pendidikan karakter, dengan menekankan pada transmisi nilai-nilai moral, sosial, agama, dan etika. Dengan menganalisis peran pendidik sebagai pemberi pengaruh utama, penelitian ini menyoroti tantangan dalam menumbuhkan karakter positif di tengah lanskap digital modern dan konteks budaya yang beragam, terutama di dunia Muslim. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, dengan tinjauan literatur naratif untuk memahami aspek subjektif moralitas dan nilai-nilai sosial, serta menghargai pentingnya pendidikan karakter dalam kerangka kerja religius dan sekuler. Tidak diragukan lagi bahwa pendidikan memiliki dampak mendalam pada siswa, terutama di tahun-tahun awal, yang akan membentuk mereka menjadi anggota masyarakat yang bermoral, berperilaku baik, dan cerdas. Pendidikan seyogyanya membekali siswa dengan pengetahuan dan karakter untuk dapat berkembang menjadi warga yang kontributif, baik lokal maupun global, di tengah era digital. Studi ini menemukan bahwa guru menolak dianggap melakukan 'indoktrinasi', tetapi hal ini secara inheren merupakan elemen integral dari pendidikan yang harus diakui, dan digunakan untuk tujuan yang baik: menanamkan pemikiran kritis, dipadu dengan moral dan nilai-nilai yang dibutuhkan untuk menjadi anggota masyarakat yang berhasil.

**Keywords:** *Socialisation, Education, Indoctrination, Islamic education, Morality, Ethics.*

**Introduction**

Education is inherently indoctrinatory in scope and nature. First and foremost, the primary purpose of education is to transmit knowledge and ideas from a teacher to a student or body of students. Undoubtedly, education is the transmission of knowledge, facilitating a student to comprehend a set curriculum of materials, data, information, and corpus of knowledge (Stürmer, Könings, and Seidel, 2013). Accordingly, discharging this responsibility is a paramount and sacred objective of teaching practice, and therefore takes a

significant proportion of allocated teaching time. Also, this teaching practice element can be assessed and quantified through summative and formative assessments, and both teaching practices and students can be measured for competency. Attainment and value-added to students can be measured and ascertained.

As social creatures, it is imperative that members of society, particularly those in their formative years, are appropriate socialised. Socialisation being the transmission of social mores, values, ideas, norms, attitudes and standards of acceptable behaviour (Wurdinger and Carlson, 2009). Thus, society can continue to function in a manner that is well- balanced, moral, just, and economically productive, with the social norms, values, morality and culture perpetuated, maintaining the quality and nature of the cultural and social context. It has been affirmed time and again, through the generations, that the youth need to learn suitable behaviour, particularly through the lens of the norms and values of society, cultural sensitivities, and there has always been a substantial emphasis on students learning through personal experience.

Education, especially at a young age, is the sandbox of life and living within wider society. Young children, particularly in education settings, impact each other regarding cognitive skills, social relationships, interactions and behaviours (Kington, Gates, and Sammons, 2013). Accordingly, it is necessary for teachers and other educators to mould and shape the paradigm of thought of students, shape their mindsets, and regulate their exhibited behaviour, behavioural characteristics, attitudes and moral value systems, so that they may learn to do this more independently and appropriately as they age and mature. This will then be carried through to adulthood, and transmitted to others (such as their children, friends, family, colleagues, and others with whom they have personal contact). This is inherently indoctrinatory, but certainly necessary for the maintenance of a fully functioning and well-regulated society. Without the transmission of values, society would invariably break down and anarchy would

eventually ensue. It is unsurprising that Melhuish (2004) found that the provision and receipt of early years education has profound benefits for both the student and the wider society. This has been well-established, as the study by Osborn and Milbank (1987) held that children with at least some type of preschool education had better outcomes at school than their peers who did not. Educators accordingly have a profound responsibility to ensure that their students do well both academically and in respect of their cultural context. Behaviour, test results and other yardsticks of success must all be met.

