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Inculcating Ethical and Moral Values amongst the E-Learners: Proposing a Model for E-Learning Platforms

AbdulHafeez Muhammad 
Bahria University, PAKISTAN

Muhammad Abid Malik 
Beaconhouse National University,
PAKISTAN

Hafiz Abid Mahmood Malik 
Arab Open University, KINGDOM OF
BAHRAIN

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Abstract: Under the influence of neo-liberalism and marketization, education is increasingly becoming more content-focused than character one. Ignoring the fact that money, science, and technology may take a person to the moon, these are ethical and moral values that take him/her to the even loftier heights of humanity. Recent COVID-19-driven focus on information and communication technology (ICT) and digital learning have further added to these woes by focusing more on human-machine interaction than human-human ones. Traditional models for inculcating these values through education which heavily rely on the physical presence of teachers do not seem to work in these circumstances. This demands a model for inculcating these values in learning management systems/ e-learning platforms. This study contributes in this regard by first identifying key players and factors, and then proposing a model for it. Using the Delphi model, it gathers opinions from 59 experts in two rounds. Academic institutions, society and online community members, teachers, and e-contenters were identified as key factors and players. It suggests a holistic approach-based model through which all of them play their role and collaborate through an e-learning platform. That platform can be used to disseminate information, create awareness, monitor, and report the e-learners. It uses pull and push strategies to help the e-learners to develop those values.

Keywords: *Online education, e-learning, e-learning platform, ethical values, moral values, learning management system.*

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Introduction

Ethical and moral values are essential for a civilized society. They usually develop and evolve with time. Their role is undeniable in improving the social fabric, harmony, and tolerance. The cohesive working of a society and its progress also depend upon them. Traditionally, young students inculcate ethics and moral values through their families, peers, teachers, elders, and other members of the society around them (Hart & Carlo, 2005). Moral and ethical values are also taught through traditional ways of education (Veugelers & Kat, 2000), and school curricula (Al-Hooli & Al-Shammari, 2009; Zhu, 2006). School books often contain topics with moral lessons. In some countries like Japan, special lessons and lectures are dedicated to teaching the students moral and ethical values (Jumani, Malik & Malik, 2020). The environment and socialization process contribute to both the character development of the students and their academic success (Ali et al., 2010; Brown, 2008).

Understanding and adherence to ethical and moral values are as pivotal as the subject knowledge (Bashir & Malik, 2020). The purpose of education should not be to make the students experts in the domain of knowledge only, but also to help them in developing character, refining attitudes, and inculcating ethical and moral values. Graduates with technical competencies, but without those values are like machines at best who would work only for the satisfaction of their own economic needs. In the worst-case scenario, those without ethical and moral values, but with technical excellence may use their expertise negatively and destructively. It is agreed with those authors who assert that the moral sense or conscience is the most significant distinction between man and lower animals (Darwin, 1871).

Parents and home are the first influences on children in shaping their character; but in this fast-paced world, children are getting increasingly less time and attention from them. This puts an extra expectation on the education system to inculcate ethical and moral values amongst the students; but unfortunately, neo-liberalism, marketization and

*** Corresponding author:**

Hafiz Abid Mahmood Malik, Faculty of Computer Studies, Arab Open University, Al-A'ali, Kingdom of Bahrain. ✉ hafiz.malik@aou.org.bh

materialistic approaches are pushing both the academic institutions and the students to be more market-oriented (Saunders, 2007). Consequently, academic institutions are keener to offer courses and programs which can help the students in getting better-paying jobs. At the same time, both materials and the focus on ethics and morality are gradually disappearing from the syllabi. As a result, the education systems of the current era especially in technology-based majors are producing students who may be deficient in ethical and moral values. Realizing this, many technical institutions and bodies are now emphasizing adding courses and activities to develop those values (Muhammad et al., 2020).

