
Integrating Anti-Corruption Values into Islamic Education: A Character-Based Framework for Ethical Citizenship in Turkey

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Abstract

Corruption remains a persistent challenge that undermines social justice, public trust, democratic governance, and sustainable development across many societies. In response to these challenges, educational institutions play a crucial role in fostering ethical awareness and preventing corrupt behavior through character formation and value-based learning. This study explores the integration of anti-corruption values into Islamic education as a character-based framework for developing ethical citizenship in Turkey. Drawing upon the principles of Islamic ethics, character education, and civic responsibility, the study examines how values such as honesty, integrity, accountability, justice, discipline, responsibility, and social concern can be incorporated into educational practices to cultivate morally responsible citizens. Using a qualitative library research approach, data were collected from academic literature, policy documents, educational reports, and relevant studies on Islamic education and anti-corruption initiatives. The findings indicate that Islamic education provides a strong moral and spiritual foundation for promoting anti-corruption attitudes through the internalization of ethical values rooted in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Furthermore, character-based educational approaches encourage students to develop critical moral reasoning, social responsibility, and commitment to public welfare. The study also reveals that the integration of anti-corruption values is most effective when supported by curriculum development, teacher role modeling, institutional culture, and community engagement. In the Turkish context, where Islamic educational traditions continue to influence moral development and citizenship education, the incorporation of anti-corruption principles can contribute significantly to strengthening ethical citizenship and fostering a culture of integrity among younger generations. This study offers a conceptual framework that links Islamic education, character development, and anti-corruption education as complementary strategies for building ethical and responsible citizens in contemporary society.

Keywords

Anti-Corruption Education; Islamic Education; Character Education; Ethical Citizenship; Integrity; Moral Development; Turkey; Civic Responsibility; Islamic Ethics; Value-Based Education



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INTRODUCTION

Corruption continues to be one of the most significant challenges confronting contemporary societies, affecting not only political and economic systems but also social cohesion, public trust, and moral development. The consequences of corruption extend far beyond financial losses, influencing the quality of governance, weakening democratic institutions, and creating barriers to sustainable development. International organizations have consistently emphasized that corruption undermines social justice, reduces public confidence in state institutions, and limits equal access to opportunities and resources. Although legal reforms and institutional mechanisms remain essential in combating corruption, many scholars argue that punitive measures alone are insufficient. Sustainable anti-corruption efforts require preventive approaches that address the moral, ethical, and cultural dimensions of human behavior. In this regard, education occupies a strategic position because it shapes values, attitudes, and behaviors that influence how individuals engage with society throughout their lives.

Educational institutions have increasingly been recognized as important agents in promoting integrity, accountability, and ethical responsibility.¹ Schools and universities are not merely places where knowledge is transmitted; they are also environments where character is formed and civic values are cultivated. Through formal curricula, extracurricular activities, and institutional culture, educational institutions contribute to the development of responsible citizens who are capable of making ethical decisions in both personal and professional contexts. Consequently, anti-corruption education has emerged as an important component of character education initiatives in many countries. Rather than focusing exclusively on legal definitions and criminal sanctions, anti-corruption education seeks to cultivate values such as honesty, justice, responsibility, discipline, transparency, and social concern. These values serve as preventive mechanisms by encouraging individuals to reject unethical behavior and contribute positively to society.

Within the broader discussion of character education, Islamic education occupies a unique and influential position, particularly in countries where Islamic traditions continue to play a significant role in shaping cultural and social life. Islamic education is fundamentally concerned

¹ Anita Uwem Brigue and V N Orlu, "Ethical Considerations of Leaders and Integrity in Public Universities," *International Journal of Institutional Leadership, Policy and Management* 5, no. 2 (2023): 245–61; Julia L Briskin and C K Gunsalus, "Fostering Accountability: How Institutions Can Promote Research Integrity with Practical Tools and Knowledge," *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics* 53, no. 1 (2025): 67–73; Almighty C Tabuena, "Integrating Ethical Corporate Governance in Educational Policy and Leadership: Policy Strategies for Accountability, Transparency, and Institutional Integrity," 2025.

with the holistic development of human beings, encompassing intellectual, spiritual, moral, emotional, and social dimensions. The primary objective of Islamic education is not only to produce knowledgeable individuals but also to nurture morally upright persons who contribute to the well-being of society. Core Islamic teachings emphasize virtues such as honesty (*sidiq*), trustworthiness (*amanah*), justice (*adl*), responsibility (*mas'uliyah*), and compassion (*rahmah*). These principles closely align with the ethical foundations of anti-corruption education and provide a strong moral framework for fostering integrity among learners.