Weingarten (2023), president of and writing for The American Federation of Teachers, infers that teachers are afraid of indoctrination. While American teachers are being (rightly) criticised due to pushing immoral agendas upon students, contrary to the will of parents, it is abundantly clear that teachers are fearful of what they understand to be indoctrinating students. However, it must be stated that indoctrination is not necessarily a 'dirty word' within the realm of education. In fact, it has the potential for significant benefit, as well as harm. Therefore, it needs to be used in a positive manner and within set parameters to ensure that individual students and society at large benefit from the values and attitudes imparted to students. Character education can, and ought to, be used as a force for good. At present, the current body of research does not sufficiently outline or detail the need for positive indoctrination by way of character education, and this article seeks to remedy this.

Ejderberg (2021) stipulates that education is the transmission of mere facts, whereas indoctrination is the transmission of knowledge, attitudes or ideas being used to shape learners to believe in facts or ideas from or with an ideological motive. Furthermore, indoctrination incorporates both the realms of spiritual and moral learning (Lepherd, 2014). In summation, indoctrinatory practice is the transmission of moral, social, political, and ideological values. This article explains why it is necessary to respect character education from

both a secular and religious vantage point, especially in relation to Islam and Muslims.

Humans are inherently social and live in social groups and units. Owing to this, it is necessary for the norms, values and expectations to be clearly passed from one generation to another. This oils the cooperative relationships that are necessary for a working society, and for social, economic and otherneeds to be met (Farkhani et al., 2022).

From an Islamic standpoint, which is corroborated by other faiths, good behaviour is of utmost importance. Justice, benevolence, charity, kindness, faith and duty are key concepts to Islam, and also other faiths. From this perspective, it is clear that character education is an integral element of Islamic education and education in general. This rings true for every society.

Cetrisnawati et al. (2023) outline the key elements of character as being resilient and having fortitude in light of difficulties, working diligently and industriously, being respectful to those in authority, peers, and others, being kind and caring, avoid oppressive practices, and act ethically, with the highest integrity and probity. Prameswari and Suryani (2023), as corroborated by Miyake and Kane (2022), go further and detail that avoiding delay and procrastination is vital, as well as avoiding harmful activities or those that can be harmful or contribute to adversity. Islamically, both the Quran and hadith encourage the above and also cater for the mental, emotional, spiritual, physical, academic, social, and economic facets of life, and promote the above, as well as deep introspection and analysis of one's behaviour in light of ethics. Further, the knowledge of being judged after death is an integral theme within Islam, as justice is a key feature. For justice to exist, it is necessary to both promote ethical and moral behaviour, as well as to punish wrongdoing. Accordingly, students ought to be aware of their actions, be mindful of how others perceive them, and how they might be judged in the hereafter.

Character education is essential for a multitude of reasons, encompassing the ethical and moral development of individuals to ensure that they internalize and practice behavior aligned with societal norms and values. It plays a pivotal role in socializing individuals, instilling empathy, social skills, and compassion, enabling them to navigate the complexities of human interactions with grace and understanding. This education equips students with the tools to handle annoyances and conflicts in a manner that respects social, religious, and cultural values, fostering a harmonious coexistence. Moreover, it imbues students with a sense of determination, fortitude, and mental/emotional strength, empowering them to face life's challenges with resilience. Character education also emphasizes the importance of social and civic responsibility, teaching students how to be active and responsible members of modern society. It complements academic success by highlighting the value of being well-rounded individuals, capable in academic, social, and athletic domains. Additionally, it actively discourages negative, harmful, detrimental, criminal, immoral, and 'sinful' behavior, guiding students towards positive life choices. Ultimately, the cultivation of these traits cumulatively prepares students to lead fulfilling and successful lives, contributing positively to their communities and the world at large (Hulawa, 2019).