The enormous growth and encompassing speed of ICT and digital technologies have been transforming education unimaginably (Amin et al., 2021; Malik et al., 2020; Noreen & Malik, 2020). This has led to electronic learning (e-learning). In it, the teaching-learning process is done through computers and information technology (Desai, 2008). It is becoming increasingly popular for educational purposes as it provides increased accessibility (to information), elimination of constraints (time and space), flexibility (self-pacing), and interactivity (Noreen & Malik, 2020; Rosenblit, 2009). The current pandemic of COVID-19 has spurred things up in this regard (Malik et al., 2022). In this time and age of social isolation and distancing; e-learning seems to be the most viable way to continue offering education. Along with these advantages, e-learning also multiplies some of the issues such as cheating, plagiarism, and using unfair means (Nagi, 2006). E-learners are more prone to lose focus, behave unethically, or go astray due to the lack of physical interaction and supervision (Akram et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2011). The literature says that frequent interactions with machines may also lead to mechanical thinking and mindset (Malik et al., 2020). All of them may adversely affect students' character development which is among the main objectives of education. This issue can be resolved if proper tools and strategies are used (Jusoh & Husoff, 2009). This study tries to contribute to this area by proposing a model to inculcate ethical and moral values through e-learning.

Research Objectives

The study has the following two objectives.

- To identify key factors and players which play a significant role in inculcating ethical and moral values amongst e-learners.
- To propose a model to inculcate ethical and moral values amongst e-learners.

Literature Review

The literature review for this study is divided into three main parts. They are the role of ethical and moral values in society, ethical and moral values in education, and ethical and moral values and e-learning. Their further details are given below.

Role of Ethical and Moral Values in Society

Ethics are moral principles and guidelines which help in recognizing what one should or should not do (Nickels et al., 2008). They are emphasized in all religions and civilizations. Without them, society would act and behave like machines at best and criminals at worst. These are ethics and morality that equip human beings with humanity (Darwin, 1871). Without them, the whole fabric of society may be lost. According to many studies, they are the fundamentals of most of the constitutions, regulations, and justice systems (Skitka et al., 2008, 2016).

The literature says that ethical and moral values play a big role in students' life and success (Ali et al., 2010). Ali et al. (2009) said that along with academic excellence, the economic and social development of a country also relies upon the attitude, morality, and character of its future generations.

Traditionally in most countries especially in the East, the moral development of the young ones is not only the responsibility of the family members but the entire society. In such cultures, the whole society keeps an eye on the young ones to monitor and guide them. Unfortunately, changing times and increasing economic challenges have weakened the family and societal bonding and values. These days, even parents cannot find a sufficient amount of time for their children's ethical and moral developmental needs. Previous studies have shown that neo-liberalism, industrialization, marketization, and individualistic approaches have also adversely affected social and moral values (Ericson et al., 2000). In this situation, the main hope lies in the teachers and the education system.

Ethical and Moral Values and Education

Education aims for students' gradual learning, improvement, and maturity. Education comprises five basic elements: student, teacher, content, context, and learning environment (Malik et al., 2018; Šepić et al., 2010). Teachers are considered one of the most important players in an education system, especially in ideological or religious ones (Jumani, Malik, Warner et al., 2020). They are also considered the guardians of cultural and moral values. Not only are they the guardians of those values, but also the ones who transfer them to the next generations (Veugelers & Kat, 2000).

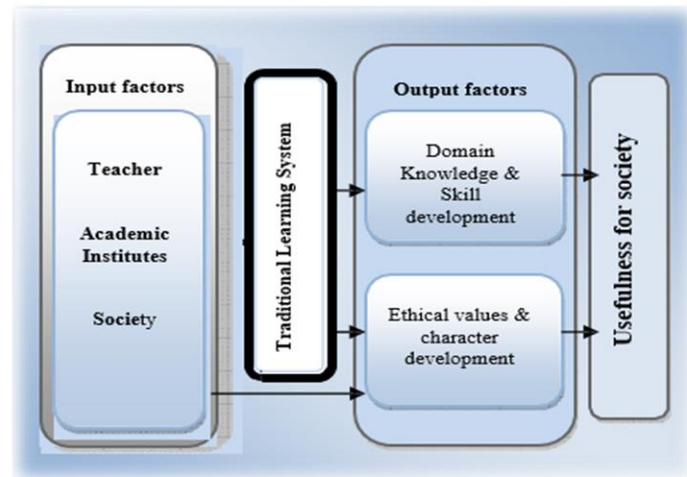


Figure 1. Process to Inculcate Ethical and Moral Values through Traditional Education System

In many religions and civilizations, education is used as a tool to transfer moral values for comprehensive growth (Ahmad et al., 2006). In the current era, insatiable desires for materialistic and worldly gains and benefits have not only affected the social fabric of society; but also, the education systems. Consequently, formal education is fast becoming nothing, but a tool to get higher status and financial gains in society (Ball, 2012). More marketable and financially rewarding subjects like management sciences and computer science have started to dominate tertiary education. Moreover, content about morality and ethics is gradually disappearing from syllabi at different levels.