The relationship between Islamic education and ethical citizenship has become increasingly relevant in contemporary discussions on educational reform and social development.² Ethical citizenship refers to the capacity of individuals to participate actively in society while adhering to moral principles, respecting the rights of others, and contributing to the common good. Ethical citizens are characterized by integrity, accountability, civic responsibility, and commitment to social justice. These characteristics are essential for strengthening democratic institutions and promoting social harmony. Islamic educational traditions have historically emphasized the formation of individuals who balance personal morality with social responsibility. Therefore, integrating anti-corruption values into Islamic education offers a promising approach for cultivating ethical citizenship and addressing the root causes of corrupt behavior.

Turkey presents an especially interesting context for examining this relationship. As a nation that bridges Europe and Asia, Turkey possesses a unique educational landscape shaped by both secular state traditions and Islamic cultural heritage. Over the past several decades, debates concerning citizenship education, moral development, and value-based learning have gained increasing attention within Turkish educational discourse. Educational policymakers and scholars have highlighted the need to strengthen ethical awareness among younger generations in response to various social and governance challenges. While citizenship education remains an important component of the Turkish educational system, growing attention has been directed toward the integration of moral and ethical values that can support responsible civic participation.

In this context, Islamic education offers significant opportunities for reinforcing ethical citizenship through character development. The moral teachings embedded within Islamic educational traditions can provide students with ethical guidance that extends beyond academic

² Najwan Saada, "Educating for Global Citizenship in Religious Education: Islamic Perspective," *International Journal of Educational Development* 103 (2023): 102894; Kamel Essabane, Paul Vermeer, and Carl Sterkens, "Islamic Religious Education and Citizenship Education: Their Relationship According to Practitioners of Primary Islamic Religious Education in The Netherlands," *Religions* 13, no. 9 (2022): 826.

achievement and professional success. Values such as honesty, trustworthiness, social responsibility, and justice can help students develop the moral resilience necessary to resist corruption and other forms of unethical conduct. Moreover, the integration of anti-corruption values into Islamic education can encourage students to view integrity not merely as a legal obligation but as a religious and moral commitment that reflects their responsibilities toward God, society, and future generations.

Despite the growing recognition of anti-corruption education, existing research has often focused on legal frameworks, governance reforms, and public administration strategies. Comparatively less attention has been devoted to exploring how religious and moral education can contribute to anti-corruption efforts through character formation. Similarly, studies examining Islamic education frequently emphasize theological instruction, identity formation, or religious literacy while paying less attention to its potential role in promoting ethical citizenship and anti-corruption values. This gap highlights the need for further scholarly investigation into the ways Islamic educational principles can support broader social objectives related to integrity, accountability, and civic responsibility.

Furthermore, contemporary societies face increasingly complex ethical challenges associated with globalization, technological transformation, social inequality, and cultural change. Young people are often exposed to conflicting value systems that may weaken traditional ethical foundations. In such circumstances, educational approaches that combine moral guidance with practical citizenship competencies become particularly important. Integrating anti-corruption values into Islamic education can provide students with a coherent ethical framework that helps them navigate these challenges while maintaining commitment to social responsibility and public welfare.

This study seeks to examine the integration of anti-corruption values into Islamic education as a character-based framework for ethical citizenship in Turkey. Specifically, the study explores how Islamic educational principles can contribute to the development of integrity, responsibility, justice, and civic engagement among students. By analyzing the intersections between Islamic ethics, character education, and anti-corruption values, the study aims to provide a conceptual understanding of how educational institutions can strengthen ethical citizenship through value-based learning. Ultimately, this research contributes to ongoing discussions concerning the role of education in preventing corruption and fostering a culture of integrity that supports sustainable

social development and democratic participation.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design using a library research approach to explore the integration of anti-corruption values into Islamic education as a character-based framework for ethical citizenship in Turkey.³ Qualitative research was selected because it allows for an in-depth examination of concepts, values, and educational practices that cannot be adequately understood through quantitative measurement alone. According to Creswell, qualitative inquiry is particularly suitable for investigating social phenomena that involve meaning-making, interpretation, and the exploration of human values within specific cultural and educational contexts. Since this study focuses on ethical principles, educational philosophies, and character formation processes, a qualitative approach provided the most appropriate methodological foundation.