Given that the above characteristics are not entirely universal when it comes to application, cultural, social, economic, and faith-based context is exceptionally important. The adumbrated points outline a comprehensive framework for holistic education, emphasising ethical, moral, social, and civic development and fulfilling the necessary academic facet to which educators must cater. First, fostering ethical and moral behaviour aligned with societal norms is crucial for developing responsible individuals (Narvaez, 2006). The second point highlights the importance of social skills, empathy, and compassion, which are essential for interpersonal relationships, community building, and facilitating well-rounded employees and parents (Durlak et al.,

2011). Managing conflicts and annoyances in accordance with social, religious, and cultural values underscores the need for culturally responsive education (Gay, 2018). Culturally sensitive education can evidently differ owing to cultural context, and within the varying strata and sub-sets existing within societies (Razaq, 2023). Nevertheless, key concepts are universally held and ought to be highlighted. Building determination and emotional resilience is critical for mental health and lifelong success (Duckworth et al., 2007). Instilling social and civic responsibility prepares students for active citizenship in modern society (Levinson, 2012). This is particularly important in the post-COVID world (Zamakda Allison, 2021). The integration of academic, social, and athletic development supports the notion that education should produce well-rounded individuals capable of excelling across various domains (Bailey, 2006). All major faiths attest to this, holding that health and athleticism are gifts from God. Discouraging negative behaviours and promoting positive traits contribute to the moral fabric of society and individual fulfilment. They also allow for a content and prosperous family life; the most fundamental element of social living. Collectively, these educational objectives aim to equip students with the skills and virtues necessary for a successful and fulfilling life (Noddings, 2003).

This research is necessary to appreciate the importance of character education, and the different elements thereof. Also, little research exists in this regard, amalgamating both religious values (particularly Islamic) with character, and secular education. It can help to shape the body of literature, inform educators, parents, administrators and educational authorities, as well as wider society, and help to focus on the needs of character education.

After performing a narrative review of the available evidence, this research utilizes a qualitative descriptive approach. This is particularly important, owing to notions of subjectivity related to morality and social values. This corresponds with the Islamic perspective of respect and deference for social and cultural norms and values, insofar as they comply with the body of

Islamic law, and the spirit of the hadith. Nevertheless, the majority of religions (despite arising at different times and locations) share key values relating to morality, even though they differ regarding theological beliefs, doctrine, liturgy and rituals. This goes some way in showing, to an extent, the existence or need for objective morality to regulate societies and the conduct of individuals.

This research method is effectively obtaining and examining a wide array of literature relating to character education, and indoctrination within the realm of education. Numerous sources were utilised, ranging from journal articles, reports, academic texts, and teacher training materials, as well as texts based on philosophy, the Holy Quran and hadiths to provide background knowledge and guidance. To a significant extent, for Muslims, Islamic morality is the objective yardstick of what is right and wrong. Therefore, is it necessary for these to be transmitted to students, particularly those who are younger. The qualitative character of this research allows for ideas and opinions to be adequately explored and adumbrated, which is particularly useful with respect to moral values, attitudes, norms and mores. This is highly analogous to Christian schools, where Christian values are at the fore of the values imparted, or Jewish schools (*yeshiva*).

Miles and Huberman (1994) model of analysis was applied to the materials examined. Three stages of analysis are performed: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data was extracted and codified, exhibited and noted concisely (appreciating the narrative outlined), and conclusions were drawn. This article is the result of the research conducted, and provides a qualitative description of the importance of character education, particularly from an Islamic standpoint. It also takes into consideration both secular views and those of other faiths.

Using the above methods makes the available narrative apparent, and a fuller appreciation of the need for character education to be imparted to students can be obtained. Whilst this study paid particular regard to the need

for character education in light of Islamic theology, other religious beliefs and practices were also borne in mind, along with the secular school of thought- where morality is simply a social construct, but nevertheless still corresponds with the key values arising from faith (especially the Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam).

