

Communication skills according to Islamic teachings and students' life skills



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Religious teachings express the fact that a human is a social being and associates with various people. In order to have a successful and safe life, we should refrain from any selfishness, harming others, malice and humiliating people and should always be forgiving, selfless and humble in relationships. Interpersonal relationships are one of the most important components of human life from birth to death; none of the potential capabilities of humans grow except in the shadow of interpersonal relationships. Learning correct interpersonal relationships is very important in creating mental health, personality development, identity finding, increasing job productivity, increasing quality of life, increasing adaptability and self-fulfilment. The current research was conducted with the aim of explaining the relationship between communication skills based on Islamic teachings and students' life skills. In this research, *Ayats* [verses] from the Holy Quran that are related to communication skills and relationships between people in Islamic society have been discussed, and then the components of effective communication and its role in students' life skills have been explained. This research discusses the following factors: human dignity and self-esteem, tolerance and compromise skills, forgiveness skills, accountability skills, justice orientation skills and individual behaviour skills.

Contribution: The results of this research indicate that according to students' imitation of teachers, paying special attention to the components of communication skills according to Islamic teachings in schools can affect students' life skills. Therefore, by improving the mental health of the youth, and consequently the health of the society will be affected and it will bring excellence to the society.

Keywords: religion; Islam; communication skills; life skills; education; school.

Introduction

Today, while humans seek to make the best life for themselves, they often get contradictory results and are robbed of their peace because of being entrapped in absolute comfort. In fact, none of the scientific advancements and surrounding amenities have helped reduce humans' pains. This shows that humankind needs life skills to reach actual peace in addition to comfort. However, one must know that these skills get more complicated as life expands. Given that human beings' level of success in any field depends on their type of communication with others in the community and how they deal with others' behaviours, it seems vital to assess people's communication skills, which are among the most important life skills (Faqihi 2009). Changes and increasing complexities of society and expansion of social relations have necessitated preparing people in the community, especially the younger generation, to deal with difficult situations. Nonetheless, people have failed to reach the true exaltation, which is the nearness of God in all societies, especially in Islamic ones where all educational rules and goals are based on religious orders (Shafiei Mazandarani 2004). On a daily basis, many students spend a vast amount of their time at school. These schools consider Islamic education and human development for effective presence in society with different titles, and continuous personal and social growth in harmony with Islamic standards are part of the educational goals of educators and officials. Despite all efforts though, cultural and social changes, the ever-increasing growth of science and the fulfilment of the concept of the global village have raised some concerns regarding the moral and social education of children (Amin Far 2015).

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Our lives are intertwined with relationships with others. We humans are social beings and that is why communication skills play an important role in our lives. We all like to be noticed when entering a group. We like to be able to influence others with our words and body language, not only in our daily life but also in the study environment and even the work environment. This can be done by strengthening communication skills (Sharifi 2016). Effective communication in the academic environment with classmates, teachers, professors and the work environment with colleagues and managers lead to progress and increase our self-confidence. Basically, communication skills are one of the keys to success in life. Not having proper communication skills can damage life in many situations. Communication skills include verbal and non-verbal skills. These skills can be learned and strengthened with training and practice, which ultimately improves our communication skills. Communication skills mean the ability to transfer information to others in an appropriate and effective manner, which improves communication between people, and the result can increase people's life satisfaction. Simultaneous communication skills include the type of speaking, presenting content to others, listening well, having good writing skills and body language. Body language is one of the non-verbal communication skills (Ahmadi et al. 2012). When a person is talking, he involuntarily shows a series of specific body postures and behaviours, such as the position of his hands and feet, the movement of his eyes and head, among others, which are considered part of body language. From these states and behaviours, we receive a message from the other person about his feelings and thoughts. For example, a person who is talking may show signs of anxiety, tiredness or lying.