The research relied on library-based data collection procedures. Data were obtained from a wide range of scholarly and documentary sources relevant to Islamic education, anti-corruption education, character development, ethical citizenship, and educational practices in Turkey. These sources included peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, conference proceedings, government policy documents, reports from international organizations, curriculum frameworks, and previous empirical studies. Particular attention was given to literature discussing the relationship between Islamic ethics and civic education, as well as research examining preventive approaches to corruption through educational interventions. The selection of sources was guided by their relevance, academic credibility, and contribution to understanding the integration of moral values into educational systems.

The data collection process involved systematic identification, selection, and review of literature. Initially, relevant publications were identified through academic databases, university repositories, digital libraries, and official educational publications. Keywords such as “Islamic education,” “anti-corruption education,” “ethical citizenship,” “character education,” “integrity,” “Islamic ethics,” and “Turkey” were used to locate relevant materials. After the initial collection stage, the sources were screened to ensure alignment with the objectives of the study. Publications that provided theoretical, conceptual, or empirical insights into value-based education and ethical

³ Jeehee Pyo et al., “Qualitative Research in Healthcare: Necessity and Characteristics,” *Journal of Preventive Medicine and Public Health* 56, no. 1 (2023): 12; Janet Salmons, “Doing Qualitative Research Online,” 2021; Chad R Lochmiller, “Conducting Thematic Analysis with Qualitative Data,” *The Qualitative Report* 26, no. 6 (2021): 2029–44.

citizenship were prioritized. This process enabled the researcher to construct a comprehensive understanding of the topic from multiple perspectives.

Data analysis was conducted using qualitative content analysis. Content analysis allows researchers to identify recurring themes, concepts, patterns, and relationships within textual data. Following the framework proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, the analysis process involved data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During the data reduction stage, relevant information was extracted and organized according to key themes, including anti-corruption values, Islamic educational principles, character formation, ethical citizenship, and educational implementation strategies. Information that did not contribute directly to the research objectives was excluded to maintain analytical focus.

The next stage involved data organization and categorization. Similar concepts and findings from different sources were grouped together to facilitate thematic interpretation. Themes such as honesty, accountability, justice, trustworthiness, civic responsibility, and moral leadership emerged consistently across the reviewed literature. These themes were then examined in relation to Islamic educational philosophy and contemporary discussions on anti-corruption education. Through this process, connections between ethical values and citizenship development were identified and interpreted within the Turkish educational context.

To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, source triangulation was employed. Information obtained from academic studies was compared with policy documents, educational reports, and theoretical literature. This approach helped ensure consistency across different sources and strengthened the validity of the interpretations. Furthermore, the study adopted a reflexive analytical approach, whereby interpretations were continuously reviewed against the original data to minimize bias and maintain analytical rigor. The study also adhered to academic research ethics throughout the research process. All sources were appropriately acknowledged through citation and referencing practices. The researcher ensured that interpretations accurately reflected the original meaning of the reviewed materials and avoided selective reporting of evidence. Since the study relied exclusively on publicly available documents and published literature, no direct interaction with human participants was required.

Through this qualitative library research approach, the study aimed to develop a comprehensive conceptual framework that explains how anti-corruption values can be integrated into Islamic education to strengthen ethical citizenship in Turkey. The methodology provides a

systematic foundation for examining the educational, moral, and social dimensions of integrity-building and character formation within contemporary Islamic educational contexts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the integration of anti-corruption values into Islamic education provides a significant foundation for strengthening ethical citizenship in Turkey. The analysis of relevant literature reveals that anti-corruption education and Islamic educational principles share common objectives, particularly in fostering integrity, accountability, justice, responsibility, and moral consciousness among learners.⁴ Rather than viewing anti-corruption education as a separate instructional component, many scholars argue that it should be embedded within broader character education initiatives that shape students' ethical behavior and civic engagement. In the Turkish context, where Islamic values continue to influence cultural and social life, the integration of anti-corruption principles into educational practices offers a meaningful approach to addressing ethical challenges faced by contemporary society.