**Education, character formation, and the role of indoctrination**

Education serves many purposes, and the foremost is the transmission of information from an educator who holds knowledge to a student who does not. To an extent, education is the transmission of knowledge, facilitating for a student to comprehend a set curriculum of materials, data, information, and corpus of knowledge (Stürmer, Könings, and Seidel, 2012). There is no doubt, particularly in the modern era, where students are subjected to an almost tsunami of test after test, and exam after exam, students need to be taught the knowledge necessary so that they can pass these exams (regardless of the manner that the testing is conducted), and also learn the skills and aptitudes that ought to be exhibited so that they may be able to test well.

Somewhat divergently, Dewey (1981) averred that the paramount aim of education is to shape learners into well-behaved and well-socialized "members of society". Consequently, from this perspective, it is the role of education to impart social norms and values. It can also be viewed as if teaching the prescribed curriculum is almost incidental to imparting norms and values. However, this perspective does not discount the need for materials, data and information to be transferred from teacher to student, as being a member of society requires that one is knowledgeable. There is also an integral need for members of the workforce to be skilled and knowledgeable, in addition to having social aptitude and morally upright behaviour. Daratista & Yusuf (2021) state that character and morality-based education must be imparted, particularly at a young age, as they are more perceptive to it: both by educators and family

members, the latter of which shoulder the greater burden to indoctrinate, shape, or otherwise socialise students to appreciate social and religious expectations, norms and values, and to partake in individual and collective rituals, and engage in socially (and divinely) expected forms of worship.

The need for both intelligent and socially adept members of society to be formed by way of education is corroborated by Anderson and Krathwohl's (2001) taxonomy for learning, where it was stipulated that learning takes part within the cultural and social context, and that this cannot be alienated from educational provision. A combination of both subject knowledge and social values can be combined, as evidenced by the use of digital technology applications to advance religious knowledge and moral awareness (Warmansyah et al., 2023). This is particularly relevant, given that cognitive patterns and behaviour can be influenced by the knowledge learnt through formal and informal educational structures, coupled with the technology necessary to thrive in the modern digital era.

Indoctrination is often viewed with negative connotations but is inherently tied to the educational process and is an integral element, particularly in the context of character education, socialisation, and moral development. It is an inevitable aspect of any educational system, regardless of the efforts made to mitigate or prevent it. This highlights the need for a deliberate approach to indoctrination, ensuring it aligns with promoting good values and morality. By embedding character education within the curriculum, and making educators aware of the need to cater to character education by way of indoctrination, educators can systematically foster positive attitudes, social aptitudes, and ethical behaviours. Such an approach is central to maintaining an orderly society where individuals can discern right from wrong, and act in ways that uphold social harmony and ethical standards.

Furthermore, indoctrination serves a critical role in reinforcing social norms and values, which are crucial for societal cohesion. As Dewey (1981)

suggested, one of the most fundamental aims of education is to shape individuals into well-behaved and well-socialised members of society. This shaping process involves imparting the social norms, values, and cultural mores necessary for individuals to function effectively within their communities and cultural context. Indoctrination in this context does not merely transmit factual knowledge, but also imbues the moral and ethical frameworks that underpin a functioning society. Without this, there is a compelling risk of social decay, where individuals may lack the necessary guidance and foundations to navigate the complexities of social interactions and moral dilemmas, potentially leading to a profound detriment to individuals, and potentially a breakdown in social order. Thus, there is a need and obligation for indoctrinatory practices to be used to ensure that well-socialised members of society exist and that social and moral decay is averted.

Most societies in the world value faith, religion, and spirituality. A majority of individuals in the world believe in God, and a huge number of individuals hold the view that it is profoundly necessary to believe in God so that one may be moral and have good values. Being socially adept requires character education to be imparted, so that individuals can act in the manner socially required of them in various scenarios and settings.

