



## Islamic Values in Higher Education Students' Communication in Edmodo Learning Platform

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.28918/jei.v3i1.1302>

Received: 6 Januari 2018

Revised: 8 April 2018

Approved: 3 Mei 2018

### **Abstract**

*This study discusses Islamic values revealed in students' communication in Edmodo learning platform. It investigated whether there was the implementation of Islamic values in the conversation and responses in the learning platform, both implicitly and explicitly. This study also observed the students' participation in the conversation platform. In the data collection, this study used observation and questionnaire, and the researcher used descriptive approach to analyze the data. There was analysis on the students' conversation forms in the online platform. The result revealed that the students integrated Islamic values through their communication styles in the online learning activity, in the form of some short expressions and in the content of the conversations. Not only did the values appear explicitly, but they could also be noted implicitly in the sentences which contained suggestions, polite greetings, and consoling others. This study concludes that the students had been able to incorporate Islamic values they learned both formally and informally in their daily communication. Those uses of Islamic terms and the existences of Islamic values in the English online conversation made this group distinctive from other online communities.*

**Keywords:** *Communication, Edmodo, Islamic Values*

### **Introduction**

Higher education institutions, as supporting places creating good-character generation, offer many subjects that must be learned and mastered by students. This is because of the wish of creating generation which not only have academic intelligence, but also emotional intelligence. Academic intelligence certainly can be achieved through formal education in any school or educational institution, but emotional intelligence demands learning, understanding, and application in everyday social life. Therefore,

teachers, lecturers, students, and other educators are required to be able to intelligently take advantage of instructional media in accordance with technological developments to reach the educational goals. For example, teachers or other educators can use electronic or online media to teach a foreign language while teaching politeness in communication.

Carlson (2005) stated that a new generation of college students has arrived. It means that colleges must rethink of how they operate the learning process, and the lecturers need to retool the way they manage their classes. Moreover, Nicholson and Sarker (2002) in Roach and Lemasters (2006) argued that institutions of higher education are creating courses and programs online to serve a student population that is more dispersed geographically. There have been many kinds of online media which are most familiar ones for our society, such as Facebook, Skype, Twitter, etc. Actually, the main usefulness of those such media is almost similar, which enable people to get information and connect with other people from distance places. People choose the kinds of social media they depend on their needs and other people around them.

Related to educational field, online media must be used maximally to support the education programs, both by the teachers and students. Hovart and Stone (2004) stated that online learning is close to all types of students because of its asynchronicity or flexibility, which allows them to access it as flexible as possible. Because of the importance of online media in educational field, teachers are required to be able to adapt the online media development, especially the ones used by their students. It will be useful for the teachers in enabling them close to the students psychologically. Besides, the availability of internet connection in public places allows teachers and students to maximize the use of online learning. Therefore, an online platform for educational issues called Edmodo was created and has been countinuously developed. As Mokhtar and Dzakiria (2012) stated in their research, the greatest invention of e-learning is when social network is blended with education and Edmodo becomes of the best platforms for combining a social network and an academic field.

In order to maximize the use of Edmodo, besides following the rule of the platform, the students as the users should also be polite in conveying the meaning of their communication in the learning platform. It is closely related to their Islamic values which appear in their communication styles. Moreover, the use of an online learning platform

for deepening a certain language provides opportunity for the users to perform their polite and nice communication using the foreign language. There is no use of having impolite conversations in an online learning because it influences their moral in their daily lives.

Based on the issue, this study observed the Islamic values appeared in the higher students' communication styles in Edmodo learning platform. It investigated whether the students had been able to implement Islamic values that they learned through online communication, both implicitly and explicitly.

### **Literature Review**

There have been many researchers conducting research of online media for language learning. Neofitou (2007) studied the intercultural internet chat and language learning based on socio-cultural theory. The study investigated the conversation analysis to discover numerous linguistic and interactional features in the ten chat logs collected. Mokhtar and Dzakiria (2015) investigated the potential use of Edmodo as an interactive virtual learning platform for English language learning.