A graduate with both content knowledge, and ethical and moral values is likely to serve society more positively and productively. Unlike content knowledge which can be imparted through the education system only; for ethical and moral values, the whole society has to work together (Figure 1).

In the traditional education system, a major role in character-development is played by the teachers (Lickona, 1993; Lumpkin, 2008). After that, course contents (curriculum and textbooks), school culture, and classroom environment influence the students. Out of educational institutions, the most important role is played by the parents and other family members (Sokip et al., 2019). Friends and other members of society also play an important role in developing ethical and moral values. All these members of society collectively shape the character and attitude of a student in a traditional educational system.

Ethical and Moral Values and e-Learning

Literature defines e-learning as an educational process that provides education through ICT, online tools, and digital technologies (Isa et al., 2008). It can take place through purely online (Hampel, 2014; Mason & Rennie, 2006) or blended mode (Osguthorpe & Graham, 2003; Rogers, 2001) using an e-learning platform. An e-learning platform is an integrated set of interactive online services that provides the technical infrastructure on which e-learning activities can take place. Different learning management systems (LMS) like Moodle and Blackboard are often used as e-learning platforms.

Delivery through e-learning can be synchronous (interactions are live and in real-time) or asynchronous (interactions are not live and in real-time) (Rahman et al., 2011). Students' motivation is essential in both types to overpower the adverse effects of physical segregation (Malik & Akkaya, 2021). Shawar et al. (2007) said that the amount of interaction plays a great role in the effectiveness of the educational process. Thus, the lack of physical interaction may hinder the success of e-learning. This lack of physical interaction and the social surrounding may not only affect motivation level but also be a hindrance to inculcate ethical and moral values. It is because students mostly pick ethical and moral values through physical interaction and social surroundings. Literature indicates that e-learning seems to be ill-equipped in imparting these values because of the aforementioned reasons (Muhammad, 2018).

Ethical Issues in e-learning

e-learning faces multiple issues relating to ethics and morality. Some of the more prominent ones are related to professional and social responsibilities, software ownership and intellectual property rights, privacy, computer crimes, confidentiality, responsibility and liability, professional competence, security and reliability, and safety. There are also other issues caused by the unethical use of the latest technologies such as illegal data collection, fringing upon others' privacy, lack of informed consent, child abuse, and breaking the trust (Kracher & Corritore, 2004; Stahl et al., 2009). Many researchers specifically mentioned academic fraud (Olt, 2002). Issues in e-learning are generally caused due to the lack of human contact and supervision, and over-dependence on and misuse of technologies. The more people

become technologically advanced, the more advance and complicated ways they might find to commit unethical, immoral, and illegal things.

As the use of technology is increasing day by day, e-learning institutions are also facing an increasing amount and level of ethical issues. Research has suggested that online education and e-learning appear to have played a role in dwindling ethical and moral values (Yeung et al., 2002). Isa et al. (2008) said that unethical behavior tends to be more common in e-learning. Brown (2008) also observed the same. It could be due to the fact that a person sitting behind the computer feels him/herself invisible, and hence more inclined to commit unethical and immoral things.

Approaches for Solving the Ethical Issues in e-learning

Realizing the arising ethical and moral issues in e-learning, many researchers have come up with different approaches to improve the situation. Nagi (2006) said that cheating and other academic misconduct in e-learning could be prevented through the embedment of relevant tools in LMS. Hinman (2002) suggested three approaches to reduce such practices. They are to develop and build the character of the students so that they refrain from unethical practices, reduce the opportunities for them, and penalize those who carry them out.

It is worth noting that most of these approaches are preventive in nature. Rather than educating the e-learners and equipping them with ethical and moral values; they use barriers, hurdles, and punitive actions to deter. In the current study, the researchers build on the guidelines of Hinman (2002) to not only deter such unfair practices during the e-learning process but also (and mainly) to inculcate ethical and moral values so that the e-learners become positive, productive, and responsible members of the society.

Methodology

Research Method and Design

This study uses the qualitative research method to get in-depth data. Furthermore, it uses the Delphi model which “may be characterized as a method for structuring a group communication process so that the process is effective in allowing a group of individuals, as a whole, to deal with a complex problem” (Linstone & Turoff, 1975). In the Delphi model, there are multiple rounds of questionnaires or interviews. Questions are sent to a group of experts to reach a consensus or near-consensus (Fish & Busby, 2005).