Strong examples of this were identified and adumbrated by Tamir et al. (2020), and include highly Catholic Brazil, where 84% felt that the sine qua non of being moral and having good values was faith in religion. This is dwarfed by Indonesia, which is religiously plural but has the largest Muslim population in the world, whereby 96% of citizens felt that the sine qua non of being moral and having good values was faith in religion. Further, the same research shows that 62% of the global population avers that religion plays a very or somewhat important role in life. Several countries, such as Germany, Bulgaria and Russia are becoming more religious and religion/ religious-based morality are becoming more prevalent, reversing the trend of secularisation that took place

in the 20th century. This has also been reflected in current voting patterns and the popularity of social media endorsing religion and faith-based morality. Generally, on both the global and local stages, the social and cultural context is religious, therefore, education and the moral values imparted must be mindful of this. Even in cases of religious plurality, key pillars of faith are common, and it is imperative for these mores, values, attitudes and ideas to be given the reverence they deserve, particularly in respect of the provision of character education.

Barrow and Woods (1975) hold that everyone is inevitably indoctrinated, even if steps are taken to preventor mitigate it, or not. Therefore, it is profoundly clear that indoctrination cannot be avoided, and that it must take the form of character education, to imbibe and reinforce good values and morality, as well as foster a positive attitude, and facilitate social aptitudes and important social values. It is a naïve belief that any education system can exist without [a] indoctrinating and [b] being responsible for appropriately socialising students and conveying morality and good values. Therefore, it is abundantly clear that character education, whether it is viewed as indoctrinatory or otherwise, is necessary for both the individual and for the maintenance of an orderly society. If trusted educators, the family unit, and respected authority figures cannot perform the role of character education and indoctrination sufficiently well (or if they shirk their responsibility), then somebody or something else will step in to fill the void. This is an intolerable scenario, and can lead to social decay and potentially a situation where right and wrong cannot be differentiated, and ethics and morality are no longer relevant.

From a philosophical standpoint, Ibn Khaldun (translated, 2015) proffered that humans have been imbued with four innate characteristics. These are that human are capable of thought and being aware of knowledge; are innately political and require regulation over and above self-regulation; are economic beings; and most importantly, are civilised and seek to act in moral,

just and upright ways, despite falling short on occasion. Thus, from this standpoint, the transmission of knowledge and skills is necessary, coupled with the transmission of morality and solid character education.

Amalia (2022) examined the provision of Islamic education and moral values to students. It is the case that teachers ought to model good behaviours, and do their utmost to become a positive role model for students, who can then gradually foster and build their own personalities and Islamic character by way of seeing the exemplary character and habits of their teachers. The foremost role of education is the fostering and formation of an intelligent student with a virtuous personality. Regardless of one's moral yardstick, this perspective is extremely robust and difficult to turn away from.

As per Zakaria (2020), education is fundamentally a learning process-whereby the dual objectives of learning information as well as one's character. In any civilised society, this is the inalienable role of education. Therefore, it is impossible to separate the two from each other. Thusly, it is apparent that education is an all-encompassing process, whereby students are equipped with the tools, knowledge, skills, aptitude, moral sense, attitude, and beliefs necessary to lead a good life, as well as being an upstanding and beneficial citizen and member of society.

Notwithstanding the fact that different societies have different values, on the whole, numerous values are common and permeate almost every society (Susilo and Pratamasari, 2018). From an Islamic vantage point, cultural variances are warmly embraced and acknowledge, to the extent that Islamic law and moral values are complied with. Therefore, character education ought to be mindful of both religious sensitivities, and be in accordance with social and cultural mores and values.

Cetrisnawati et al. (2023) hold that learning attitudes, a positive outlook, and an inclination to work diligently and attentively, as well as being respectful towards teachers/ educators and other students, persisting in the face of

perceived adversity, and acting in a moral and ethical manner is of paramount importance. Further, acting according to Islamic values, which perfectly align with the above, leads to social and academic success. Islam and other religions teach fortitude in light to testing times, provide a greater understanding of why testing times arise and how resilience is needed. Therefore, in respect to character education, both resilience and fortitude are pivotal and form the spine of the character of individuals. The need for this to be imparted helps students in every realm- ranging from educational and spiritual, to the physical travails of life and the need to lead a healthy and positive lifestyle. The need to do this is resolutely laboured in Islam, both in the Quran and hadith.