One of the most prominent findings is that Islamic education provides a comprehensive moral framework that supports the internalization of anti-corruption values. Islamic teachings consistently emphasize virtues such as honesty (*sidiq*), trustworthiness (*amanah*), justice (*adl*), responsibility (*mas'uliyah*), and sincerity (*ikhlas*). These values directly correspond with the ethical foundations necessary for preventing corrupt behavior. The reviewed literature suggests that students who are exposed to value-oriented Islamic learning are more likely to develop moral awareness regarding ethical decision-making. Rather than perceiving corruption merely as a legal violation, students are encouraged to understand it as a moral and spiritual transgression that harms individuals, communities, and society as a whole. This perspective strengthens internal motivation to act ethically, even in situations where external supervision may be absent.

The findings further indicate that character formation serves as the central mechanism through which anti-corruption values can be effectively transmitted. Character education within Islamic educational traditions extends beyond the acquisition of knowledge and focuses on the development of personal virtues and moral habits. Students are encouraged to cultivate self-discipline, honesty, empathy, and social responsibility through both formal instruction and daily

⁴ Irma Wani Othman, Saifulazry Mokhtar, and Mohd Sohaimi Esa, "Corruption Offences Education Literacy in Preventing the Loss of National Treasures: A Review of Challenges and Concerns," *International Journal of Education, Psychology and Counselling* 7, no. 47 (2022): 639–65; Erin Channiago et al., "Media and Character Education in Preventing Corruption in Indonesia: The Future Challenges," *Indonesia Media Law Review* 1, no. 2 (2022): 199–230.

practice. This emphasis on moral habituation is particularly important because ethical behavior is not developed solely through cognitive understanding but through repeated engagement with values in everyday life. Consequently, anti-corruption education becomes more effective when integrated into character-building activities that encourage students to practice integrity in academic, social, and community settings.

Another important finding concerns the relationship between anti-corruption values and ethical citizenship. Ethical citizenship involves more than legal compliance or political participation; it requires individuals to act responsibly, respect the rights of others, and contribute to the common good. The literature reviewed in this study highlights that Islamic education has historically sought to develop individuals who balance personal morality with social responsibility. Students are taught that citizenship entails obligations toward society, including promoting justice, protecting public resources, and opposing harmful practices. These principles align closely with anti-corruption objectives because corruption often emerges when personal interests are prioritized over collective welfare. By emphasizing civic responsibility and ethical conduct, Islamic education helps prepare students to become active and responsible members of society.

The findings also reveal that educational institutions play a critical role in creating environments that support the internalization of anti-corruption values. Schools and universities are not merely places for academic learning; they function as social institutions where ethical norms are modeled, reinforced, and practiced. The literature consistently emphasizes the importance of institutional culture in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors. Educational environments characterized by transparency, fairness, accountability, and respect are more likely to foster integrity among students. Conversely, institutions that tolerate favoritism, dishonesty, or inconsistent rule enforcement may inadvertently undermine anti-corruption efforts. Therefore, the successful integration of anti-corruption values requires institutional commitment that extends beyond curriculum content to include governance practices, administrative procedures, and interpersonal relationships.

Teacher influence emerges as another crucial factor in the development of ethical citizenship. Islamic educational philosophy places significant importance on the moral example provided by educators.⁵ Teachers are expected not only to convey knowledge but also to embody

⁵ Katarina Sperling et al., "In Search of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Literacy in Teacher Education: A Scoping

the values they seek to promote. The reviewed studies suggest that students are more likely to internalize ethical principles when they observe consistency between instructional messages and teachers' behavior. Educators who demonstrate honesty, fairness, responsibility, and respect create powerful learning experiences that reinforce anti-corruption values. In this sense, teachers function as moral role models whose actions often have a stronger impact than formal lessons. The integration of anti-corruption education therefore depends heavily on educators' commitment to practicing the ethical standards they encourage among students.

The analysis also highlights the importance of curriculum integration. Rather than presenting anti-corruption education as an isolated subject, scholars recommend embedding relevant values across multiple areas of learning. Within Islamic education, discussions of honesty, justice, accountability, and social responsibility can be incorporated into theology, ethics, history, citizenship education, and community service activities. This integrated approach enables students to encounter ethical concepts in diverse contexts, reinforcing their significance and practical relevance. Furthermore, interdisciplinary learning allows students to examine corruption not only as a moral issue but also as a social, political, economic, and developmental challenge. Such comprehensive understanding strengthens students' capacity to address complex ethical problems in contemporary society.