Sahiruddin examined the English use in Indonesian Islamic higher education, which focused on the vocabulary competence and reading skill. In addition, Sudan (2017) explained the natural characteristic of Islamic education. He mentioned that Islamic education is comprehensive, balanced and targets personality development, cognizant mind set, patriotism, open-mindedness, intellectual, spiritual, and harmonious coexistence. Those studies promoted how online learning, language learning and Islamic education were related each other. However, none of them explained the role of Islamic higher education in online learning.

Related to Islamic values performed by students, Nuriman and Fauzan (2017) conducted research which tells about the influence of Islamic moral values on the students' behavior in Aceh. In addition, Muttaqien (2017) conducted another research to investigate Islamic values integrated in the English language teaching (ELT) in Islamic higher education institution. The result revealed that there were three values performed by the English teacher in teaching process, namely: spiritual, moral, and cultural values of Islam.

## 1. Edmodo

Edmodo is a kind of social media platforms which supports educational field. Members of this useful social media are teachers, students, and students' parents. In Balasubramanian et al. (2014), it is stated that Edmodo *is a free and secure learning platform designed by Jeff O' Hara and Nick Borg in 2008 for teachers, students, parents, schools, and districts.* Teachers may create a group consisting of some students in order to control and observe students' learning activities easily. This platform provides the recapitulation of students' performance in detail so that teachers are able to know their progress in simple way. For students, this platform enables them to share content, submit homework, assignments and quizzes, receive their teachers feedback, notes and alerts as well as voting on polls (Jarc, 2010).

The availability of free internet connection in public places eases people, including students to access Edmodo anytime. Clyde in Enriquez (2014) stated that Internet allows cheap information delivery services, collaborative and distance education. *Edmodo has more than 6.5 million users and host online conferences called Edmodocon with thousands of attendees (Flanigan, 2011).* Therefore, teachers must be able to optimize the usefulness of this platform. Teachers can give a paperless assignment to students, in which they only need the internet connection and computer or gadget to access Edmodo. Teachers in some countries note that Edmodo can strengthen the relationships between students and led to a stronger classroom community (Mills, 2011).

However, the optimal use of Edmodo depends on the teacher itself, whether he has capability and willingness to maximize it for supporting learning process. Researchers believed that the effectiveness of Edmodo is various depending on the internet facilities of the school and level of enthusiasm among students and teachers on the use of social networking sites in education.

## 2. Spoken and Written Communication in Edmodo Platform

Spoken and written communication have significant differences which influence the result and length of the communication itself. The differences between them explained by Horowitz and Samuels (1987), which stated that:

Oral language is typically associated by linguists with conversation that is produced, processed, and then evaluated in the context of face-to-face exchange and grounded in interpersonal relationships that are often clearly

established. Oral language is adapted to a specific audience and to socio-cultural settings and communities that are presumably present, functioning in a context of here and now.

In contrast:

Written language is typically associated with language of books and explanatory prose such as is found in schools. Written language is formal, academic, and planned; it hinges on the past and is reconstructed in such a way that in the future it can be processed by varied readerships.

The differences emphasize that spoken and written language produce different sentences and expressions, which stimulate different responses as well. However, the combination between spoken and written communication has been a common thing in this modern society. The form of the combination can be seen in the use of instant messaging or online chat. This facility has been very familiar among our society because it creates a live-like situation, which enables the user to imagine that the person he is texting, is in front of him. Like Chafe & Tannen (1987) said that formal spoken lectures, personal letters, diaries, notes passed in class, computer dialogue, oral ritual, oral poetry, and others similar kinds of communication are examples of mixed uses between the spoken and written language.

Crystal (1995) said that in spoken or oral communication, people use tones, stresses and intonation, but in written communication, there is a term of paralinguistic, which expresses feelings by using emoticons, colors, capitalizations, choice of words, or other features. This paralinguistic accommodates people to write and communicate as well as they speak in front of the respondent. Even, it is a rare thing for people to use formal, grammatical, and complete sentences in a written chat.