Muslima (2021) corroborates this and indicates that the above becomes apparent through the course of study, leading to self-reflection, rectification, and greater self-awareness in light of group dynamics. This can also be reflected in how educators modify practice to ensure the best outcomes for students (Warmansyah, 2022).

## Examining the essence of indoctrination in shaping social norms and character development

In any civilised society, it is necessary for norms and values to be transmitted from one generation to the next. Every member of society is expected to comply with the values of the cultural context that they find themselves in, and the role of educators is to ensure that these values are transmitted, so that society can perpetuate itself, and so that students can be moral, just and well-socialised functioning members of society.

Conversely, indoctrinatory practices within education can be criticised for several reasons, including that it fetters critical and free-thinking, caused close-mindedness, stifles diversity, and is unethical (Habl, 2017; Martin, 2023). However, the authors both accept that indoctrination cannot be entirely avoided. Both authors fail to recognise that students can in fact be provided

with solid character education which allows for them to act as moral and socially adept individuals in the context of modern society, but also have discernment and critical thinking skills. It is not suitable to arrive at the conclusion that students are either majestic free-thinkers, or closed-minded bigots, as the situation is certainly not either 'black or white'. It is certainly possible to have elements of both, which ought to be promoted. Providing strong character education and indoctrination does not necessarily lead to intellectually passive students. In fact, students having the awareness to critique other perspectives on an academic and objective basis is far more effective than robotically being programmed to have a particular perspective.

Further, it would be an extremely naïve averment to make that education can exist without the character of students being impacted. Socialisation is a key function of any education system, and it is unbecoming of the education system and education providers to teach facts and knowledge, without also imparting social norms and values, and expected behaviours. The classroom experience in itself, being the sandbox of society reflects how students ought to behave- with respect for authority, to study to the best of their abilities, to work hard and diligently, to obey instructions, to deal with others with kindness and care, to practice sharing, not to fight or touch each other in inappropriate ways, and to appreciate the unspoken cues from others. Students also learn resilience and learn from their mistakes. They also learn that their actions have positive and negative repercussions, particularly from praise and chastisement of them or others. In fact, it would be impossible for character not to be formed within the educational context, particularly the classroom.

Whilst peer to peer learning is pivotal, a key element of character formation and learning suitable behaviour in the classroom arises from the behaviour of the teacher (Cruess et al., 2008; Ming-Yue et al., 2022). Teachers ought to model impeccable behaviour, so that the students under their care reflect on this, internalise it, and then bring it to practice. Teachers who act

inappropriately, or model unbecoming or otherwise unsatisfactory behaviour both in terms of their spoken and unspoken behaviour, mannerisms and techniques, can show students that inappropriate behaviour is acceptable.

Even if it is abundantly clear that certain behaviours are solely for teachers to carry out, this can be internalised, and played out in the playground or corridors, or carried through to adulthood and perpetuated. Yunita et al. (2021) highlight this, and go further in stating that this is why teachers ought to employ teaching methods that encourage kindness and compassion, so that these positive behaviours can be modelled by the students as they progress through life, and so that they are perpetuated. Motivation for good behaviour and worship is required, and ought to be modelled in front of students, as well as extending a spoken or unspoken invitation to them to join in. This is due to the fact that it is easier for younger students to emulate modelled behaviours, as opposed to the behaviours that religious and non-religious teachers tell students are those that ought to be followed.

By way of a critique, some teachers may fall short of the high standards expected, which can have a detrimental effect. Safeguards ought to be put into place to ensure teachers always act with the highest level of integrity and probity. Teachers' behavior carries significant weight, and they must be mindful of this at all times. This can be challenging at times, particularly in the face of unruly, defiant or problematic students, but the teacher must rise above the situation and remain unwavering in their conduct. If need be, different coping mechanisms ought to be employed.