Research Tool

In the current study, the researchers employed open questionnaires. They were selected as they facilitate the collection of data from a large number of participants. The questionnaire was developed by one of the researchers, and then internally reviewed by the other two for content validity. Later the questionnaires along with the research objectives were sent to five experts in the field of ICT and moral education for experts’ opinion. Some changes were made as per their suggestions.

Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of experts (university faculty members). All those were considered part of the population who had at least four years of teaching experience, including at least one year of online teaching experience.

Fifty-nine experts (37 lecturers, 13 assistant professors, 4 associate professors, and 5 professors) belonging to four different faculties (computer science, education, management sciences, and social sciences) were selected. All of them had extensive experience in teaching through both traditional and e-learning methods. The most experienced person had 26 years of teaching experience, while the least experienced ones had four years.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection was done in three rounds. Based on the literature and their personal experiences, the experts were first asked to identify important factors and players to inculcate ethical and moral values amongst the e-learners, and then to propose a model for it. Based on their proposed models and suggestions, a model was developed. That model was again sent to all the experts for their opinions, which led to some changes in it. Once the model was finalized, it was shared with all the experts, asking how it could play a role in the ethical and moral development of e-learners. The final model is presented in this study. This whole process took around six months.

Results

Based on the research objectives, the results have been divided into two parts: key players and factors, and the proposed model for inculcating ethical and moral values through e-learning. Research results are presented and discussed as under.

Key Factors and Players in Inculcating Ethical and Moral Values through e-learning

The experts pointed out various factors and players who could play a pivotal role in inculcating ethical and moral values through e-learning. They included parents, friends, family members, teachers, fellow e-learners, society members, school culture, classroom environment, online community, e-curriculum, videos, and other digital materials. E-curriculum, videos, parents, teachers, and school culture were pointed out by 56 experts. 51 of them talked about friends, family, society members, online community, and e-curriculum; while 42 mentioned fellow e-learners and the classroom environment. 40 experts cited digital materials as one of the factors that could play a role in building ethical and moral values amongst e-learners.

One expert suggested grouping them so that they could be presented in a model more effectively. He suggested four groups: society, family, school, and e-curriculum. This categorization along with the proposed model was sent to the experts in the second round for their opinion and feedback. There was a difference of opinion about a few things. Some experts put teachers in the group of academic institutions; but most suggested that due to their importance, they should be put separately. Another argument was about family. Some suggested that family should be a separate factor while most said that it can be in the broader and larger category of society and online community. They said that as it was a model for e-learning, the role of a family was somewhat mitigated. Based on the feedback and suggestions, it was eventually decided to create four groups: academic institutions, society and online community members, teachers, and e-contents. Some thought that society and online community should be the first one as it was the broadest; but most suggested that as the model was about e-learning, academic institutions should be the first as they are the ones that devise the policies and guidelines for e-learning. All others are linked to them one way or the other.

Academic Institutions

Academic institutions can play a very significant role in developing students' ethical and moral values. Literature also suggests that academic institutions' policies, regulations, implementations, culture, and environment play a significant role in inculcating ethical and moral values amongst e-learners (Department for Education, 2016; Goodman, 2019; Harkavy, 2006; Starratt, 1994).

One expert said that in most cases, e-learners were getting an education from an online/ e-learning educational institution. As a result, academic institutions play the role of an umbrella organization under which all the e-learners, teachers, and online learning platforms come. As also indicated by literature, they must have rules and regulations that discourage unethical and immoral activities and support constructive and positive ones (Torre, 2013). Another expert said that the absence of proper regulations or leniency from the academic institutions encouraged the e-learners to indulge in unethical and immoral activities. Harris (2001) also said the same. One expert said that although e-learners may not stay in the academic institution for long, they were likely to be "deliberately conscious" of those policies and rules. If e-learning educational institutions have proper rules and regulations which are also implemented effectively, it would create an environment and culture of awareness and discipline which would promote ethical and moral values. The literature says that a person, who is exposed to a certain culture or environment for a long period, tends to follow it unintentionally (Bumjaid & Malik, 2019; Malik et al., 2020).

Experts said that academic institutions should also provide training sessions for the teachers teaching through e-learning mode. They further added that providing appropriate content on ethics and morality to both the teachers and the e-learners should also be the responsibility of the institutions. Some experts said that as the e-learners were very much grade-conscious, it might be better if some marks were reserved for the character. This would provide extra incentives for them to follow ethics and moral values.