### **3. Islamic Values of Islamic Higher Education Students**

Sudan (2017) in his research revealed the nature of Islamic education concept. He implied that Islamic education is divided into three areas: to know (cognitive), to love (affective), and to act (psychomotor), combines all aspects of human personality, and is unlimited regardless of place and time. Furthermore, Yasin and Jani (2013) stated the aim of education must be related to the purpose of life and to the current situation of the

Muslim. The principals of education teach Islamic values to everybody to be the better person than ever, by not only behave but also think positively.

Referring to Islamic character, the goal of Islamic education is to create an Islamic personality within the individual Muslim (Haneef, 2002). It means that the Islamic personality exhibits are God-consciousness, which means to be aware of the Creator at all times, and to know that God is aware of the individual's actions. Moreover, Haneef in Salahuddin (2011) stated that an Islamic personality has as its base Islamic values and attitudes on which the personality is built and where Islamic criteria lead all aspects of life.

Islamic higher education institutions are the media to create good character students after they learn at their schools. The institutions are the place for the students to develop their potential and realize their passion. This place must be a proper media to guide the students to go on the right way based on Islamic values. Because of the values, there are some regulations and norms that they have known to do; they call it passion and interest. Islamic education could play a very vital role. Pohl (2000) emphasized on community development must not be misunderstood to mean that the study of tradition of Islamic disciplines occupies a diminished of secondary role. His statement indicated that Islamic traditional study could play a very vital role in educating the society. In addition to that, Al-Attas (1977) also stated that Islamic education helps in complete growth of an individual's personality whereas instruction merely trains an individual or group to do some tasks efficiently.

Ma'sumian (1995) in Nuriman and Fauzan (2017) stated that Islamic values emphasize on human's life to think and behave to seek true worship of the God. It means that Islamic values must be the main reference for everybody to live in their social lives such as communicating and treating others. The definition covers the education system that must be implemented for the students as the next Muslim generation. It can be moral education which the teachers or lecturers teach inserted in any subjects, or their roles as the models for the students in having good attitude based on Islamic rules.

Teaching Islamic values consisting moral education means teaching and disciplining students to have the best characters and it is closely related to educational system (Nuriman and Fauzan: 2017). Tauhidi (2001) explained that the use of teaching values in Islam is guiding the students to find morally-correct choices and decision by

themselves. College students sometimes do not want to ask for the elder's argument in deciding their decision, which allowing them to choose the best decision based on their own side.

Islamic values are not explicitly taught like the other subjects in learning process. Although there are some subjects that teach Muslims about Islamic values, students actually have learned it since they are taken care by their family and environment. Therefore, to measure the implementation of the values, not only are written tests given to the students, but there should also be observation in the students' lives.

### **Research Methodology**

The researcher used descriptive approach to conduct the research. There were observation and analysis of students' activities in the Edmodo group. In conducting this research, the reason of choosing Edmodo was the usefulness of Edmodo as the students' online discussion platform, which provided simplicity and effectiveness for both the lecturer and students.

This study was conducted to 25 students of non-English Departments in Institut Agama Islam Negeri Pekalongan. They were from Islamic Education (PAI) and Islamic Elementary School Teacher Training (PGMI) study programs. All of them had learned about Islamic values that could be implemented in their ways of communication. Most of them were categorized as low learners, which meant that they were not familiar in practicing both spoken and written English.

In collecting the data, the research used observation and questionnaire. The observation started after the researcher and the students had joined in the Edmodo group. The most important thing is the Islamic values that appeared in the students' communication in the online chatting platform, both in spoken and written language. After ensuring that all students had joined in the group, the researcher observed and noted their activities, even very short posts or comments. The observation was used to reveal their communication style in the platform, especially related to Islamic terms and the existences of Islamic values in their communication. Meanwhile, the questionnaire was distributed after the research had been conducted to know the students' responses, feelings, and comments towards the online learning. They might answer the questionnaire in Indonesian.