Strengthening these skills is very important in our daily communication with others. It takes skill to be a good listener and to convey a message to others. Communication skills play a role in creating lasting and successful friendships. If we can establish useful and effective communication with our friends, we will definitely not have misunderstandings in our relationship; we will understand how to improve our relationship with others and maintain it. Communication skills give us more opportunities for advancement. People who have strengthened these skills well have more attraction power; other people trust them and cooperate with them. Maybe you yourself have met such people; people who leave a good impression on you with a few short encounters and you would like to communicate with them again. These people definitely practised to strengthen their communication skills (Bos-van Hoek et al. 2019). These people are good at presenting content to others effectively and appropriately. So, if we have good verbal and non-verbal skills, we can attract the attention of many audiences, not only in the classroom or workplace, but also in the environment of friends and family. These skills help us to have higher self-confidence, and thus a positive view of ourselves. One of the other important things that is considered to be one of the benefits of strengthening communication skills is having a warm family environment and good communication between parents and children. One of the problems that families are

always dealing with is the inability to communicate properly between parents and children. If the family members have a good relationship, the relationship between them will definitely be strengthened. Therefore, according to the importance of the subject, this research explains the relationship between communication skills according to Islamic teachings and students' life skills in Islamic contexts.

The principles of effective communication according to the Holy Quran

There are valuable tips on communication skills and lifestyle in Islamic teachings, especially the holy Quran that is a great source of divine revelation. Obviously, no effective and constructive communication can be established without knowing a person. This important issue has been pointed out in *Quranic Ayats*. Even communicating with things other than humans, such as birds and insects, requires some level of understanding between the two species. One must consider the sensitive conditions and situation of the other one, as well as their understanding and inference power. In other words, we must be able to understand their character because, as Quran says: 'Each one doth according to his rule of conduct, and thy Lord is Best Aware of him whose way is right' (Surah Al-Isra', Ayat 84). Solomon used these understandings to communicate with hoopoes and the queen of ants (Surah An-Naml, Ayat 18–21). He used the same method to communicate properly with the Queen of Sheba, which is mentioned in the same *Ayat*.

Another effective communication method is to be a good listener and talk well. In other words, you should not use harsh words and must have eloquence and reasoning in your talks (Surah An-Nahl, Ayat 125; Surah Hud, Ayat 69; Surah Al-Ahzab, Ayat 70; Surah Al-Imran, Ayat 159). As mentioned, being a good listener is a very important part of establishing constructive and healthy communication (Surah Al-Furqan, Ayat 63). This is why *Quranic Ayats* have pointed out the prophet's skill of being a good listener, such that people said: 'He is an ear', and God said 'it is an ear of goodness for you that believes in Allah' (Surah At-Tawbah, Ayat 61).

Having things in common with the audience, which comes from understanding their situation, generates sympathy, which makes you understand others' situations and attempt to solve their problems. Such actions and reactions are extremely important in creating constructive and positive communication (Surah Al-Kahf, Ayat 6; Surah Ash-Shu'ara, Ayat 3; Surah Al-Imran, Ayat 61; Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 120; Surah Yusuf, Ayat 103; Surah Al-Isra', Ayat 174). Any factor that could contribute to offence and detachment must be eliminated from constructive communication. In verbal communication, it is better to be brief in your speech, such that the audience understands what you are saying easily and does not get confused (Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 9). In addition, verbal communication must happen face to face, and one must look the speaker in the eye and not neglect to confirm their credibility (Surah Al-Anfal, Ayat 20). However, one must be aware of the difference in the level

of understanding of people and use all verbal and non-verbal tools based on their level of contactability. For instance, some are interested in wisdom and argument because they have rationality, whereas others might be interested in stories and activities. In this regard, understanding the person's character is of paramount importance (Surah An-Nahl, Ayat 125). In addition to words, human beings communicate with body language as well. In fact, a person's face shows whether they are happy or angry. Smiling at others is another way to establish and improve constructive communication. This is why Solomon welcomed the criticism of the queen of ants with a smile (Surah An-Naml, Ayat 19). Similarly, the prophet of Islam always had a smile when talking to people and was never bitter towards them.