It was by and large agreed by the experts that academic institutions can and should play a proactive role to inculcate ethical and moral values amongst e-learners. They should lay down clear policies, guidelines, and rules, and convey them to the e-learners clearly. Those regulations and rules should be implemented properly. Academic institutions should also train the teachers so that they know how to teach, guide, and motivate the e-learners to follow ethical and moral values. If institutions are able to do these things properly for a period of time, they can create a culture and environment where e-learners would not only excel academically but also morally.

Society and Online Community Members

The second and the broadest category was about society and online community members. This includes parents, family members, friends, the online community, and other society members. Literature acknowledges the role of parents, family members, peers, and society in the moral development of the students (Hart & Carlo, 2005; Rowe, 1994). Not only are they the judges of an individual's morality, but also the ones who suffer in case of immoral behavior.

The experts opined that society and online community members should play a proactive role in improving e-learners' ethical and moral behavior. Some experts proposed that members of society should be asked to evaluate and improve rules and regulations regarding ethics and morality. They can also monitor and judge the e-learners on those criteria and report to the academic institutions about it. Most of them said that the parents ought to play an important role in

inculcating the ethical and moral values of the e-learners. Parents' role in students' character-building is repeatedly pointed out in literature (Hart & Carlo, 2005; Hoffman & Saltzstein, 1967). Parents should collaborate with educational institutions. They need to not only preach morality to their children but also monitor them.

Some experts suggested that the normal concept of the parent-teacher meeting should be expanded to community-teacher online discussion and feedback through the online platform where they could discuss the ways to collaborate for this purpose. Society and community members should monitor and report any inappropriate issue to the institution. Different inspirational members of the society like dignitaries, religious leaders, social workers, and motivational speakers may be asked to record lectures about morality and character so that they may be shown to the e-learners later. Some experts also suggested that some members of society may be given access to the e-learning platform. They could act as neutral observers to monitor the activities on an e-learning platform and may also suggest ways to improve.

The experts agreed that inculcating ethical and moral values amongst e-learners cannot be done without the support of society and online community members. They could suggest ways to improve policy, guidelines, and rules; and monitor and report any immoral and unethical activities by the e-learners. There could be community-teacher discussions and dialogues through online platforms. In this way, the whole community would feel part of this process and play a more proactive role in it.

Teachers

There was a difference of opinion about the teachers in the model. Whereas some suggested teachers should be included as part of academic institutions; most thought that due to their importance, they ought to be put separately. Despite this difference of opinion, almost all acknowledged their importance in developing e-learners' ethical and moral values. A few opined that in e-learning, teachers take a backseat, but an overwhelming majority thought otherwise.

The literature says that teachers play a pivotal role in students' moral character development in the traditional education system (Veugelers & Kat, 2000). The experts said that in e-learning, teachers can and should play the same role. They should define, monitor, and judge the ethical and moral development of the e-learners. Realizing that inculcating ethical and moral values through e-learning is much different (and even difficult) than traditional ones, the experts strongly suggested that all online teachers ought to be provided with training to equip themselves with the required skills and strategies for this task. Experts said that although in e-learning, these are the online platforms and software that appear to be at the forefront; these are the people behind the machines who really matter. Teachers should know how to utilize online tools and platforms effectively and adopt strategies for developing e-learners' ethical and moral character.

In e-learning, teachers must not only remain in touch with e-learners and their parents but also with the broader society and online community. Research also points out that teachers can play an effective role in school-community relationships (Nebor, 1984) which is vital for the comprehensive development of e-learners.

E-Contents

The literature says that in the traditional education system, textbooks are a great source of inculcating ethical and moral values amongst the students (Han et al., 2018; Tan et al., 2018). The experts said that in e-learning, the same should be done through e-books and other digital and online materials. It was suggested to develop special materials about ethical and moral values which should be made part of e-books and curriculum. The experts also suggested employing some activities to involve the e-learners in moral and humanitarian activities.

Many experts strongly suggested the use of short videos for this purpose. They said that short videos (1 to 3 minutes long) can be developed which would be played on the e-learning platform. These videos can be about different acts of ethics and morality such as kindness, respect, harmony, following rules and regulations, etc.

The research reveals that if a message is repeatedly played to someone, it would make a lasting impression (Krugman, 1965; Zhou et al., 2015). Some experts said that such practices have already been employed in different countries like China, Japan, and Korea with great success. Such short video clips may also be played on different social and electronic media.