## Findings and Discussion

### 1. Findings

After conducting the observation and collecting the questionnaires that had been obtained from the students, there were some very significant results. Firstly, not all students posted or commented in the Edmodo learning platform. It can be noticed that among 25 students joined in the group, not all of them gave responses. There were 14 students posted in the Edmodo group, and 16 students commented on their friends' posts. The rest of the students were silent readers.

Secondly, students who were passive in the classroom learning became active in the online group learning. It can be noted that there were some of the students who were passive in the classroom learning, but they became active in posting or commenting in the online group. The number of the students who was active in online learning platform is higher than the numbers of the students who were active in the classroom.

Thirdly, in giving response, some students used mixed languages (Indonesian-English) to respond their friends' posts or comments such as *"don't worry, my friend Sabar...ini ujian..."*, *"what is the meaning of your post, I not paham"*, *"yes, you go to kondangan\_in wedding party your friends"*, and *"no, I am hanya play go to home my friends"*. These mixed languages existed because they had courage to respond directly without looking up the meaning of foreign words in a dictionary. Their language skills were not appeared directly in their written chats.

Fourthly, there were Islamic terms stated in the content of the conversation such as *"Alhamdulillah"*, *"Assalamualaikum"*, *"sabar...ini ujian..."*, *"don't waste your time complaining about what you lack or worrying about what you might lose"*, and *"give the best of what you have in this moment to create new value"*.

### 2. Discussion

#### a. Spoken and Written Communication

In fact, the different characteristics between spoken and written communication is not so obvious in online group communication. Actually, according to the basic concept of spoken and written language, the language used in this online chatting is written



language although the application covers the character of spoken language as well. However, based on the concept, there were some sentences used the spoken language. For example, in Nilty's response, she said: "*Hi ...*" to respond Saefudin's greeting "*Hallo friends ???*". In addition, Saefudin also used his verbal language to respond the post from Mifta. He said "*Of course*". Dzati also responded "*Hahahy*" to respond her friend's greeting. In another chat, Tutik said "*Night too mbak kholidah*" to reply Nur Kholida's post. These sentences can only be found in spoken language since they are not grammatically structured and do not refer to the rules of written communication correctly.

Those responses used in this online group were written languages, but are in the form of spoken sentences. Spoken language was influenced by stresses, intonation, live performance, and both speaker and listener atmosphere while they were communicating. The fast response required from the listener influenced fiercely what next sentences would be because the response was a form of spontaneous response without thought and the preparation of sentences maturely. In this group, the students did not face each other to make communication. They implemented the principals of spoken language in written communication activity. Therefore, this communication was categorized as written-oral language, which meant a combination of oral and written language rules.

However, the spoken language responses that they wrote did not fully required the characteristics of spoken language itself because there were some responses which did not purely occur in spoken communication. Regarding the principal of spontaneity, students could give longer responses than just "*Hi*" or "*Hahahy*". In this case, surely, the short responses were influenced by their confidence, feelings, and ability to write words and sentences correctly. Undoubtedly, one the one hand, written language required more formality and rules than spoken language in written. On the other hand, spoken language required more spontaneity and feelings in responding the words or sentences.

One of the students' difficulties in responding to post or comment from others in this group was influenced by their ability to compose English sentences. This can be seen from some of their responses that used written language such as Laily's reply to Nur's post "*I'm thinking about final task*". Besides, Nur answered "*My handphone finding above in wardrobe*" to question "*Where did you find it?*" The above sentences use grammar-structured sentence patterns, which is one of the characteristics of written language. The students did not ignore the principles of correct sentences although in order

to produce the correct sentences, they had to think deeply and used their translation tools. Therefore, it can be said that the communication or response of the group members used written language according to the rules of English grammar. This is surely caused by delaying time to answer or respond to posts or comments. Delaying time is one of the characteristics in communication through writing where they have time to construct sentences perfectly and structured.

According to the principles of written language, students are able to make complex sentences in posts or comments to make it completely the form of written sentences. The examples could be seen on Mifta's post "*Don't waste your time complaining about what you lack or worrying about what you might lose. Give the best of what you have in this moment to create new value.*" She used formal, complete, and correct-structure sentence rather than an informal and short sentence. Unfortunately, there was no any comment towards the post, which could be caused by other students' less interest, misunderstanding, or disability to give response.