It seems that effective steps can be taken in the field of education by creating an appropriate communication skills education programme based on Quranic *Ayats* and the lifestyle of the prophet in a way that matches students' level of understanding and comprehension. In fact, an ideal communication system can be established by considering these recommendations of the Quran and everything that is emphasised in the behaviour of the prophet. Even though religious teachings do not offer a general description and special framework for communication and life skills, one can deduce the laws of social ethics and correct behavioural patterns in Islamic society from the *Ayats* of the Quran and the Prophet's tradition.

Improving communication skills according to the Holy Quran

Islam has introduced a number of mechanisms to improve our communication skills, one of which is being affectionate towards others. You respect others by dealing with them without reproach. In general, people do not get friendly with those who act with reproach and consider their relationship a type of business and nothing more. Therefore, the first thing prophets mentioned was that they asked for no reward for their role as a prophet (Surah Al-An'am, Ayat 90; Surah Hud, Ayat 29). One must step into any path he considers righteous by relying on God and the guardianship and divine victory. In addition, one must act on something by trusting in God when they are sure of its legitimacy. This will help them not be afraid of failure and even consider failure as a kind of victory because it would happen if God wanted it to. So, if it does not happen, there was something wrong with it. Such an attitude will help humans not to be ashamed and do their best by trusting in God (Surah Al-Imran, Ayat 159).

Trust building is an important tool in social communications. You cannot communicate constructively with a person you do not trust, and this relationship will be with fear and concern. In Quran, we read: 'when they did not stretch out their hands for food, the Prophet Abraham [peace be upon him] became afraid in his heart', which discouraged him from continuing to communicate. However, the angels attempted to put the communication in the right direction by building trust in

Abraham (Surah Hud, Ayat 74). Even though one should not praise themselves (Surah An-Najm, Ayat 32), introducing yourself and your personality can be helpful in creating or reinforcing a constructive and effective social relationship. Therefore, prophets first introduced themselves in order to communicate with people (Surah Al-A'raf, Ayat 158). Understanding others, as well as focusing on their differences can greatly contribute to effective communication. So, when you talk, you need to pay attention to the level of understanding and wisdom of your audience; otherwise, you cannot get your message across properly. Based on this central principle, divine messengers spoke in their people's language in the first phase: we did not send any prophet except in the language of his people to reveal facts to them (Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 5). Facts can be explained properly when the audience's level of understanding is taken into account. The Prophet of Islam asserted: 'we, the prophets, are to speak to the people at their level of understanding and reason' (Majlisi 1985).

Humans must speak in a humble and submissive manner and should recommend good deeds. Therefore, eloquence must exist in what we say and the way we say it in order to create a healthy relationship. According to the Quran, a healthy relationship is one established based on mutual respect and self-esteem. Imam Ali noted: ... 'avoiding bawdry as it causes grudge' (Amedi 1990). Given that human nature demands good words, God has ordered us to speak with good words (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 83). The Quran commands its followers to avoid profanity. 'O believers! Do not insult what they invoke besides Allah or they will insult Allah spitefully out of ignorance' (Surah Al-An'am, Ayat 108). The book of life has avoided the use of grotesque talk by its followers and has ordered them as follows: 'O you who have believed, fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice' (Surah Al-Ahzab, Ayat 70). In another part of the Quran, we read: '... [A]nd speak to them words of appropriate kindness' (Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 5).

We also read:

'... [A]nd tell My servants to say that which is best. Indeed, Satan induces [dissension] among them. Indeed Satan is ever, to mankind, a clear enemy' (Surah Al-Isra', Ayat 53).

The Quran also says: 'And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames' (Surah Al-Hujurat, Ayat 11).

Methodology

This study is in the category of review research. This research reviewed the background of the research, and relying on Islamic teachings, especially the Holy Quran, explained the components that are somehow related to the communication skills and life skills of the students.

Human dignity and self-esteem

God talks about human dignity explicitly (Surah Al-Isra', Ayat 70). 'And We have certainly honored the children of

Adam'. For this reason, all human beings must recognise this human dignity as a right. This *Ayat* is also used to show that in addition to the right to life, humans have the right to inherent dignity, and as long as human beings do not deny themselves of this dignity for the sake of crime and betrayal, others must respect this right as well.