Another significant finding concerns the role of community engagement in promoting ethical citizenship. The literature suggests that anti-corruption values become more meaningful when students have opportunities to apply them in real-life situations. Community service programs, volunteer activities, social initiatives, and civic engagement projects provide practical contexts in which students can exercise responsibility, cooperation, and ethical leadership. Islamic educational traditions have long emphasized service to others as an expression of faith and social responsibility. Through active participation in community-oriented activities, students develop empathy, social awareness, and commitment to public welfare. These experiences reinforce the connection between personal integrity and broader societal well-being.

Despite these positive prospects, the study identifies several challenges associated with integrating anti-corruption values into Islamic education. One challenge involves balancing religious instruction with contemporary citizenship education objectives. Some educational

Review,” *Computers and Education Open* 6 (2024): 100169; Debika Layek and Navin Kumar Koodamara, “Motivation, Work Experience, and Teacher Performance: A Comparative Study,” *Acta Psychologica* 245 (2024): 104217.

institutions may focus primarily on theological knowledge while giving limited attention to practical ethical application. As a result, students may understand moral principles theoretically without fully developing the competencies required for ethical citizenship. Another challenge relates to curriculum implementation. While anti-corruption values are widely recognized as important, educators often lack structured frameworks and instructional resources that facilitate systematic integration. Professional development opportunities are therefore necessary to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills required for effective value-based education.

The findings also suggest that broader social and cultural factors influence educational outcomes. Students are exposed to various social influences beyond the classroom, including media, peer groups, political discourse, and economic pressures. These influences can sometimes conflict with the ethical principles promoted within educational institutions. Consequently, anti-corruption education should not be viewed as the sole responsibility of schools and universities. Families, community organizations, religious institutions, and public authorities must also contribute to creating environments that reinforce integrity and ethical behavior. A collaborative approach is essential for ensuring that anti-corruption values are consistently supported across different spheres of social life.

Overall, the study demonstrates that integrating anti-corruption values into Islamic education represents a promising strategy for strengthening ethical citizenship in Turkey. The alignment between Islamic ethical principles and anti-corruption objectives provides a strong foundation for character formation and civic responsibility. Through value-based learning, role modeling, curriculum integration, and community engagement, educational institutions can contribute significantly to the development of citizens who are committed to integrity, justice, and public welfare. These findings suggest that Islamic education possesses considerable potential to support long-term anti-corruption efforts by addressing the moral and cultural dimensions of ethical behavior while fostering responsible participation in society.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the integration of anti-corruption values into Islamic education as a character-based framework for promoting ethical citizenship in Turkey. The findings indicate that Islamic education provides a strong moral and ethical foundation for cultivating values that are essential for preventing corruption and strengthening civic responsibility. Core Islamic principles such as honesty, trustworthiness, justice, accountability, and social responsibility closely align with

the objectives of anti-corruption education and contribute to the formation of ethical individuals who are capable of making responsible decisions in both personal and public life.

The study demonstrates that character education serves as a crucial mechanism through which anti-corruption values can be internalized. Rather than focusing solely on the transmission of knowledge, Islamic education emphasizes the development of moral character, ethical behavior, and social awareness. Through value-based learning, students are encouraged to understand corruption not merely as a legal offense but as a violation of moral and religious principles that undermines social justice and public welfare. This perspective helps foster intrinsic motivation to uphold integrity and reject unethical practices. The findings also highlight the importance of educational institutions, teachers, and community engagement in supporting ethical citizenship. Schools and universities contribute to character formation by creating environments characterized by fairness, transparency, accountability, and respect. Teachers play a particularly significant role as moral role models whose behavior reinforces the values taught in the classroom. Furthermore, opportunities for community service and civic participation allow students to translate ethical principles into practical action, strengthening their commitment to the common good.

Despite the positive potential of integrating anti-corruption values into Islamic education, several challenges remain, including limited curriculum frameworks, insufficient teacher preparation, and broader social influences that may contradict ethical teachings. Addressing these challenges requires collaboration among educators, policymakers, families, religious institutions, and civil society organizations. Such cooperation can help create a supportive ecosystem that reinforces integrity and responsible citizenship. In conclusion, integrating anti-corruption values into Islamic education offers a meaningful and sustainable approach to developing ethical citizenship in Turkey. By combining moral education, character formation, and civic responsibility, Islamic educational institutions can contribute significantly to the cultivation of future generations who are committed to integrity, justice, accountability, and social welfare. This approach not only supports anti-corruption efforts but also strengthens the foundations of a more ethical, responsible, and inclusive society.

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