Among other characteristics, formality is an indicator that people are able to construct sentences in a complete and correct structure grammatically. In the students' responses, there were some students who preferred to use informal short sentences rather than formal ones, but there were those who preferred to use formal sentences. Surely, this was influenced by their ability in arranging sentences grammatically. Students who were accustomed to composing English sentences would be easier to compose sentences than those who were not accustomed to reading or creating English sentences. However, formal and informality in response cannot be fully an indicator of their English skills.

### **1) Conversation Analysis among Students**

In a conversation, there are usually several pairs of repetitive dialogue or turn-taking to discuss one topic. Nevertheless, in this group, the turn-taking did not take a long and was limited to only a few responses. The students used a spoken form to response, but they did not use purely spoken language. Besides, there was no subsequent response involving other people or conversations. One post got response from some others, which ended without any further questions. For example:

Nur K: *“Good day buddy, I want to ask where your goes out? Because where I died lights”.*

Mifta: *“I went to my brother’s place”.*

Tutik: *“I stay in ponpes”.*

Novi: *“I am just at home”.*

The responses from Mifta, Tutik, and Novi showed that they only answered questions from the post, and no new topic in the conversation. This proves the statement released by many researchers, which stated that in some ways, turn-taking in online messaging is different with spoken communication. The difference can include the participants’ roles, turn construction, turn allocation, adjacency pairs, and interpersonal involvement (Nishimaki, 2014).

In oral conversations, it is quite possible for the students to create new turn-taking topic when they speak Indonesian, even they can make the conversation longer involving more students. Unfortunately, in this group, they hesitated their own ability to compose or come up with a new context because they were not so sure of their language skills.

In addition to the length of the conversation, students’ politeness and ethic of the conversation took place as well. For example, there was not any sentence indicating underestimating or annoying others. Surely, one of the politeness was because of the teacher’s existence in the group and the role of the group as a learning media. Students knew how to communicate politely to others by giving positive responses to other’s post or comments. When they wanted to complain, they did it in polite ways such as Kumar said *“Too much questions. You should ask one by one for interesting discuss.”* He made his complaint in a good way rather than saying *“You make us confused”* or other more impolite sentences.

As individuals who had complex and various use of words in communication, they could use other sentences which reflected their feelings in a direct way. However, the students preferred to keep using polite language because they knew that they had to be polite and respect everyone as the part of implementing the Islamic personality and to reach the goal of Islamic education itself.

## **2) Islamic Values in Students’ Communication in Edmodo**

The result of this research reveals that there were more active students in online media rather than in the classroom activity, and they communicated in a very polite way.

Based on the data, there were only five active students in the classroom learning, who created uninteresting classroom atmosphere and did not support the students' improvement in language practices. The students felt accommodated to deliver questions and comments through the online learning. This is due to students' diverse thinking ability. Some of them were slow learners who took longer to understand and respond to sentences in English. With communication through writing, they had time to correct what they said once they found their confidence to share it.

In Ikhsan's statement, it appeared that he wanted to encourage his friends to use the Edmodo application and practice English although it was a hard work. It represented his character as a good Muslim to be optimistic and did some effort to be a better person. It can be seen in his post *"In my opinion, this application is very good for deepening our understanding of English vocabulary. When there are students who posts the status, other students will try to open a dictionary to find it."*

Both active and passive students in the online group learning had similar opinions towards the benefits of the group although they showed different performances. This fact supported other researchers statements, which said that being extrovert in a classroom sometimes becomes introvert in online learning, and vice versa (Butler and Zipp, 2006; Downing and Chim, 2004). However, all of them supported each other by delivering good and polite comments. When someone made a mistake in a conversation or post, no other students complained about it. Another example could be seen when one of the students posted a complicated riddle, and the others could not answered it. They still kept their respect by giving a polite comment, and none of them said something bad because of the difficult riddle. That conversation represented good communication as Islam teaches us.