Students must learn that they have been put into this world by God in a way that has enabled them to do many things. If students learn from a young age that they have been given this opportunity because of God's special affection for them and God's expectations of them are a kind of credibility given to them, compared to other creatures, they can somehow accept this position for themselves in the world. In addition, if they are constantly reminded at home and in the classroom that all human beings are regarded differently by God, and all humans have the right to be respected, there will be fewer arguments in school and other environments.

Tolerance and compromise skills

In Quran, we read:

'If Allah were to take people to task for their deeds, He would not leave any living creature on earth, but He grants them respite to an appointed time' (Surah Fatir, *Ayat* 45).

According to this *Ayat*, it is difficult for human beings to accept their mistakes and one cannot easily prevent another person from wrong deeds, and directing them towards the right path requires tolerance, patience and kindness.

This also applies to students; even if they behave improperly, their instructor cannot persuade them to stop this kind of behaviour and get back on the right path in one session. In fact, teachers must make their students aware of their wrongful manners gradually and in a calm way. It is really important for teachers to be kind and tolerant in this path so that they could teach students the important things as good friends.

Forgiveness skills

According to the Quran, forgiveness has a special place in the social system. In other words, one must behave honourably and with kindness, which will show high-mindedness, tolerance and modesty (Sobhaninia 2013). Addressing believers, the Quran says: 'Take what is given freely, enjoy what is good, and turn away from the ignorant' (Surah Al-A'raf, *Ayat* 199).

This means that even though God gives human beings the right to stand up to oppression, he asks them to waive their right mercifully considering that he will reward those who forgive. This can be properly considered for elementary students as a behavioural principle in their surrounding environment and create a strong relationship between individuals. In general, children have a strong sense of ownership of their possessions and agree to waive their rights. According to Quranic *Ayats* (Surah Al-A'raf, *Ayat* 199), where God emphasises forgiveness in order to improve the

social relations of humans, we can teach students how to forgive each other's mistakes and waive their rights on certain occasions, [as long as it does not become a habit] in order to make their friendships stronger and live in a happier environment.

Accountability skills

According to Quran, having power is not a moral criterion. For instance, even though the Prophet of Islam had a high position among people, he always acted in a way that showed serving people is one of the best righteous deeds in the eyes of God. He always tried to serve the people and this type of behaviour emerged from a sense of accountability towards others.

Despite the fact that attention to this matter has increased among students, especially elementary schools, it still needs to be reinforced. It has been a few years since elementary school teachers have started classifying students into multiple groups, where children with higher abilities in any area [moral, educational, artistic] are grouped with students with fewer skills. Even though this seemingly simple grouping may lack the necessary effectiveness because of the lack of facilities and time, it can help teachers analyse students' sense of accountability, serving fellow human beings, collaboration and feeling responsible towards other students and remind them of the important points that can prepare them for a bigger community with more responsibilities. These skills can be taught both individually and in groups.

Justice orientation skills

Establishing justice is mentioned in the Holy Quran as one of the motivations for sending prophets to people. One of the main goals of the prophets is to implement justice in society. Social justice is the view that everyone deserves equal economic, political, social rights and opportunities. This kind of view can be taught to elementary students who must spend many hours of a day with themselves in a shared environment. For instance, students must be the first to learn about the details of a law that has been approved by school and student councils. Through distributing brochures or during morning ceremonies or in the classroom, teachers can teach students not to disobey this law regardless of their level of mental ability and skills. Therefore, the first important point is learning about the law and then realising that all children of all ages are treated equally in the school environment. There must be consequences for those who disobey the law so that no one thinks that they are superior to others. Students must be treated in a way that they realise that all of them must follow the rules and avoid exempt rules.

Individual behaviour skills

According to Surah Al-Hujurat, human beings are prohibited from mocking each other in order to maintain pleasant and healthy social relationships. This is also observed in the

words of God and interpretation of the mentioned *Ayat* and other statements of the Prophet and other Imams (Surah Al-Hujurat, Ayat 11). This is found in elementary students, especially younger ones, because they are separated from their families and put in a place with people of the same age and have no prior correct understanding of individual differences. Even though people of this age may have no intention to hurt each other, the way they treat others with fewer abilities in any area may destroy or strengthen their relationships.