Proposed Model for Inculcating Ethical and Moral Values through e-learning

The experts in the first round were asked to propose a model for inculcating ethical and moral values through e-learning. Many of them proposed different models using different players and factors. One model that was shared by some of them was sent to the experts again for their suggestions, feedback, and comments. Based on their comments and suggestions, it was revised and finalized. That model is presented in this study with academic institutions, society and online community, teachers and e-contents as input factors.

Discussion

Findings suggest that academic institutions, society and online community members, teachers, and e-contentes can play a vital role in inculcating ethical and moral values amongst the e-learners. The experts initially suggested many factors and players, but eventually agreed on these four categories. The proposed model shows that these key factors required for inculcating ethical and moral values should be integrated into the LMS or e-learning platform of academic institutions.

In e-learning, all kinds of tasks like attendance, teacher-e-learners interaction, course materials like handouts and videos, group discussions, submissions of the assignments, assessments, evaluations, and results, etc. are usually carried out through an e-learning platform. The literature also highlights the significance of learning management systems and other e-learning platforms (Forouzesh & Darvish, 2012). Realizing this, the experts put the e-learning platform at the center of the model (Figure 2) as it is the one that connects e-learners with all the other factors and players in the proposed model. The experts said that the e-learning platform should be advance and powerful enough to help in publishing and disseminating policy guidelines and regulations about ethics and morality, sharing e-contentes and videos, collaborating and communicating, receiving and sorting feedback, reporting, monitoring, and grading the e-learners based on their ethical and moral behavior.

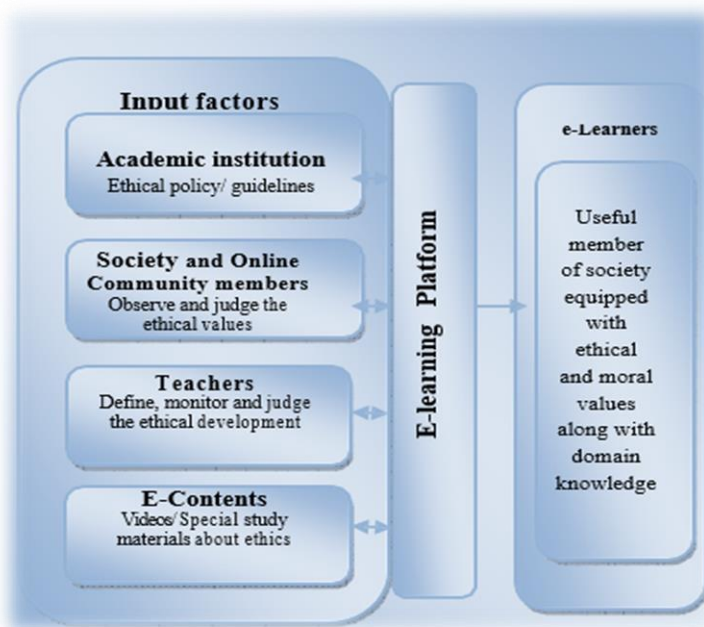


Figure 2. Model to Inculcate Ethical and Moral Values Through E-Learning

In the current model, the relation of the e-learning platform with all the factors and players is bidirectional. The factors and players also interact with one another through the platform. The platform takes data in form of policy guidelines, videos, e-contentes, community feedback, etc., sorts it, and gives it to the relevant person(s). Those persons will give their feedback based on that data.

The platform will analyze the feedback and then forward it to the students, academic institutions, and other relevant persons in presentable form. For example, academic institutions will devise policies and regulations with the help of the teachers and community members. Those policies and regulations will be placed on the e-learning platform so that the e-learners may know and follow them, and teachers and community members may monitor and judge them accordingly. If any immoral and unethical action by the e-learners is observed or noted, it will be reported on the platform. The platform will categorize that activity based on its type and severity, and the e-learner will be dealt with accordingly. In minor cases, a mere warning may be given and some of the marks for a character be deducted. In case of any major incident, more severe action may be taken.

Based on the proposed model, first of all, the academic institution should develop clear policies and guidelines pertaining to ethical and moral values. They will contain what is expected of the e-learners, shoulds and should nots, reporting mechanism, punitive actions that may be taken, and grading criteria to evaluate the e-learners. Institutions should work closely with the teachers, society, and online community members for this. These policies and regulations will be put on the e-learning platform and evolve continuously for the new needs and challenges.