Related to their position as Islamic Higher Education students, there were no significant influence in their communication both in online and traditional learning. The students have been taught about Islamic character that they have to practice as Muslim, and they have known how to implement in their daily communication. In fact, the implementation of the Islamic education is not clearly implemented in the group conversation. Most of the Islamic values which were showed in the Edmodo learning group is the use of Islamic terms for oral communication such as greeting and *tahmid*. It means, there is still the existence of religiosity in their English communication. For

example, there are some students using Greeting by writing "*Assalamualaikum*" and "*waalaikumsalam*".

Based on the observation in the online communication, students preferred to use Islamic terms for "*Assalamualaikum*" than using "peace be upon you" although they were in English learning community. It means that they knew how to implement original terms in Islam for their communication. However, among those more than 70 conversations they made, there were only seven conversations using this kind of greeting. Most of the students likely used "*Good morning*", "*Good afternoon*" or "*Good evening*" rather than "*Assalamualaikum*" itself. In fact, most of them did not use the Islamic terms of greeting because they wanted to practice English communication purely to be able to practice greeting in English. Other students, wrote "*Alhamdulillah*" as their responses of other greetings or good news. Actually, the numbers of Islamic terms in the form of Arabic mentioned in the conversation were not significant enough if we compared it with the numbers of all conversations they made. This fact revealed that not all students wanted to mix between the use of English and Arabic terms.

Moreover, Islamic values appeared in their sentences patterns and choice of words. None of them used bad and cruel words. It means that they knew how to respect and treat others appropriately. As we know, Islam teaches us to be polite and keep our communication to avoid insulting others by our words. It is a certainty that Islamic values cannot be measured by looking at someone's performance or sentences only, but his way in communicating with others represents his moral value. This study focuses only on language used in the online communication. Therefore, it considered not only the choice of words, but also the content of the sentences or expressions. By looking at the students' conversation, there were few sentences which contained good values in Islam. As Nayla said, "*Its noble job because the real paradise is on your mother's feet*". This sentence contained religiosity and a good moral value represented in good advice. Indirectly, this sentence also represented her position as a Muslim and student, who knew about Islamic knowledge. Besides, Daniatul also said that "*Don't worry, my friend... sabar... ini ujian...*". Although the sentence was written in mixed Indonesian-English, it showed that they had good attitude to remind their friends to be more patient. In some cases out of this research, there are many students which like to provoke their friends to be more emotional and aggressive.

Although the students' communication style purely cannot be measured only by their posts and comments in English learning group, it showed how far the role of their Islamic education that they had learned. It is impossible for students to communicate in polite and calm way if they were not taught good character education, as a part of Islamic characters.

In the end of the online group learning, students concluded that they were helped and satisfied by using the online group chat like Ikhsan's comment "...*saat tiap ada anak yang buat status, mungkin tidak semuanya bisa dipahami. Maka jika ingin tau, pasti akan membuka kamus/sejenisnya untuk bisa memahaminya...*" Based on the rule in the group, the post was totally wrong because it used fully Indonesian. However, it contained Islamic values which supported the other students to keep maximizing the online group.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The position of higher education students does not guarantee that each of them can deliver their communication in a good manner by regarding Islamic values they have learned. Teachers, lecturers, and educational institutions should observe whether they have internalized Islamic values in their daily communication or not to guide the students to have the best moral. This study concludes that the higher education students, especially studying in Islamic higher education institutions, had implemented Islamic values in their online learning platform. The implementation was in the form of Islamic terms they used, motivating and consoling sentences, and polite greetings and responses. It shows that the impact of the use of online media is very significant for the passive students because sometimes they are not courageous to express their ideas in the classroom. It means that by using online media in language learning, teachers are able to accommodate students' needs in practicing their foreign language and observe their communication style in the platform as well.

In order to maximize the use of online media, especially in language learning, teachers need to guide students to improve their polite communication that they can create more sentences to communicate in spoken, written, and both. Students can optimize the use of online media to support their learning process and express their ideas that they do not deliver in a classroom by regarding Islamic values to create a good atmosphere in the conversation.

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