A Quranic *Ayat* (Surah Al-Hujurat, Ayat 12) shows well the destructive effects of suspicion and ill-will of people towards each other in society. In this *Ayat*, God clearly points out the sinfulness of this wrong action and its consequences. A closer look at these *Ayats* reveals that all these orders exist to preserve the personality and self-esteem of people in society. In fact, the main goal of all of these teachings in Quranic *Ayats* and the life of scholars has been to prevent the humiliation of human dignity and character in society, so much so, that God likens backbiters to someone who eats the meat of the dead and faces horrible consequences for this action. Nevertheless, these behaviours are observed in most elementary students and must be resolved. It is important for teachers to use the opportunity and familiarise students with the consequences of such destructive behaviours.

Discussion

The basis of the system of social ethics and human relations in the Holy Quran and, accordingly, in the Prophet's life, is piety and a sense of accountability in all individual and social dimensions. In this system, not only humans are held responsible for their own happiness in this world and the afterlife but also they are accountable regarding matters related to the community and other people. In the social system of the Quran, culture and social customs exist to serve human excellence and its movement towards perfection.

In a favourable social system, social responsibility becomes meaningless and the stability of society will be damaged if duty does not prevail in individual and social life. No one is responsible for the actions of others, because they have no power over them. Not only religion recognises human rights but also one of the ultimate goals of religion is the restoration of human rights. The existence of *Shariah* duties and taking into account worldly and hereafter punishment is to guide people in the path of natural rights. Social behaviours are described as just when they are protected from extremes. Social justice as in not exaggerating the rights of others and in seeing people equally against regulations.

Humans are not created equal; if they were equal, they would have the same things and would lack the same things, which would naturally lead to no mutual needs and services. Therefore, God has created human beings with different physical, mental, intellectual and emotional talents and capabilities, and in this way, he has naturally made everyone

willing to join together and has provided the basis for a socially connected life. Therefore, human beings are related to various people in life, and without a doubt, proper interaction with different people is not possible for every person. Thus, social education and the way people communicate with each other requires life skills which should be considered from childhood. Therefore, the social upbringing of people and their type of relationships with others require talents that must be developed from childhood.

A religious person always has God's satisfaction in mind and considers themselves obliged to play a social role in the community. In this regard, people have responsibilities such as helping, serving people, taking responsibility and avoiding inappropriate manners that humiliate fellow human beings. As a social religion, Islam cares a lot about human social education, and even Islamic rules and rituals have deep benefits and philosophies in cultivating social spirit. Therefore, the orders of Islam such as prayer, *Hajj*, *Jihad*, *Zakat*, *Khums* and *Infaq* are based on the community. Moreover, Islam considers man to have a God-seeking nature and believes that as long as his nature is not contaminated by filth, he can join society with purity. This pure nature inspires them that they have duties and responsibilities towards the members of the community that they should feel responsible for.

Conclusion

The aim of this research was to examine the relationship between communication skills according to Islamic teachings and students' life skills. In addition to the importance of educational methods of students' parents at home, teachers in schools also play a very important role, especially in the primary period, in the field of teaching correct social behaviour and how to communicate with others in society. Therefore, it is necessary to educate the individual and teach life skills to children to participate in the social arena to make a balanced person in social behaviour worthy of effective membership for the society, whose life is based on the public good and philanthropy. In this study, the following factors have been identified and described: human dignity and self-esteem, tolerance and compromise skills, forgiveness skills, accountability skills, justice orientation skills, individual behaviour skills. In this respect, the use of Islamic teachings can lead to ultimate happiness, the benefits of which can be for both the individual and society.

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Authors' contributions

R.R., Writing, review and edition, I.M., Writing original draft, A.A., Visualisation, A.D.A., Conceptualisation, S.A., R.S., and E.P.P., Investigation.

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