Muazza et al. (2019) highlighted the potential negatives of the lack of classroom discipline, which can impact students both in terms of academic achievement, but can also have a negative impact on their social skills, as well as being harmful to the teachers. In a religious context, the perpetuation of religious values can wane, leading to the detriment of society, and also harm students in a mental, emotional or spiritual context. A good outcome for

students is doing well on formative and summative assessments, as well as gaining the ability to be disciplined, productive, and well socialised and behaved members of society. With respect to being disciplined and well-focused, this is something inherent to Islam, and is strongly analogous with the five daily prayers, which must be carried out properly, diligently, with sincerity, and in a timely manner. This has benefits which are both spiritual, emotional and physical, and teaches key skills, such as time-management, punctuality, sincerity and diligence.

In respect of character formation, being able to use correct volume, pitch, tone of voice and language is key. Transmitting this is a key element of education. Further, respect for authority and other members of their own social group and others, being mindful and respectful of the opinions and ideas of others, comprehending verbal and non-verbal cues, accepting and being mindful of feedback provided (on a peer-to-peer basis, and from educators), dressing appropriately, being punctual, and acting in accordance with written and unwritten rules is pivotal. Thus, from this, the character of students is formed, and over time, becomes ingrained both in them and wider society. This helps to build a well-functioning and moral society.

In addition to these facets of character education, from an Islamic standpoint, it is important for religious philosophy, rituals (such as prompt praying of salaat), the need to be caring and charitable towards others, to wish peace and contentment for others (as exemplified by the practice of greeting others with *al-salam 'alaykum*), not to harm others or steal, and have faith in god as well as to be aware of social norms and values that go above and beyond the faith is of significant importance. This helps students socially, morally, ethically and spiritually, and puts them on a trajectory to perform well in society. It can also help in averting, mitigating or otherwise discouraging negative behaviours, such as bullying (Jumiarti, 2023).

Thus, what some may claim to be 'indoctrination' can have profoundly beneficially effects on both individuals and wider society, and also discourage potential criminality and immoral behaviour. If educators, trusted authorities, and the family unit fail to discharge their social and moral obligations in imparting character education on the youth, this is certainly at their own peril.

Additionally, the incorporation of religious and spiritual dimensions into education further underscores the necessity of indoctrination. By way of examples, studies like those by Amalia (2022) and Cetrisnawati et al. (2023) emphasise the importance of teachers modelling good behaviour and acting as positive role models for their students. This approach is both necessary and effective in religious education, where the transmission of moral and ethical values is intertwined with religious teachings, and is also equally important within the context of secular education. The consistent reinforcement of these values helps students internalise them, fostering a sense of resilience, fortitude, and moral integrity. It also helps individuals to be swiftly able to identify and discern right from wrong, and repudiate evil or immoral behaviours and ideas. In societies where religion plays a significant role in daily life, such as in Indonesia and Brazil (Tamir et al., 2020), the moral and ethical education provided through religious indoctrination is pivotal in shaping individuals who are both morally upright and socially responsible. This demonstrates that when intertwined with positive character education, indoctrination is vital for nurturing well-rounded individuals capable of contributing positively to society.

Whilst critical thinking certainly has a role, student must be able to function according to the norms and values of society, regardless of potential distaste or opposition to various elements. Being able to think critically does not usurp or reduce the need for character education to be imparted, even if it might be considered indoctrinatory. Despite 'indoctrination' potentially having negative connotations, it is profoundly significant to conduct, particularly with students. The music industry, gangs, prostitution rings, social media companies

and television will happily fill the role that ought to have been played, and likely cause corruption, social degeneracy, crime, immorality, and despair. This is an extremely important role to fulfill for the good of society and the individual. The absence of a solid ethical compass and strong character in students can have profoundly negative effects. A lack of shared values and ethical principles can tear apart society. This is something that strong character-building and education can avert.