Society and online community members along with the teachers would play the role of monitors and evaluators. They would help monitor the e-learners and report any immoral activity by them. They would also help in evaluating and evolving the policies and guidelines, e-contentes, and e-learning platforms to ensure that all of them are in line with the ground realities and meet the changing needs of the time.

Although in e-learning, teachers are physically absent (Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2015), their importance cannot be denied. They are basically the drivers of this system who would operate and manage the e-learning platform to get the desired results. Teachers play one of the more important roles in this model. They help explain the policies to the e-learners, monitor them, review e-contents for further improvements, collaborate with the society and online community members, and grade the e-learners.

Due to the physical absence of teachers, e-contents play a more pivotal role. In this model, videos and recorded lectures substitute for real class lectures. Not only separate e-contents be created for inculcating ethics and moral values, but content about ethics and morality should also be added to different course content. With the help of teachers, society, and online community members; important topics about ethical and moral values would be identified. Short clips and videos can be created which would be played to the e-learners through the platform. e-learning platforms would play these videos automatically once the e-learners are online and open certain links. Continuous exposure to those messages is likely to influence the e-learners positively.

Due to the nature of e-learning, all the players and factors would interact with one another and the e-learners through the platform. In this way, despite not meeting or maybe even knowing; the system would work efficiently. With the collaboration of all the relevant stakeholders and the help of e-contents; e-learners would be able to pick those values hence becoming positive members of the society with better human values.

Conclusion

Due to the neo-liberal mindset, marketization, focus on financial success, lack of time in this fast-paced world, and absence of caring behavior in the classroom; the focus on developing ethical and moral values amongst the students is being overlooked. This situation is even more alarming in e-learning which has become the most viable option for delivering education during COVID-19. In e-learning, the physical absence of the teachers, lack of social environment, and constant interaction with the machines (computers in this case) are not conducive to inculcating human values amongst the e-learners. This study presents a model for inculcating ethical and moral values amongst e-learners. This model uses an e-learning platform to put all the stakeholders and factors like academic institutions, society and online community members, teachers and e-contents on one hand, and the e-learners on the other. The role of all the stakeholders and factors is also defined clearly in it. Defining policies and regulations for ethical and moral values, preaching the message to the e-learners, monitoring and reporting them, giving feedback about the model to further improve it, and evaluation and grading of the e-learners are done in this model.

This model uses both push and pull strategies. e-learners are attempted to be pushed out of unethical and immoral activities through rules and regulations, monitoring, and introducing the system of rewards and punishment (in terms of grades and punitive actions). It also uses pull strategies through e-contents and videos that would motivate the e-learners. It can be used in both online and blended learning education institutions to help e-learners in improving their ethical and moral character. The current model can be easily incorporated into existing LMS and other e-learning platforms. Universities and educational institutions may also modify it according to their local culture, context, and needs.

Recommendations

This study comes up with the following recommendations.

- Ethical and moral values are being overlooked in most the education systems, especially those using online tools and platforms. Education is not about providing content knowledge only, but also about character development. Educational institutions providing education through e-learning platforms must pay close attention to it and develop policies and practices for it.
- Inculcating ethical and moral values is tougher than providing content knowledge. It is about the whole development of the students; consequently, it cannot be done by the academic institution or the teachers alone. Academic institutions should collaborate with all the stakeholders to get the desired results.
- Most of the current LMS and e-learning platforms just focus on the teaching-learning process. They are not used for inculcating ethical and moral values amongst the e-learners. With some changes, they can be used to preach, promote and inculcate ethical and moral values. They should be used as a platform for not only increasing awareness and promoting ethical and moral values but also to bring the stakeholders together.
- As many of the students are very much grade-conscious, some marks/ grades may be dedicated to the character, social work, and other good deeds to stimulate it.

Limitations

This model is theoretical. It should be practically implemented by developing and upgrading LMS with the help of software and content developers. It is also important that once it is employed by educational institutions, further

research is carried out to see if it is really effective, and how to improve it further. It may also be interesting to explore the impact of ethical and moral values on e-learners' academic achievements.

Authorship Contribution Statement

Hafeez: Introduction, conclusion, proofreading, and reviewing. M. A. Malik: Abstract, Introduction, literature review, result, discussion, editing, and reviewing. H. A. M. Malik: Methodology, results, discussion, editing, and reviewing.

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