## Conclusion

From the above discussion, it is apparent that indoctrination need not be a dirty word. In fact, it is squarely within the bailiwick of educators to impart upon students the necessary moral, ethical, social, religious, and character requirements upon students so that they can thrive within their local context and in the globalised digital world. Furthermore, it is apparent that students are perceived to numerous cues, and the best age-appropriate character education ought to be provided to them, both in terms of direct instruction and by educators who model the best behaviour both inside and outside the classroom. Accordingly, educators and parents must take responsibility and appropriately shape children's character.

Character is not a blank slate; individuals can pick up negative behaviours. Therefore, it is important that educators and teachers do their utmost to do as Islam commends- to command good and forbid evil. If such character education is not provided, individuals will likely obtain character education from detrimental sources, their life chances, and wider society. If diligent character education is not imparted, individuals can learn negative behaviours from peers, online, being modelled by others, or inadvertently make social faux pas. Without a common framework of ethics and morality, ethical ambiguity can take hold, leading to moral relativism, and cause for greater social conflicts which are harmful to both the individual and wider society. A degree of

objective morality must exist, and moral individuals ought to be confident enough to command good and forbid evil. As stated above, if those with the responsibility to impart character building and education on students fail to do so, those with less than altruistic motives may fill the void, and cause harm to both the individual and wider society.

Particularly in the modern digital era, youths can become exposed to content that is harmful spiritually, morally, emotionally, and physically. Students can learn abusive words, which can be normalised on online gaming platforms of social media- despite their usage being ghastly in genuine social contexts, such as with people in positions of authority, or even their peers. Violence can also be learnt or normalised, along with perverted concepts in relation to human behaviour, sexuality, and relationships. Authorities, parents, and educators need to take control and provide strong guidance to ensure that students have the resilience and discernment to make positive choices, despite the availability of harmful options. The use of drugs, inappropriate and harmful relationships with people of the same or different gender, promotion of smoking, alcoholism and drug use, as well as racism or discrimination can be learnt from social media, songs, or other sources.

Notwithstanding this, the online world [including platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram, even via the "FYP" (for you page) feature] can be used for good, including the promotion of virtue, ethics and morality, resilience, good values, and health (Ratmiati et al., 2023). Islam stands firmly as a bastion against the harmful phenomena previously mentioned, which can be detrimental to both the individual and wider society. Thus, character education ought to be infused with religious education, as morality and ethics organically arise from religion and faith. Even in a secular context, where morality and ethics can be somewhat subjective, the vestiges of religion and faith cannot be hidden.

In conclusion, educators (as well as parents) have the obligation to form and shape learning attitudes, encourage students to a positive outlook, foster an inclination to work hard, diligently, and attentively, as well as being respectful towards teachers and educators, other students, and members of society. Furthermore, it is imperative to encourage students not to give up when times are hard, or when they come across something challenging- persisting in the face of perceived adversity is one of the most important elements of education, as well as teaching students that acting morally and ethically is of paramount importance. Character education is a force for good, both for individual students and also for broader society. Accordingly, it should be given the importance it deserves, rather than just being incidental to the regular academic requirements set by those who control the curriculum.

While educators may be hesitant to embrace the concept of 'indoctrination' due to its negative connotations, it is crucial to recognize that imparting values, ethics, and morals is an intrinsic part of education. This process should not only be acknowledged but also actively embraced and utilized for the greater good. By instilling critical thinking alongside a moral compass, educators can equip students with the necessary values to become upstanding and successful members of society. When infused with religious and ethical teachings, character education can be a powerful tool to combat the pervasive influence of harmful ideologies prevalent in the digital age. Through this holistic approach, educators can foster a generation capable of navigating the complexities of the modern world with resilience, discernment, and a commitment to positive social change. Teachers and parents alike are responsible for cultivating learning attitudes that encourage a positive outlook, diligence, attentiveness, and respect, ultimately preparing students to face challenges with persistence and act with moral and ethical integrity. In this manner, the essence of education is honoured, trancending merely the

accumulation of knowledge but the development of character that leads to a fulfilling and successful life for both the individual and society as a whole

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